

No. 6 of 2010



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY  
DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION  
TUESDAY 06 JULY 2010**

**CONTENTS**

**PAPERS LAID**

**QUESTIONS** (*Oral*)

**MOTION**

**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)**

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**BILLS** (*Public*)

**MOTION**

**GOVERNMENT-PROGRAMME 2010-2015**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**QUESTIONS** (*Written*)

*Members**Members***THE CABINET****(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 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>   |
| Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo                         | <i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>   |
| Hon. Showkutally Soodhun                         | <i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>   |
| Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK                   | <i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>                                       |
| 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  
 Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee  
 Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee  
 Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum

*Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands*  
*Minister of Health and Quality of Life*  
*Minister of Arts and Culture*  
*Minister of Information and Communication*  
*Technology*  
*Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues*  
*Minister of Civil Service Affairs and*  
*Administrative Reforms*

Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK  
 Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah

Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack  
 Mohamed

*Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations*  
*and Employment*

Hon Yatindra Nath Varma  
 Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen

*Attorney General*  
*Minister of Business, Enterprise,*  
*Cooperatives and Consumer Protection*

*Members**Members***PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Mr Speaker</i>                                | Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK |
| <i>Deputy Speaker</i>                            | Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing         |
| <i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>             | Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez        |
| <i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>            | Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit              |
| <i>Deputy Clerk</i>                              | Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena               |
| <i>Clerk Assistant</i>                           | Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi          |
| <i>Chief Hansard Reporter and<br/>Sub-Editor</i> | Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie               |
| <i>Senior Library Officer</i>                    | Pallen, Mr Noël                     |
| <i>Serjeant-at-Arms</i>                          | Munroop, Mr Kishore                 |

**MAURITIUS**

-----

**Fifth National Assembly**

-----

**FIRST SESSION**

-----

**Debate No. 6 of 2010**

**Sitting of Tuesday 06 July 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. Prime Minister's Office -**

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills –

- (i) The Supplementary Appropriation (2008-2009) (No. 2) Bill (No. XII of 2010);
- (ii) The Supplementary Appropriation (2009) Bill (No. XIII of 2010), and
- (iii) The Sugar Cane Planters Trust (Repeal) Bill (No. XIV of 2010).

**B. Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment -**

The National Economic and Social Council Report 14 of the Integration into the Global Economy - Socio-Economic Challenges and Policy Implications for Mauritius – May 2010.

**C. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development -**

- (a) The Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (2008-2009) (No. 2) of 2010.
- (b) The Estimates of Supplementary Expenditure (2009) of 2010.
- (c) Direction for the extension of period within which Annual Reports of the Director of Audit shall be transmitted in respect of the financial year 2008-2009 (In original).

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

The Annual Report 2006/2007 of the Small Planters Welfare Fund.

**E. Ministry of Arts and Culture -**

- (a) The Audited Accounts of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the years ended 30 June 2001, 30 June 2002 and 30 June 2003.
- (b) The Audited Financial Statements of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the years 2004-2006 and 2007.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**MCB/NPF AFFAIR – SUPREME COURT JUDGEMENT**

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, whether, in regard to the MCB/NPF affair and the judgement of the Supreme Court delivered in relation thereto last Wednesday, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the details of criminal cases still pending before our Courts;
- (b) table copy of the judgement of the United Kingdom Court which discharged Mr Teeren Appassamy from extradition proceedings, and
- (c) say whether he will agree to the setting up of a Select Committee of the House to inquire into the way the Teeren Appassamy and Robert Lesage cases have been handled by the authorities concerned.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I stated in my reply to Parliamentary Question 1B/71 on 22 June 2010, the MCB/NPF case was uncovered on 06 February 2003 when a massive shortfall of about Rs860 m. in the accounts of the NPF at the Mauritius Commercial Bank was discovered by the then Principal Accountant of the NPF. The case was referred to the ICAC on 15 February 2003 by the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Regarding part (a) of the PNQ, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two cases of alleged misappropriation of fund at the Mauritius Commercial Bank were reported to the Police as follows -

- (i) On 26 September 2003, Mr Mousa Mohamed, Chief Auditor at the MCB reported a case of misappropriation of funds in the amount of Rs632,613,615.00 by Parties to the prejudice of the MCB. An enquiry was initiated in the matter.

Simultaneously, ICAC was also conducting an enquiry into the matter. The Police, therefore, referred the case to ICAC in order to avoid duplication of enquiry.

On 14 April 2004, ICAC, however, referred back the case for investigation by the Police on ground that they were not empowered to investigate corruption offences which dated before the coming into force of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002. The Police resumed the enquiry. However, the enquiry stalled because of the reluctance of the Bank's representatives to produce banking documents unless and until a Judge's Order was obtained. Applications were accordingly made on two occasions, on 19 February 2008 and 12 December 2008 for a Judge's Order, but both applications were unsuccessful. The enquiry, therefore, could not progress and the case was referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions' Office for advice on 30 December 2009.

- (ii) On 21 January 2004, Mr Clifford Allet, Fraud Investigator at the MCB reported that there had been fraudulent misappropriation of a sum of Rs586,244.45 by Mr Robert Lesage to the prejudice of the MCB. In that respect, I am informed by the Police that the enquiry had been completed and the case referred to DPP's Office on 30 December 2009 suggesting prosecution against Mr Robert Lesage for the offence of embezzlement.

I am also informed by the Director of ICAC, who investigated the same sets of fact in the MCB/NPF case post 2002, that the enquiry was completed and prosecution has been instituted against MCB before the Intermediate Court for the offence of money laundering. The case is coming for trial on 17 September 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director of ICAC that according to an official correspondence from Mrs Anna Tamba, Extradition Section of the Home Office and Mrs Kundert Anne-Marie of the Crown Prosecution Service of the United Kingdom, it is stated that there is no written ruling from the court concerned in the UK and the case has been discharged by the court due to Mr Teeren Appassamy's physical and mental condition. I am further informed that the court felt that while Mr Teeren Appassamy showed the symptoms, that had been identified by the doctors treating him and which were confirmed by the doctors instructed independently by the Crown Prosecution Service, that it would be unjust and

oppressive to extradite him. I am also informed that the court in the UK had previously adjourned the proceedings so that treatment could be given to Mr Teeren Appassamy in order to assess whether there had been any improvement in his health.

The court felt that it was not in the interest of justice to adjourn further and the Crown Prosecution Service informed the court and Mr Teeren Appassamy that if ever his health improved, there would be a resubmission of his extradition case to the court. As regards the request for tabling a copy of the judgement from the UK Court, there is no written ruling, but I am tabling the relevant correspondence from the Crown Prosecution Service.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I should like to inform the House that -

- (a) there still are a number of court cases, as I have just mentioned, pending in relation to the MCB/NPF affair;
- (b) the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court last Wednesday is still subject to the possibility of being appealed against within a period of 21 days from the date of the judgement;
- (c) insofar as the manner in which the cases of Messrs Teeren Appassamy and Robert Lesage have been handled by ICAC, it is the Parliamentary Committee which has been vested with statutory powers under sections 59-61 of the Prevention of Corruption Act to monitor and review the manner in which ICAC generally carries out its functions and additionally has the power to examine any member of the Board or Officer of ICAC and may even summon any public officer to answer questions, and
- (d) matter relating to the institution or not of criminal proceedings against Mr Teeren Appassamy or Mr Robert Lesage or any other suspect ultimately falls within the prerogatives of the DPP whose acts and decisions, as the House knows, are not reviewable or questionable otherwise than by the Supreme Court.

Therefore, it would be inappropriate to set up a Select Committee of the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was the Leader of the Opposition, I had asked a series of Private Notice Questions to express my concerns about possible cover-ups and the way in which concerned authorities were handling the whole affair.

I am sure the whole country shares my prevailing concern to know the whole truth about the biggest financial scandal this country has ever known. I have therefore decided that, at the

earliest opportune time, a full-fledged Commission of Inquiry presided by a person having the status of a Judge should be set up with a comprehensive Terms of Reference.

*(Interruptions)*

This, I think, should also help to dissipate doubts that have been created in the minds of people by the campaign of false allegations and innuendos that are being nurtured in certain quarters.

I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there should be no impediments to a Commission of Inquiry. Should there be any need to amend the law to allow the Commission of Inquiry to enquire fully, I will not hesitate to do so.

**Mr Bérenger:** In the first part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I tried to listen as carefully as possible to the hon. Prime Minister. On Tuesday 22 June, that is, two weeks ago, he stated, I quote –

“I am informed that the number of cases, both civil and criminal, are still before the courts”.

If I am not mistaken, I heard him mention only one criminal case. Is that correct?

**The Prime Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a series of cases, I understand, that are in front of the courts, I think I mentioned...

*(Interruptions)*

But I did say -

“I would like to inform the House that there are still a number of Court cases pending in relation with the MCB/NPF affair, including the Police enquiry that is going on”.

**Mr Bérenger:** Yes, but I asked details of the other cases and we are not provided with the details because, from what I understand, there was only one case. Does not the hon. Prime Minister find it extraordinary that the MCB comes forward, makes complaints of fraudulent behaviour against Mr Robert Lesage and, at the end of the day, it is the ICAC which decides to bring the MCB before the Court? Does not he find that extraordinary?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No, I am sorry, hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are asking the opinion of the hon. Prime Minister, which he cannot give.

**Mr Bérenger:** He has given the information; this is what has taken place.

*(Interruptions)*

It is quite extraordinary. The MCB complains against somebody, ICAC grants him immunity, and following last Wednesday’s judgement from our Supreme Court which found Messrs Teeren

Appassamy and Robert Lesage guilty, and *blanchi* - that is the word – the MCB, does ICAC still intend to go forward and, if yes, will Robert Lesage be their star witness?

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition, the law which has been passed in this House prevents any Member of the House to put questions and prevents the Executive to answer. There are certain things that can take place, but not question the procedure of the inquiry which has been carried out by ICAC. I gave a ruling in this House. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Prime Minister and he, himself, stated in the House that we have limited powers. I hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition will understand my position.

**Mr Bérenger:** I said about what has already taken place, that is, the judgement from our Supreme Court, last Wednesday...

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, a civil case which found guilty Messrs Lesage and Appassamy *et a blanchi* the MCB. Now, my question is: with that judgement, does ICAC still intend to go forward? If the hon. Prime Minister does not know, he can tell us he does not know.

**The Prime Minister:** Perhaps I would just add one clarification, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission. The immunity given to Mr Lesage actually took place in 2004. Mr Beekarry was the Commissioner of ICAC at that time. I must also say that the MCB at that time did not contest in writing about the immunity given by ICAC to Mr Teeren Appassamy or Mr Robert Lesage.

**Mr Bérenger:** Whether it was Mr Beekarry or somebody else, ICAC took a line of action which has been proved completely wrong by the Supreme Court judgement last Wednesday. So, my question is simple: does ICAC intend to carry on and call Mr Lesage as its star witness?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the immunity given to Mr Lesage, I again repeat, was in 2004. The hon. Leader of the Opposition himself was Prime Minister at that time. That is what happened at that time.

**Mr Bérenger:** Yes, but the Prime Minister, in 2004 or today, does not dictate ICAC.

*(Interruptions)*

Not to interfere either today or in 2004! That is the law, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, fair enough! We agree.

**Mr Bérenger:** So, the hon. Prime Minister will not reply to my question as to whether ICAC has decided not to move forward with that case.

**Mr Speaker:** The Prime Minister cannot decide on that.

**Mr Bérenger:** On the second part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are told that there is no judgement as such by the UK Court. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who represented us, the State of Mauritius, in that case?

**The Prime Minister:** I would take it that it must be somebody from the State Law Office.

**Mr Bérenger:** We are not provided with the names of those who represented us before the UK Court. Did we bring in medical advice against the advice which Mr Appassamy brought in?

**The Prime Minister:** The Crown Prosecution Service themselves decided to adjourn the case to get independent advice separate from Mr Appassamy's medical doctors who gave the advice that they gave.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether due consideration was given by the State Law Office here and by whoever represented us in London – we are not provided with names – on appealing against the decision of the UK Court?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, when you see the correspondence, the UK Court has said that we can resubmit the application. There is a condition attached to it and that is what we will look forward to, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** My question was: whether consideration was given to appealing against the decision? Again, we are not provided with information. I heard, I think, the hon. Prime Minister say that the Court concerned - by whatever name it is called – with time going by, consideration will be given to whether the health of Mr Appassamy allows for his extradition. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how closely have we been following that and have we made any move in that direction?

**The Prime Minister:** We are following it closely, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we also want to have all the truth uncovered in this case. I should add - I have just been given the information as to who represented us – that it was ICAC which was in charge of the extradition procedures in collaboration with the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since we have reached the last part of my question, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister why, until I raised this issue and proposed a Select Committee of the House - in a Select Committee, as we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government would have the majority – to look into the way ICAC, the State Law Office, authorities in London - authorities on our side, I

mean, not on the UK side – have handled this case, only then that he comes forward with a proposal of a Commission of Inquiry?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am surprised that the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked this question. In fact, I explained that it would be inappropriate at this point to have a Select Committee. There are cases in front of the Courts, including a serious case of money-laundering. But, once it is appropriate, there is no impediment for a Commission of Inquiry, we will go forward with a Commission of Inquiry. As I said earlier on, there are criminal and civil cases pending in front of the Court. I should say, Mr Speaker, Sir - perhaps I should refresh the memory of the House - the event happened on 06 February 2003. Even then, as the then Leader of the Opposition, I asked a PNQ on 18 March 2003. The then Prime Minister said that he was informed by Mrs Rojooa that she was worried, something was amiss, that the money of the NPF and the national savings at the MCB might have disappeared. We are talking of a lot of money. But nobody was informed, except the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who was the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister of Social Security. They were informed the next day, that is, on 07 February 2003. Only eight days later, on 14 February 2003, was the Central Bank informed. Even then, the Central Bank – believe it or not – Mr Speaker, Sir, took three days to send inspectors to MCB to investigate.

*(Interruptions)*

That is something that we want to have the truth found out, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Bérenger:** All these are facts! The point is that ICAC started an inquiry to be carried out in its full independence. My question was simple: why, until today...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I said order!

**Mr Bérenger:** ... when through a PNQ, I asked for a Select Committee to be set up, it is only then that the hon. Prime Minister comes forward with a request for a Commission of Inquiry? He chooses not to reply. *C'est éloquent*, Mr Speaker, Sir! Can I know what will be the terms of reference of that Commission of Inquiry? Because the whole point is that we are not satisfied at all the way ICAC has handled this, right going back to 2003. Now, with this judgement of the Supreme Court last Wednesday, it is a completely new picture. I am not

satisfied at all with ICAC, the way the State Law Office advised here and the way we handled the extradition processes in London. Will the terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry to be set up allow replying to those questions, including what we all know, the political links between Messrs Appassamy and Lesage, and certain politicians now on the other side there?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I find it amazing again that the hon. Leader of the Opposition makes these remarks. Why do I say that? He was Prime Minister in 2004, why did not he then allow things to happen as it is? Why was there not a Select Committee or whatever done? It is not the fact that he asked for a Select Committee that we say we will have a Commission of Inquiry. The Select Committee would be inappropriate and I gave the reasons why. In fact, I am saying that it would be better if we have a Commission of Inquiry, not within the four walls of Parliament, but outside, with full powers in a person of a Judge, and then, we can have a look and see whether this is possible. I added, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the judgement of the Supreme Court to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition is making reference, is still subject to appeal.

I understand - I saw in the papers - that Mr Lesage has said that he will appeal the decision. He has, I think, 21 days to appeal the decision. We have to wait for that. I cannot put a Commission of Inquiry if there is going to be an appeal, it would be *sub judice*, as you know.

**Mr Bérenger:** It applies also to the setting up of a Select Committee. The hon. Prime Minister, therefore, announces today that if there is no appeal, there will be a Commission of Inquiry. My question, again, relates to the terms of reference, whether it will cover the way different authorities - starting with ICAC - handled Lesage and Appassamy case, and whether political links between Messrs Appassamy and Lesage and certain politicians now sitting in Government, will be included in the terms of reference.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, my wish is that the terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry – I should add one thing just to correct the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Not only there is no appeal, but there are cases also, there is the case of money laundering, we will have to look at whether there are any impediments. That's why I said I would even be prepared to amend the law for the Commission of Inquiry. I believe there would be no such impediments because most of the cases have already been discussed in Courts. There are always people who raise the question of banking secrecy, but most of the accounts have already been discussed in Court. It is in the open Court. Therefore, I would have the terms of

reference as wide as possible, including I would like to know why it took so long from 06 February 2003 to 14 February ...

*(Interruptions)*

I would also like to know why the hon. Leader of the Opposition advised the then Prime Minister not to say anything to Cabinet at that time.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** We know who was the Prime Minister then. I hope the hon. present Prime Minister remembers who was the Prime Minister then. The affair broke out in 2003 and ICAC started its inquiry; now, five years since the elections of 2005, ICAC goes in the same direction and we have last Wednesday's judgement. Now, the hon. Prime Minister tells us that he is going to wait also what happens to the other cases, including the case of alleged money laundering. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is being serious to throw full light on what took place in that affair or is he playing for time, the appeal till 21 days, then, cases are before the Courts?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am still amazed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Let us look at what he said in 2003 when the then Prime Minister was answering a question because he is saying that we know who was the Prime Minister. Look at what the former Prime Minister then said –

“The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance suggested to me that I should not raise it in Cabinet and that we should find out because of the importance of this bank, that is, the MCB, in the economic life of this country.”

I could ask the same question: what is the link between the Opposition and the MCB?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Order, now! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Order! Order, now! Order, please! Order!

**Mr Bérenger:** There is absolutely no link...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, I said!

**Mr Bérenger:** ... between the present Opposition and the MCB and the hon. Prime Minister knows that. He did not quote all that I said. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is aware that if that had not been handled carefully, danger of a run on the main bank in the island was very real and that is why we had to take every precaution. Will he agree with me?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** I am glad that the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks that the MCB is untouchable.

*(Interruptions)*

I am glad that he is saying that.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** I said that the danger of the run on the bank, being given that he, himself, said *le trou du scandale était* nearly R 900 millions. I wish he wants to be fair. He must know that with that kind of situation, a run on that bank then was a real danger.

**The Prime Minister:** Does that mean, therefore, that if a bank does whatever...

*(Interruptions)*

It is not above the law. That is what I am saying. The MCB should not be above the law.

**Mr Bérenger:** ICAC was informed, the inquiry started. There was no hiding of anything. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me also that there were nearly Rs900 m. of workers' money, their pensions, that were in danger and that, therefore, the first urgency was to prevent a run on the bank, the second urgency was to obtain from the bank that there will be complete refund of that nearly Rs900 m. and that was obtained? Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that these were the two most urgent considerations at the same time that ICAC and others started their inquiry?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the refund has been made, as far as I remember. But the point is that, concerning the biggest financial scandal that happened in this country, on the 6<sup>th</sup> Government is aware of the problem. They do not mention it and nobody knows. The MCB is allowed to look at the books, do its own inquiry on itself; only on the 14<sup>th</sup> is the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius apparently – God knows, if he was informed before – from what we see, was informed. Then he takes three days, only on the 17<sup>th</sup>, they sent independent inquirers from the Central Bank. What has happened ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Patrick Assirvaden, can I ask you to keep quiet when the hon. Prime Minister is answering the question? This is the National Assembly here.

**The Prime Minister:** And I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the then Governor of the Bank went to see the then Director of the MCB; they sat together for three days, God knows what happened during those conversations. I hope all this will be uncovered because, as I said, a Commission of Inquiry will take place. That's why I am saying, if we need to amend the law, as far as Commissions of Inquiry are concerned - I don't see much impediment in that - we will do it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** I have a last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. This was the biggest fraud in the history of Mauritius. We all agree on that. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that he targeted certain quarters all through, but, in fact, last Wednesday's judgement of the Supreme Court - it is a civil case, but they inquired fully before finding people guilty - found the guilty parties, Mr Lesage and Mr Appasamy. This is already on record. This is the Court's judgement. Therefore, will he agree with me that after this turning point, this Supreme Court judgement, which has identified the guilty parties, we should have either a Select Committee or a Commission of Inquiry, but with the correct terms of reference *pour faire toute la lumière sur toute cette affaire une fois pour toutes?*

**Mr Speaker:** I am not answering in the place of the hon. Prime Minister. As far as I understand, the hon. Prime Minister has said that he will give a full-fledged Commission of Inquiry with the largest terms of reference and I think that we cannot pre-empt the issue now and I will ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition if the terms of reference are published - it will have to be published - then he can come back to this House for any amendment which he thinks fit to the terms of reference.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there has been any prosecution envisaged against any person who has directly or indirectly benefited from the alleged embezzlement by Mr Lesage?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not quite understand the question.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware if there is any prosecution against any person who has directly or indirectly benefited from the alleged embezzlement carried out by Mr Lesage?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, in the ruling of the Court, this is not mentioned, but, as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned about links between Messrs Teeren Appassamy, Robert Lesage and people in the Government. I am not aware of this. But everything will come out in the Commission of Inquiry starting from the very beginning.

**Mr Speaker:** I will allow two more questions and I will come back to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, since the recent judgement has made mention of conspiracy between Mr Lesage and Mr Teeren Appassamy, would the hon. Prime Minister – since conspiracy is a criminal offence in our law – envisage new procedures to extradite Mr Appassamy? In view of the averment made in the judgement about the offence of conspiracy, would therefore new extradition procedures be envisaged or is Mr Appassamy, in fact, the untouchable one?

**The Prime Minister:** No! In fact, I said - and the hon. Member knows, but he wants to make innuendoes and allegations - that we will want the whole truth from the very beginning, that is, from 06 February. Let me say, from what I understand, the fraud took place even earlier than 06 February 2003. To answer the hon. Member's question directly, we will re-submit an application eventually for Mr Teeren Appassamy to be extradited.

**Mr Speaker:** Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Regarding the extradition of Mr Appassamy, since years there are many questions which have been put regarding the lawyer who represented the Government of Mauritius, but, up to now, we have never received the name of the person, be it through ICAC, more so that the request for extradition went through the Minister of Foreign Affairs as per the reply that we received in the House. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can give the name of the lawyer, even through ICAC, who represented the Republic of Mauritius in this case?

**The Prime Minister:** We will certainly be able to give the name if the hon. Member wants. But let me say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, in fact, it was on 13 April 2005 that a request for extradition of Mr Teeren Appassamy was officially referred to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs who forwarded it to the Home Office of the United Kingdom. Only on 13 April 2005 was there

such a request and I can go through the whole procedure as to how, eventually, Mr Appassamy was arrested in 2007.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a question?

**Mr Bérenger:** Whenever we propose a Commission of Inquiry - it has happened half a dozen times recently - every time the Prime Minister says: no, because we cannot act criminally - no one can be sued criminally on the basis - it would not be right to set up a Commission of Inquiry because the Police would have to restart the whole inquiry and so on and so forth. But, in this case, *comme par magie*, we are going to have, in due course, a Commission of Inquiry when the Supreme Court last Wednesday has already found the guilty parties. Will not the hon. Prime Minister agree with me, therefore, that the way forward is not a Commission of Inquiry ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Bérenger:** ... it is either a Select Committee which works and the Police can carry on or the Police restart the Police inquiry after the judgement of the Supreme Court last Wednesday, but *la meilleure façon de noyer le poisson venimeux dans l'eau* is through a Commission of Inquiry after all that the Prime Minister has said concerning Commissions of Inquiry.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am again surprised with the Leader of the Opposition. Every time he asks for Commission of Inquiry, why is it by *magie* this time, he does not want a Commission of Inquiry? He should want a Commission of Inquiry.

**Mr Bérenger:** In fact, the reason is simple.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order now! Order!

**Mr Bérenger:** Last Wednesday, there was a judgment from the Supreme Court of 200 pages. This is why we are now in a situation where the guilty had been identified by the Supreme Court. There is no need to waste time unless there is some other purpose. Why not, on the basis of that judgement, ask the Commissioner of Police to reopen inquiries?

**The Prime Minister:** Let me be clear on this, Mr Speaker, Sir. Who is saying that the Police are not inquiring? I did say the Police are inquiring. We are going to resubmit an application for the extradition of Mr Teeren Appassamy, but, in the meantime, instead of a Select Committee in the closed walls of the National Assembly, we want a full-fledged Commission of Inquiry with whatever terms we can agree with, as open as it can be, and we will know the result. But to add to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is also saying that there has been judgement, as I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir - and that is why I don't want to put a Commission of Inquiry at this point - there are 21 days where the person can appeal and I understand that he is going to appeal. That is what I read in the papers. There are also some other cases. But we will have to see when it will be appropriate to put the Commission of Inquiry, but I would want to put it during the term of this Government. That is why I say that I want the terms of reference, the law amended if need be.

**Mr Speaker:** Time is over! May I make an announcement? The Table has been advised that PQ No. 1B/226 has been withdrawn and that the Table has been further advised that PQ No. 1B/228 addressed to the hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations. Questions addressed to the Prime Minister! Hon. Dr. Sorefan! I want peace and quietness in this House now.

### **MBC – EMPLOYEES - INTERDICTION**

**(No. 1B/219) 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 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the number of employees who have been -
  - (i) suspended or interdicted since 2005 to date, and
  - (ii) reinstated to their posts, and
- (b) whether any employee has not been re-instated and, if so, the number thereof and the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that from 2005 to

date, 15 employees of the Corporation had been interdicted from the exercise of their duties. Two of them were interdicted twice during that period.

In regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, six employees have been reinstated in their respective posts and one employee has left the service of the Corporation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the Director-General that eight employees have not been reinstated so far.

Six of these employees would be required to appear before a Disciplinary Committee in view of the seriousness of the alleged offences once administrative formalities would have been finalised.

In the two other cases, the matter was referred to the Police as the alleged offences were of a criminal nature. The outcome of the Police inquiry in one of these two cases has been received and the Corporation is seeking legal advice on the course of action to be followed. In regard to the second case, the outcome of Police inquiry is awaited.

#### **RAMADAN – VISITING MAULANAS - VISA**

**(No. 1B/220) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to visiting *maulanas*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police if instead of a 30-day, a 40-day visa could be issued to them during the period of Ramadan.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, *maulanas* visiting Mauritius during the Ramadan period are eligible for a social visa for a period of 30 days. However, upon request, some *maulanas* are allowed to stay for a few more days.

I understand the point that the hon. Member is making that 30 days might not be enough – I think the hon. Member is talking about the Ramadan period. Extension of such social visas for *maulanas* during the Ramadan period will be looked at positively on a case to case basis and will be extended, if so requested.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the specific problem is, precisely, as he said, for the Ramadan period when the Hafiz come here to read the Quran. Then because Ramadan is exactly 30 days, the Hafiz have to leave on the very day of Eid, so they are not able to even celebrate Eid when

they have stayed here for 29 days and read the Quran. Would the hon. Prime Minister see to it, as the Ramadan period is coming soon, that the Hafiz are able to stay, at least, to celebrate Eid on the day of Eid?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the law says that you can have three types of visa. There is a tourist visa which, I think, is between two months and six months; there is a business which is up for three months, and then there is a social visa, which falls under the item social which is for one month. As the hon. Member has pointed out to us, we will extend that, especially if it falls under the Ramadan. It makes sense that we extend that period.

**PALM COURT, NHDC, PALMA & RÉSIDENCE BEAU SÉJOUR, QUATRE BORNES – CCTV - INSTALLATION**

(No. 1B/221) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, if consideration will be given for the installation of Close Circuits Television Surveillance System (CCTV) at –

- (a) Palm Court, NHDC, Palma, and
- (b) Résidence Beau Séjour, Quatre Bornes.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has already implemented the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Street Surveillance System in the Flic en Flac region since April 2009 and in strategic positions along the St. Jean Road in Quatre Bornes since December 2009. As the House is already aware, the project for the installation of a CCTV Street Surveillance System in Port Louis and Grand' Baie is under way and is expected to be completed by the end of August 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is fully committed to ensure the safety and security of our citizens as well as of visitors. This commitment has been reiterated in the Government Programme of 2010–2015 wherein we have announced our intention to extend the CCTV to other regions, particularly in high risk areas.

In this connection, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police are planning the project for the extension of the CCTV Surveillance System by taking into consideration the wider public interest and also the availability of funds.

Accordingly, the Police have prioritised the following areas where CCTV Street Surveillance System will be set up -

- (a) the towns of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill and their adjoining areas;
- (b) the tourist resort area starting from Belle Mare passing through Palmar to Trou d'Eau Douce, including Ile aux Cerfs;
- (c) the town of Curepipe and its adjoining areas and lateral areas;
- (d) the Mahebourg Waterfront and adjoining areas;
- (e) busy villages such as Goodlands, Central Flacq, Rivière du Rempart and Rose Belle which comprise market fairs and bus terminals and where socio-economic and commercial activities are on the increase, and
- (f) extension of the adjoining areas and lateral areas to the town of Quatre Bornes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, consideration will also be given to cover the two regions of Palm Court, NHDC Complex at Palma and Résidence Beau Séjour at Quatre Bornes. In fact, the Police said they could link the CCTV system of Quatre Bornes to that of Rose Hill when the system will be implemented and that will cover those areas.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the CCTV camera systems have for years in the UK, for example, been an important tool in combating crimes, stolen vehicles and so on. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is aware of matters of privacy and that is why in the UK for years now, there has been an independent regulator to supervise it all. But right now, I am sure he is aware, the debate is on for strengthening governance of the whole system, what kind of evidence is kept, for how long, under whose control and so on. Legislation is being prepared right now. Has the hon. Prime Minister given consideration to the possibility of bringing in regulations or legislation to regulate the use for privacy purposes, the use of CCTV cameras?

**The Prime Minister:** We have to look at the two. On the one side, there is privacy which I am also very concerned with as the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said. But, on the other hand, there is the public interest that we have to look at. In fact, I was surprised, in the UK, Mr Speaker, Sir, this has come out that now they want to put microphones together with the CCTV so that they will listen to what people are saying. That goes even further than the CCTV cameras. But we will certainly have to look at this. And we will have to balance on the one side the privacy interests, but, on the other hand, the public interests.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Sir, may I just ask one last supplementary? In view of the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister, and because the Government Programme talks about high risk areas, would the hon. Prime Minister consider that those areas, where citizens complain about drug smuggling and so on and so forth, be given the highest priority?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, that is why we consider some of the areas as priorities, because not only there are thefts, larcenies and all this, but also people possibly dealing with drugs. So, that is why we want to cover those areas as well.

### **VICTORIA & SSRN HOSPITALS – POST MORTEM EXAMINATIONS**

**(No. 1B/222) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to post mortem examinations which are presently being carried out at the Victoria and SSRN Hospitals, he will state if Government is envisaging to extend these services to other hospitals.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that at present, post-mortem examinations are carried out at SSRN Hospital, Pamplemousses and Victoria Hospital, Candos. The two mortuary houses located at these hospitals, it is felt, are properly equipped with appropriate facilities for conducting autopsies in hospital and medico-legal cases.

Post-mortem examinations which used to take place also at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital will resume at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital on completion of phase I of the hospital which is scheduled for December of this year.

Although it is felt, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the number of existing mortuary houses is adequate for the whole country, I understand why the hon. Member might have put that question. Consideration will be given for mortuary facilities to be made available at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital and Flacq Hospital in due course.

### **AMBASSADORS/ADVISERS - ACTIVE POLITICS**

**(No. 1B/223) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to active politics, he will state if Ambassadors and Advisers are allowed to engage therein.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer is in the negative in the context of existing policy whereby Ambassadors and Advisers are not allowed to engage in active politics while in office.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister what will be his stand concerning advisers from his own office if we come forward with evidence concerning their taking part in the last general election?

**The Prime Minister:** The one political adviser in my office that I suppose the hon. Member is referring to is Dr. Jhurry. He resigned before the election.

### **MBC – EMPLOYEES - TERMS & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**(No. 1B/224) 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 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the number of employees employed on –
  - (i) a full time;
  - (ii) part time basis, and
- (b) their respective posts and their terms and conditions of employment.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have one supplementary question for the hon. Prime Minister. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that a Chief Executive Officer of a parastatal body is also doing part time at the MBC? Is it normal that a Chief Executive Officer of a parastatal body is engaged as part-timer at the MBC/TV?

**The Prime Minister:** Offhand like this, I do not see why this cannot take place, but I can look into the matter if the hon. Member will refer the names specifically to me, privately, maybe.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Not at a private level, Sir, but a Chief Executive Officer of a parastatal body cannot go and engage as a part-timer.

**The Prime Minister:** I don't know under what section the hon. Member is referring to.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** I will tell the hon. Prime Minister where he is engaged. It is in a Hindi emission – ‘*Woh din Yaad Karo*’. A Chief Executive Officer of a parastatal body is engaged in that particular programme and we want to know how much is being paid to that officer?

**The Prime Minister:** I understand he believes he can sing very well, Mr Speaker, Sir. That’s what my understanding is. I am not saying I agree with it, but I understand that he believes he can sing very well.

*(Interruptions)*

Whether people believe he can sing very well is another matter.

**Mr Speaker:** I don’t think the hon. Member can stop me if I want to go and sing at the MBC.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** You are laughing. It is our hundred rupees which pay that gentleman.

*(Interruptions)*

He is earning Rs200,000 monthly...

**Mr Speaker:** Mr Bhagwan, please!

**Mr Bhagwan:** But let the hon. Prime Minister inquire. He is not singing, but he is making other people sing!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** I will certainly inquire into it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, I can say to the hon. Member now that the person he is referring to is about to be replaced where he is at the moment.

#### **WORLD ANTI-DRUG ABUSE DAY - CATHÉDRALE ST. LOUIS SQUARE**

**(No. 1B/225) 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 the 23rd celebration of the World Anti-drug Abuse Day by the *Mouvement Anti-Drogue* at *Cathédrale* St. Louis Square in Port Louis, on or about Saturday 26 June 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether the projection of a film on the Prevention Against Drug Abuse was prohibited by the Police and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 24 June 2010, he received a letter dated 22 June signed by Messrs I. D. and A. L. representing the "*Mouvement Anti-Drogue*", in which they sought for authorisation to hold a public gathering on Saturday 26 June of this year from 18.30 hrs to 22.00 hrs, at the "*Place de la Cathédrale de Port Louis*". The activity was to be organised in the context of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

On 25 June 2010, that is, one day before, Mr A. L. called at the Metropolitan South Police Division and gave a statement in which he confirmed the organisation of the public gathering on 26 June, that is, the next day. He also stated that a public address system would be utilised as there would be addresses by social workers, a show by local artists and the projection of a film on a giant screen. He requested for Police assistance during the gathering and undertook to abide by all Police directives and obtain all necessary clearances prior to the date of the event.

On the same date, he submitted to the Police, clearances from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Mauritius Society of Authors and the *Cathédrale* St. Louis. However, no clearance from the Film Classification Board was produced for the projection of the film.

On 26 June 2010, the Police informed Mr A. L. of its no objection to the holding of the public gathering. However, no authorisation was granted for the projection of the film in view of the fact that no certificate of exhibition issued by the Film Classification Board in accordance with the provisions of the Films Act of 2002 had been submitted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the "*Mouvement Anti-Drogue*" held its gathering in the private compound of "*La Cure de la Cathédrale Saint Louis*", and publicly projected the 30 minute clip on a giant screen in spite of the fact that it had not obtained the prior approval of the Films Classification Board. The Police have, therefore, initiated an enquiry in the matter.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if any person has been arrested in relation to the film diffused?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody is above the law in this country whoever he is and if the law has been broken the Police are enquiring, if they have to arrest, they will arrest.

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister is stating that there is a projection of a film in the yard of the parish. Is this considered to be a public place?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member is asking for an opinion from the hon. Prime Minister. This is not allowed.

## NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION/SEX DISCRIMINATION DIVISION – MEMBERS

**(No. 1B/226) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission and the Sex Discrimination Division thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information, in each case, as to -

- (a) the names of the members, and
- (b) their respective date of appointment.

*(Withdrawn)*

## PRISONS – AMMUNITIONS & EQUIPMENT - PURCHASE

**(No. 1B/227) 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 the protection of Prison Officers whilst on duty, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the last time ammunitions and equipment were purchased.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that several equipment and ammunitions are available for use by the Prison officers for their protection in accordance with the existing protocol.

I am also apprised that equipment and ammunitions were last purchased by the Prisons Department in March 2003, to add to the existing ones. In addition, a few other equipment have been issued on loan by the Police Department in February and June of this year. The existing protective equipments are resistant to wear and tear and have a long life span.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the events of last week at the Grand River North West Prison, I have given instruction that a comprehensive organisational audit of our prisons should be carried out. In the light of this exercise, consideration will be given for the acquisition of such other security equipment, as may be necessary.

I should also add that a security audit, in fact, had been started on 01 March 2010, that is, before the problem arose. But the organisational audit has been requested to the Office of Public Sector Governance on 30 June 2010.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I have heard the hon. Prime Minister say that no new security equipment for the prison service has been purchased since 2003. And then, he added - if I heard him correctly – that only this year twice the Police lent equipment to the prison services. Can I know which equipment that was?

**The Prime Minister:** I don't know whether it would be proper to say exactly what equipment. In fact, I have talked to President Sarkozy when he was Interior Minister and he had agreed that certain equipment being used in France could be used here. Here, we find some legal impediments to, in fact, having those equipment and we are looking into that. But all the equipment were given by the Police.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who shall have the responsibility of the security audit on the prisons? Is it going to be the same officers who have done it before or is it going to be an independent Body?

**The Prime Minister:** Because it touches security, Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to have the expertise to be able to do that security audit. We are looking at not the same persons, but Police from the Police Force would be included in that.

**Mr Bérenger:** The question is simple. The hon. Prime Minister himself went out of his way to say that this security audit had started before the Grand River Prison mutiny. If it started before, some people must have been doing the work. Can we be informed who they are?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I can give the names of who are the people. I don't have the names with me here, but I can give the hon. Member the names of who were involved in the security audit and also for the organisational audit. As I said, the office of public sector governance should have a new name for it. But also perhaps in the security of audit, there has been a committee which was set up under the chairmanship of the National Security Adviser.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in respect to Prison officers who have contact with inmates who have AIDS, whether special equipment are being provided to protect these officers?

**The Prime Minister:** What equipment did the hon. Member have in mind?

**Mr Uteem:** Some officers have been complaining that they are being threatened by their inmates with AIDS; they use syringes and so on. I don't know whether any protection gloves could be provided to them. I would like to know whether there is any inquiry made to find out whether special equipment need to be provided to these officers.

**The Prime Minister:** I think this issue was raised when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister. If the hon. Member will remember, there was an attempt to attack Inspector Tuyau with a syringe which was contaminated. All these were linked into. That's why I asked the hon. Member what specific equipment else can be provided.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in the course of the audit, consideration is also given to the whole telecommunication network and the transport service within the Police department?

**The Prime Minister:** All this is being looked at, Mr Speaker, Sir.

#### **INDUSTRIAL COURT – EMPLOYEES - LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

**(No. 1B/228) 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 the Legal Aid Act, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments thereto with a view to making provision for employees to benefit from legal assistance in litigations before the Industrial Court.

*(Withdrawn)*

**PRISONS – DETAINEES – NUMBER & EXPENSES INCURRED**

(No. 1B/229) Mr R. Issack (Fourth Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to detainees in the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to -

- (a) the number of male and female thereof in each prison, and
- (b) the annual average expenses incurred by the State per detainee.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that the prison population for Mauritius and Rodrigues, as at 01 July 2010 stands at 2,308 male and 136 female detainees in the nine prisons and one Correctional Youth Centre as follows -

| <u>INSTITUTION</u>                   | <u>MALE</u> | <u>FEMALE</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Central Prison, Beau Bassin          | 1336        | Nil           |
| New Wing, Beau Bassin Prison         | 233         | Nil           |
| Grand River North West Remand Prison | 322         | Nil           |
| Richelieu Open Prison                | 84          | Nil           |
| Petit Verger Prison                  | 256         | Nil           |
| Phoenix Prison                       | 18          | Nil           |
| Women Prison                         | Nil         | 136           |
| Correctional Youth Centre            | 32          | Nil           |
| Rodrigues Prison (Male)              | 27          | Nil           |
| Rodrigues Prison (Female)            | Nil         | Nil           |

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the annual average expenses incurred by the State per detainee are Rs138,733.

**Mr Issack:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many detainees are foreigners?

**The Prime Minister:** There are some, but I don't have the list with me. For the foreigners, in certain countries, we have an agreement. Some countries don't want to have the agreement with us. But I can tell the hon. Member - I don't think they have given me the exact number - I have answered a question on this in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I can certainly give you the number of people who are of foreign nationality and who are actually in the prisons.

### **PRISONS – BOARD OF VISITORS**

**(No. 1B/230) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Board of Visitors for each of the prison institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number of Boards which have been established as at to date, indicating in each case -

- (a) their composition;
- (b) the name of the Chairperson;
- (c) the number of meetings held and the number of visits effected by the Board to its respective institution since first January 2010 to date.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, section 53 of the Reform Institutions Act provides for the establishment for every institution of a Board of Visitors as may be necessary. A Board of Visitors assigned to a prison shall be composed of not less than three Magistrates, a Law Officer and four other members, three of whom shall not hold public office.

Section 53(3) of the Reform Institution Act provides that a Board of Visitors assigned to a Correctional Youth Centre shall be composed of not less than eight members. Both Boards were last constituted in 2003.

I should point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are in the process of setting up the National Preventive Mechanism whose main functions 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 and to make recommendations regarding the improvement of the treatment of detainees. The National Preventive Mechanism which is about to be set up will thus take over the functions of the Visiting Boards.

In this regard, a draft legislation has been prepared for the establishment of the National Preventive Mechanism and is now being finalised in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. We hope to introduce this legislation as soon as this process is over.

This is in line with the Government Programme 2010-2015, where we have stated that, as part of our obligations under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations' Convention against Torture, Mauritius will set up a National Preventive Mechanism which will ensure that the conditions prevailing in our prisons, Police cells and other places of detention comply with the human rights obligations and the provisions of the protocol.

I should also like to point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the National Human Rights Commission is also empowered to visit any Police station, prison or other place of detention under the control of the State to study the living conditions of the inmates and the treatment afforded to them.

I am informed that the National Human Rights Commission has since 2005 to date effected 16 visits to the prisons.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the announcement of the hon. Prime Minister of setting up this new mechanism confirms, in fact, that the other structures set up in the Reform Institutions Act have not worked properly in the past. The problem is that we can set up as many mechanisms as we want to, like the ones to be found in the Reform Institutions Act, but the question is practically how will these institutions work. True it is that this is the first time that such a measure is being announced, but, in practice, if these institutions had worked in the prisons, I don't think we would have reached where we are today. The question I am putting to the hon. Prime Minister is: what guarantee can he give to the House that, in practice, the new mechanism that he is proposing to set up will, in fact, work?

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member knows very well that the Prime Minister has just said that he will bring a Bill to the House. The question, that the hon. Member has asked, goes against the rule of anticipation. I think that he will have to wait for the Bill to come to the House, and then raise that point and, perhaps, move for amendments.

**Mr Ganoo:** The Prime Minister has said that this Body will be set up by legislation. Does he have an idea of the constitution of the Body? For example, will it be made up of lawyers, magistrates?

**Mr Speaker:** That again infringes the rule of anticipation! Next question!

### **PRISONS – ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY**

(No. 1B/231) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the prison institutions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information, in each case, as to –

- (a) the accommodation capacity;
- (b) the actual number of inmates;
- (c) the number of detainees on remand, and
- (d) the number of prison officers in post.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

**Mr Speaker:** Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Seetaram!

### **TROU D'EAU DOUCE/BEL AIR – BUS SERVICE**

(No. 1B/232) **Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to public transport from Trou d'Eau Douce to Bel Air, he will state if he is aware of the hardships caused to the students and elderly persons of the region as a result of the absence of bus services thereat and, if so, will he consider the introduction of a bus service to serve that route.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, following request from inhabitants of Trou d'Eau Douce and Bel Air, the NTA was requested to look into the nature of the problems faced by them. I am pleased to inform the House that the issues raised have been addressed to the satisfaction of the inhabitants.

### **CAROLINE, ECROIGNARD & BRAMSTHAN - WATER SUPPLY**

(No. 1B/233) **Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to

water supply, he will state if he is aware of the irregularity and quality thereof in the region of Caroline, Ecoignard and Bramsthan and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial actions that will be taken.

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the region of Caroline, Ecoignard and Bramsthan are supplied from Caroline borehole, which is operated on a 24-hour basis. I am aware that water supply in the region needs to be improved, and that some 50 houses in Upper Ecoignard do not receive adequate water supply because they are situated on high elevation, and valve operations are carried out daily to supply these consumers.

The Central Water Authority is implementing a project to pump water from Caroline borehole to the new Belle Rose Clemencia Service reservoir. Two separate pipelines will be laid from that reservoir to supply the regions in question.

I am glad to inform the House that the contract has already been awarded to Sotravic for the value of Rs69 m., and works are expected to be completed in May 2011. Upon completion of the works, water supply will be substantially improved in the region.

#### **GLEN PARK-CUREPIPE – LINK ROAD**

**(No. 1B/234) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the link road from Glen Park to Curepipe via Pont Malakoff, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the expected date of completion thereof.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a new proposal, which requires a preliminary study on the proposed alignment. In addition, a feasibility study needs also to be carried out.

#### **QUARTIER MILITAIRE – SWIMMING POOL**

**(No. 1B/235) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the construction of a swimming pool at Quartier Militaire, he will state where matters stand.

**The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am going to answer to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a plot of land of an extent of 8,354 m<sup>2</sup> at Quartier Militaire has been vested with my Ministry for the construction of a swimming pool. The project has so far not been implemented due to unavailability of funds.

However, I have been informed by the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands that this project will be funded and implemented by the Local Infrastructure Fund.

I am also informed that a geotechnical study will be carried out to assess the suitability of the land for the project. The Local Infrastructure Fund will hire the services of a specialist contractor for the study. Bids to that effect are being evaluated.

**Mr Dayal:** Can I know from the hon. Minister when the geotechnical study will be carried out?

**Mr Ritoo:** It is actually being studied, Sir.

### **MGSS, MOKA - FOOTBALL GROUND**

**(No. 1B/236) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a football ground at Mahatma Gandhi State Secondary School at Moka, he will state where matters stand, indicating the estimated cost and the expected dates of commencement and completion of the works.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the construction of a football ground forms part of the Phase IV of the construction project at Mahatma Gandhi Secondary School (MGSS), Moka, which comprises also a Dance/Music Block, Communication, Design Technology/Home Economics Block, and a Computer/Library Block.

Given that similar Phase IV of the construction projects have also to be implemented at the MGSSs at Nouvelle France, Solferino and Flacq, my Ministry and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping adopted a holistic approach with a view to harmonising the works to be undertaken and to be provided to these schools remaining facilities.

I am informed that this fourth phase of the MGSS at Moka will cost around Rs142 m. I am also informed that, presently, the MPI is working on the detailed drawings and draft bidding documents for the Phase IV works in these MGSSs. It is expected that bidding documents will be finalised in October 2010, and tenders will be launched in November 2010.

Works are expected to start in February 2011. I would like to point out that, during implementation, the football ground will be undertaken in the first part of the project. According to this time frame, the football ground could be completed by August 2011, should the tendering exercise and implementation of the project proceed smoothly, of course.

#### **MOKA BYPASS - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. 1B/237) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of the Moka bypass, from Réduit to Verdun, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Bachoo:** The RDA is working on the feasibility and design of the project, which is expected to be completed in September this year.

#### **JEAN LEBRUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – EXTENSION WORKS**

**(No. 1B/238) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Jean Lebrun Government School, he will state -

- (a) the cost of the Phase I extension work;
- (b) when the Phase II construction works are expected to start, indicating -
  - (i) its duration;
  - (ii) the cost thereof, and
- (c) where matters stand in relation to the upgrading of its football ground, indicating if money has already been earmarked.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), the answer is Rs21.8 m.

Regarding part (b), works are expected to start by end of November 2010 and completed by end of July 2012. The estimated cost of works is around Rs62 m.

As regards the upgrading of the football ground, my Ministry has earmarked funds for the implementation of the project. The National Development Unit (NDU) of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping, has already carried out a survey, and is now working on the design, scope of works and the cost estimates, which would be ready by next month.

**STC - MILK POWDER - DESTRUCTION**

**(No. 1B/239) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) whether the Corporation has recently proceeded with the destruction of forty-five tonnes of milk powder, brand name Oasis, at Mare Chicose, and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) whether appropriate clearances were obtained from the authorities prior to its importation.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that, on the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, 40 metric tonnes of milk of Oasis brand were destroyed on 14 May 2010, as they did not comply with the Regulations 39(a) and (d) and 270 of the GN 173 of 1999.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that, before importation of the milk, a sample had been sent to the Food Importation Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, and was analysed by the Government Analyst Division. The test found that the full cream milk powder complied with the Food Regulations GN 173 of 1999, and was free from vegetable fats or starch materials.

However, when the consignment was received on 13 April 2008, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life found that -

- (i) the milk did not comply with the food regulations;
- (ii) the milk powder which was labelled “instant full cream milk” was not full cream, though it was labelled “instant full cream milk”. It was found to be *filled milk*, in which the milk fat had been replaced by vegetable fat, and
- (iii) the milk packet did not mention the country of origin.

STC made a claim for refund to the supplier Qingdao United Dairy, which has agreed to refund the total cost.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Minister inform the House of the amount of loss incurred in purchasing and destroying this milk powder?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned there was no loss, and the total cost was Rs3,752,136.

### **RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL & CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

**(No. 1B/240) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether he will state if, for the period 2005 to December 2009, his Ministry has given any allowances, grants or other financial assistance to any religious, social, cultural or other organisation and, if so, give in each case, the details of the amounts and the reasons therefor.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Ministry, in pursuit of its objectives to meet the population's needs for leisure and to ensure that maximum leisure opportunities are accessible to one and all, has been adopting a two-pronged approach. First, activities have been organised at local and national level and, second, sponsorship is extended to various organisations, upon request, through the provision of financial assistance, towards meeting the costs of the leisure components of activities organised by them.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that, in this regard, my Ministry very frequently receives requests from various organisations, including religious, social and cultural throughout the island, to sponsor their activities or the leisure components of these activities. The Ministry examines these requests on their merits and, on being satisfied that they are *bona fide* organisations and that the activities which they propose to organise will really provide moments of leisure to the target communities, in these cases, the Ministry approves those requests either *in toto*, or partly contribute towards the costs of such activities.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am also informed that some 75 organisations throughout the island have benefited from such assistance since 2005 to date. The amount of financial contribution depends on availability of funds, nature of the activities organised, the total costs involved, the targeted audience, the financial resources of the organisation, etc. On average, my Ministry has disbursed around Rs400,000 annually over the past five years to support financially the leisure activities organised by various organisations. Examples of sponsorship extended are as follows -

- Defenders Social and Welfare for the organisation of Qawali night;
- Brahma Kumari Raja Yoga Centre for family health campaign awareness;

- Rotary Club of Quatre Bornes for the sponsorship of activities for employees of the Tourism Sector;
- Anglican Diocese of Mauritius for Christmas celebrations;
- Tamil Federation for the celebration of Varusha Pirappu;
- Sunnee Mosque for Eid celebration;
- Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture for *Journée Internationale Kréol*;
- *Association Jeunesse Sud* for Regatta Festival;
- Black River & Plaine Wilhems Kivil Organisation for leisure event, and
- *L'Ombre de la Lumière* for the organisation of a concert in the context of World Women's Day Celebration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the detailed information being requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and, with your permission, will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

#### **NDU - CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

**(No. 1B/241) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to construction works carried out by his Ministry, he will, for each of the past five years, give a list thereof, indicating in each case-

- (a) the cost, and
- (b) if tendering procedures were followed.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the House.

The tendering procedures have been followed where appropriate.

#### **GAMBLING HOUSES – RELOCATION**

**(No. 1B/242) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development

whether, in regard to the relocation of gambling activities as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, he will state if -

- (a) the designated areas have already been identified, and
- (b) a time frame has been set for the closure of gaming houses in residential and commercial areas.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, this Government is firmly committed to protecting the society at large from the harm and unintended consequences of gambling and its associated ills. To this effect, Government has set up a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the hon. Prime Minister to examine the proliferation of gaming houses and discotheques in the country. A Technical Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service has also been set up along the lines, and I am informed that it has submitted its Report for consideration to the High Level Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, pending the carrying out of the necessary financial, legal and social assessments as regards the specific zones to be identified for the purpose of relocation of gaming houses, all measures are being taken to ensure the strict monitoring of gambling activities in the country and the enforcement of the provisions of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act 2007.

Furthermore, as the House is aware, no new licences for the running of gaming houses, betting shops and discotheques are being issued until further notice.

I also wish to inform the House that prior to the setting up of the Gambling Regulatory Authority, there was an established monitoring mechanism that was used to comprise at that time of the ex-VAT Department, the URB Squad and Officers from the Gaming Board, to ensure that the conditions of licences issued were being complied with. The responsibility for these activities was subsequently vested in the GRA.

In view of the pressing need to strengthen the monitoring mechanism, it is envisaged to reinforce the Inspectorate Division of the GRA to increase the frequency of inspections that are carried out for the collaboration of the relevant Authorities.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that new licences are not being issued. What about licences that come to expiration, are these being renewed or are these not being renewed?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, on a case to case basis, we will have to seek the advice of the SLO in order to take appropriate decisions.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a known fact that these gambling activities are causing havoc in Mauritius. We have discussed lengthily in the House, more than one year, concerning the problems raised at Quatre Bornes, Ti-Vegas, at Vacoas recently and even in my constituency. Can we have a definite time frame from the hon. Minister? Because the people of Mauritius must know exactly the timetable of Government as far as this issue is concerned, its implementation, its recommendations and when, at least, concrete action will be taken concerning Ti-Vegas, the one in Vacoas and even in Beau Bassin?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I have just replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Technical Committee has submitted its report to the High Powered Committee and I have, in fact, the recommendations of the Technical Committee. There are few things that we have to look at further with regard to certain matters and, of course, it will have to follow its procedure. The High Powered Committee will look at all these recommendations. It will also have to go to Cabinet for approval and then we will come up with the new policy.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House who will bear the cost of these relocation activities? Is it the State or operators themselves?

**Mr Jugnauth:** It is again subject to the recommendations that have been made. In the light of these recommendations, we will analyse the implications of those recommendations and we will come up with decisions that have to be taken and then we will know.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that the Government Programme talks about relocation and the question is about time frame and given that the GRA is already in presence of the expiry dates of several of these gaming and gambling houses, would the hon. Minister be agreeable to table in the House the expiry dates of these licences - because the licences are not forever - and whether the relocation can be made as and when these licences expire, as the hon. Minister has said on a case to case basis? Would the hon. Minister be agreeable to table the expiry dates of all the lists of these gaming houses?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no problem with tabling the required information to the House.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether one of the areas identified by that committee for Quatre Bornes is the Ebène area? Ebène area is not only the Cybercity; it is also a most residential zone on the extremity of Ebène.

*(Interruptions)*

Let the hon. Minister reply! You are no longer a Minister!

**Mr Speaker:** I know that you know.

**Mr Jugnauth:** I do not want to pre-empt what the hon. Member is saying but, of course, again, I will refer the House to the recommendations that will have to be looked at by the High Powered Committee. Whatever site identified will have to be looked at very carefully by the Committee.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, sometimes I am ignored because the way you sit...

*(Interruptions)*

Does the hon. Minister share with me my concern about students taking part in gambling activities? If yes, what action does he intend to take for that purpose? Are we going to ban, at least, gambling activities, during school hours?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is precisely because the Government is concerned that there was the setting up of this High Powered Committee together with the Technical Committee. As I said, it is a matter that we have to look at within the framework of the law and, therefore, we will have to act. We are all concerned about the ill effects of gambling on our youngsters.

*At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQ No.1B/228 has been withdrawn.

#### **EBENE CYBERCITY - LAND LEASE – BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. 1B/243) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to land at Ebène Cybercity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Park of Mauritius Limited (BPML), information as to -

- (a) the names and addresses of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating in each case -
  - (i) the extent of land leased;
  - (ii) rent payable, and
  - (iii) the amount of deposit made and the date;
- (b) the description of the project, indicating, when the approval of the Board was obtained, and
- (c) the list of cases where construction has not yet started.

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** The question has various components which call for detailed information on land leased at the Ebène Cybercity. It requires the compilation of details about the names and addresses of beneficiaries, the extent of land leased, the rent payable, the amount of deposit made and the date such deposit was made, the description of the project and the date on which the Board approved of the lease and the proposed development as well as the listing down of all the cases where construction works have not yet started.

I have caused the relevant information to be updated and compiled, and in one week's time, it will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Since the Minister has assumed office, has he been informed of the number of plots on which construction works have not yet started?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Speaker, Sir, taking into consideration the numerous components the question contains and also the number of beneficiaries involved in that project, I cannot off-hand give detailed and precise information about the individual cases. But, in the circumstances, if my friend had been more precise in respect of a particular case, I could have given him all the details he wanted at one go, but my friend will bear with me that on the next occasion he will get it.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I am sure. I know that the Minister has just assumed office, but I will advise him to have a trip there not only as Minister responsible, but both in his capacity as Minister and also as a citizen of Mauritius and see what is happening.

*(Interruptions)*

You were in India; you were not in Mauritius all these years, so shut up!

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this Cybercity area, in this triangle, especially at the Cybercity, there are lots of problems. Is the Minister aware or can he go into the files and

inquire as to whether there have been fictitious names used for the leasing of land and whether he is aware that the Chief Executive is actually under the scrutiny of ICAC?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to look into it and, in due course, I will inform the House accordingly because I don't want to mislead the House. It is only now that the hon. Member is saying what he has just said. I am going to do it in due course.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, I think that the Minister has explained his predicament and I allowed you a few supplementary questions to highlight to the Minister certain information that you have. I will allow you one more supplementary, but he stated that he will have to compile the information.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Cybercity is a very delicate subject. I have two questions about the national interest. Is the Minister aware that a permit has been given for the construction of a filling station within the Cybercity area? Does the Minister find this normal? And in the compilation of the relevant information which he has agreed to lay on the Table of the Assembly in one week, can he let us know about the situation concerning the construction of a *station de service d'essence à l'intérieur de la Cybercité* and who is the promoter? Is it a blue-eyed boy or somebody else?

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into it and I will apprise the House of the situation on the next occasion.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The nation, not me!

**Mr Pillay Chedumbrum:** Of course, my friend!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware of the problem within the Cybercity as far as traffic congestion is concerned. This is linked with the portion of plots.

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, here we are concerned about the beneficiaries, their names and addresses, deposits made and whether construction has just started. The hon. Member should come with a specific question.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, there were plots reserved for the construction of parking space and none has been constructed. So, I am asking the Minister to see to it and inform the House as to where matters are concerning the construction of the parking space?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Unfortunately, we don't have the information which perhaps the hon. Member has.

**Mr Bhagwan:** He has agreed today that he will give the information in one week. That is why I have made another request.

**The Deputy Speaker:** If it is another request, then there is no problem. Next question!

### **FERNEY & QUATRE SOEURS – FLOODING**

**(No. 1B/244) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the difficulties encountered by the road users in the region of Ferney and Quatre Soeurs due to flooding and, if so, will he state the actions that will be taken to address the issue, indicating the time frame.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, work on site at Ferney has already started and it will be completed in December 2010.

The design for the bridge at Quatre Soeurs is being finalised and works are expected to start by August 2010 and completed in December 2010. The cost of the project is above Rs50 m.

### **NATIONAL PARKS & CONSERVATION FUND**

**(No. 1B/245) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the National Parks and Conservation Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to –

- (a) the amount of money held in that Fund as at to date;
- (b) its objectives, and
- (c) the amount of money spent for each of the last four years, indicating in each case, the projects.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, as at 30 June 2010, an amount of Rs103,173,957.70 is available in the National Parks and Conservation Fund.

As regards part (b), the National Parks and Conservation Fund has been established under section 25 of the Wildlife and National Parks Act of 1993, and the funds therein can be used only for the payment of any expenses which may be incurred by the Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service in performing his functions under the Act.

As regards part (c), I am tabling the financial statements regarding the amount of money spent by the National Parks and Conservation Fund in respect of the projects undertaken during the last four years.

### **BATTLE OF VIEUX GRAND PORT - BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION**

**(No. 1B/246) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the celebrations marking the Bicentenary of the Battle of Vieux Grand Port, he will state whether –

- (a) the inhabitants of Vieux Grand Port will be involved therein and, if so, how, and
- (b) the activities will benefit the region, indicating how.

**Mr Choonee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Commemoration of the Bicentenary of the Battle of Grand Port will be held from 30 July to 29 August at Pointe Canon, Mahebourg, opposite the bay where the battle took place. The inhabitants of Mahebourg and the surrounding localities are fully involved in the infrastructural works, which are being carried out at the venue since the last three months. In fact, more than 90% of the infrastructural and artistic works are being executed by the people in the surrounding area. Manpower from the same region, including Vieux Grand Port, will be recruited to service the event in different capacities such as guides, hostesses, cashiers and manual workers. The recruitment exercise is presently being finalised by the Grand Port 2010 Co. Ltd, company set up by Government to organise the event. Performing artists of Mahebourg, Vieux Grand Port and the surrounding region will occupy a prominent position in the daily programmes to be held.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, this important historic event will definitely put this part of the country in the limelight for one month, and will attract a great number of tourists besides Mauritians. A massive publicity campaign has already started since April on all Air Mauritius and Air France flights, to sensitise incoming tourists on the commemoration and its venue. Tourists visiting the site will also visit the historical sites of Vieux Grand Port. The Frederik Hendrik Museum at Vieux Grand Port will benefit from a huge fibre glass dodo bird as a special attraction after the event.

Tour operators who have been approached have agreed to arrange for organised trips, which will include the Vieux Grand Port region. It is expected that sales through the movement of people attending the event and visiting Vieux Grand Port will increase substantially.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also highlight the fact that, after the event, a number of tangible outcomes in terms of permanent cultural infrastructure will remain in Mahebourg for the benefit of Mauritians altogether and people of the region in particular. These will comprise -

- (i) a museum on the peopling of Mauritius, depicting the different stages of our history, through huge panels, *figurines* and film projections;
- (ii) a permanent *Table d'Orientation* at Pointe des Régates, showing major features of the battle in the bay of Grand Port;
- (iii) the existing basic open amphitheatre at Pointe Canon will be provided with a covered roof and latest sound and light system. It will thus become more functional and operational, and will allow the organisation of cultural and social activities, and
- (iv) 3 *arpents* of bush land at Pointe Canon, which was a real *danger public*, as it was a potential den for drug addicts, has been converted into a public garden, where the inhabitants of the region will be able to relax during their leisure time.

These cultural infrastructures are mainly tourist focused, and will increase the tourist attraction in the region of Mahebourg and Vieux Grand Port.

### **SOLAR WATER HEATER FINANCING SCHEME**

**(No. 1B/247) 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 Solar Water Heater Financing Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius, information as to -

- (a) whether the scheme is still operational and, if so, indicate –
  - (i) the eligibility criteria, and
  - (ii) the amount of the grant per beneficiary, and
- (b) the duration of the scheme.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM), that the first financing scheme regarding solar water heater, following the 2008-2009 Budget Speech, which should have been closed on 31 December 2009 was, in fact, extended till 31 March 2010, to enable all registered suppliers to complete all installations prior to disbursements.

However, the second financing scheme, as announced in the Budget Speech 2010, is not yet operational.

The eligibility criteria for both schemes are the same, that is, open to all households and to non-profit making residential charitable institutions, such as orphanages, shelters, etc.

With regard to part (a) of the question, as regards the amount of the grant per beneficiary, I am informed that the grant for the first scheme was Rs10,000 per solar water heater, to encourage people to switch from electricity and gas to renewable source of energy. For the second scheme, the grant per solar water heater has been brought to Rs5,000, to cater for a greater number of households.

As for part (b), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the duration of the scheme is concerned, I am informed that the first one was for a period of 21 months, that is, from July 2008 to March 2010. But, for the second scheme, it is not time bound but limited to 50,000 beneficiaries, as Rs250 m. have been earmarked for that purpose.

#### **MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS - RESIGNATION**

**(No. 1B/248) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Municipal Councillors, he will state the number thereof who have resigned or lost their seats since October 2005 to date.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **HOSPITALS - CEREBRAL ANGIOGRAPHY**

**(No. 1B/249) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she will state if cerebral angiography as a major investigative procedure for person suffering from cerebral haemorrhage, is performed in our hospitals.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that cerebral angiography can be categorised into –

- CT (Computerised Tomograph) Angiography;
- MRA (Magnetic Resonance Angiography),
- DSA (Digital Subtraction Angiography).

Computerised Tomograph and Magnetic Resonance Angiography are performed in our hospitals as screening tests in case of traumatic or hypertensive cerebral haemorrhage.

As regards Digital Subtraction Angiography, it is not presently available in our hospitals in view of the high cost of the equipment and lack of trained personnel in this field. Such cases are referred abroad for investigation and treatment.

However, with the coming into operation of a new Neurosurgery Unit at Victoria Hospital by the end of 2011, it is planned to provide cerebral angiography services to patients.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Has the hon. Minister been made aware that all that is needed is a software and the human resources to be able to conduct the cerebral angiography? Many cases that actually get referred to India for treatment are returned to Mauritius, because when the cerebral angiography is performed in India, it is found they should never have been sent there in the first place.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not the information that I have. I have been told that cerebral angiography is something very complex. We have a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Vimhans, New Delhi and Apollo Hospital, Chennai, and this is where we send all our patients. Up to now, we have not had any patients who have come back and said that they have been ill-treated or not been treated well.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Can I have the number of patients who actually have had cerebral angiography performed over the past two years?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** From the year 2005 to date, some 297 neurosurgery cases, including cerebral haemorrhage, have been referred for treatment overseas and, as I said, mostly to India. But we have not separated cases of cerebral angiography from neurosurgery cases.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** For the sake of the patients, I would be most grateful if the hon. Minister could table, eventually, the list of patients who have had cerebral angiography in Mauritius over the past - as she says - five years.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Not in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As I said, we have not had these cases of cerebral angiography done in Mauritius. The cases have been referred to India.

### **HYPERTENSION & NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS - PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS**

**(No. 1B/250) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to pharmaceutical products, especially for non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and neurological disorders, she will state if regular inventories are carried out to ascertain the availability and to avoid any possible shortage thereof.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in line with established stores procedures, an appropriate Stock Monitoring System is already in place at the Central Supplies Division of my Ministry to constantly monitor the stock level of all drugs to ensure, amongst others, continuous availability in our hospitals and health centres.

In this regard, regular stock taking is carried out by officers of the Stock Control Unit of my Ministry.

Inventory reports on drugs reaching critical stock level, i.e. less than three months, are regularly submitted to the Pharmaceutical Monitoring Committee set up at the level of my Ministry. The Committee scrutinizes the reports and recommends appropriate actions to be taken for the replenishment of stocks, or for expediting supply of outstanding orders.

However, it happens at times that there are shortages of a few drugs for limited periods, mainly due to the fact that -

- (i) suppliers default because of increasing production costs, unavailability of raw materials or changes in the sources of supply;
- (ii) suppliers are late with their deliveries;
- (iii) retendering has to be resorted to where no quotes or no responsive bids are received, and

- (iv) there are unforeseen increases in the consumption of some drugs, thus resulting in depletion of stock.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** My question also extends to pharmaceutical products in the private sector where, very often, many products are missing, causing patients great distress for a change over to a new tablet and increasing the expenses at the level of private medicine for the changing of the therapy.

*(Interruptions)*

I heard a remark about this being very rare. I refuse to agree to that.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let the hon. Minister answer!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have information actually on what is being done at the level of Government. If the hon. Member will provide me with information on specific items which, from time to time, are missing on the local market, I will try to find out.

#### LAND DUTIES AND TAXES ACT - AMENDMENTS

**(No. 1B/251) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Land Duties and Taxes Act, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments thereto with a view to –

- (a) re-introducing the exemption for first time buyers of bare land and built up land;
- (b) re-introducing the exemption for first time borrowers for completion of construction or loan for the purchase of built up land or apartment;
- (c) exempting Land Transfer Tax for first time sellers or maintaining a flat rate of 5% of the value of the transfer, and
- (d) exempting from Land Transfer Tax the sale of properties acquired by inheritance.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member would surely appreciate that future decisions pertaining to tax policy cannot be revealed at Question Time. I would, therefore, invite the hon. Member to have some patience and to wait for the forthcoming Budget.

**Mr Ganoo:** I do understand and agree with what the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has just said. But, doesn't he agree that there is an injustice in making people pay land transfer tax when they have inherited a property? Land transfer tax was instituted at a time when there was a lot of land speculation some twenty years ago. This tax is an injustice, especially for the '*ti-dimounes*' when they have to sell their small properties and be made to pay 5% to Government, especially if they have inherited that plot of land.

**Mr Jugnauth:** The hon. Member has said in the first part of his question that he does understand. Therefore, I would ask him also to be patient and wait for the forthcoming Budget.

**Mr Ramano:** En marge du *Stimulus Package* de l'année dernière, mention a été faite du maintien exceptionnel du taux de 5%, même pour les biens qui ont été acquis avant cinq ans et ce jusqu'à fin 2010. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre s'il compte maintenir ce taux à 5% ?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I have just answered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What prevails now, we will see. There is a new Government, of course, we are going to review the taxes in general and decisions will be taken. I think it will be more proper to come in the forthcoming Budget.

#### LAND TRANSFER TAX – SUGAR CANE CULTIVATION

(No. 1B/252) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments thereto to make provision for exemption of taxes on the transfer of land under sugar cane cultivation.

**Mr Faugoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, currently, there are incentives provided for the transfer of lands under sugar cane cultivation under section 10 of the SIE Act 2001. Under section 10 subsection (2), the rate of tax provided for such transfers, subject to conditions to be satisfied under subsection (3), stands at 5%.

As regards the issue of exemption of taxes on transfer of land under sugar cane cultivation, I would also, like my friend, the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, request the hon. Member to have some patience and to wait until Budget time, maybe.

**Mr Ramano:** M. le président, le *Finance Act* de 2006 n'a pas su faire la différence entre les terrains sous plantation de cannes et les terrains résidentiels. Au vu de la gravité de la situation pour les planteurs de cannes, n'est-il pas temps de considérer un régime fiscal approprié

pour ceux qui souhaitent vendre et éventuellement développer leurs terrains sous plantation de cannes ?

**Mr Faugoo:** This is a matter of policy which needs to be discussed and will surely come back to the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**TRUST FUND FOR THE INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS -  
FIELD WORKERS**

**(No. 1B/253) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to field workers of the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to the number thereof attached to the Citizens Advice Bureau of Vacoas, indicating their names and the date of posting thereat.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in accordance with the organisational framework of the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups (TFSIVG), a field worker is attached to a specific region and works under the supervision of a social facilitator. The field worker is required to identify and record requests from vulnerable families seeking assistance under the Trust Fund and determine their eligibility for such assistance.

In the process of the identification and recording of such requests from vulnerable groups, the field worker collaborates with community-based organisations and Government agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB).

As far as the presence of a field worker at the CAB of Vacoas is concerned, one field worker of the Trust Fund, Mrs T. D., was posted thereat since end April 2006 on Tuesdays from 9.00 a.m. to noon until she resigned on 30 April 2010.

Subsequently, effective as from 25 May 2010, two other field workers, Mrs B. P. and Mrs M. K., posted in the District of Plaine Wilhems, are covering the Vacoas CAB office on Tuesdays from 9.00 a.m. to noon pending the recruitment of a field worker.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the organisational structure of the Trust Fund is being reviewed and will be consolidated to allow it to extend the necessary and appropriate support to the distressed and vulnerable groups, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

**Mrs Labelle:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there are many applications which are pending? According to my information, it is because there is no field officer working right now and the poor people are just waiting for their corrugated iron sheets and so on. In view of such a situation which is prevailing, may I ask the hon. Minister if he is considering taking measures to remedy the situation to alleviate the sufferings of these people?

**Mr Duval:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think there are four vacancies in the grade of field worker. The best thing is to recruit and to fill these vacancies as quickly as possible. But, in the meantime, I'll make sure that people who are filling in for the person who has left, to do so regularly.

**Mrs Labelle:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will see to it that we have a time frame to process an application? According to my information, there are applications which are pending since one year or even more than one year.

**Mr Duval:** This is a good idea, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister saying that he is going to review the structure. Is the hon. Minister taking into consideration what happened recently in Curepipe where some fictitious organisations were operating in that area? It is nearly island-wide, this racket.

**Mr Duval:** If the hon. Member has any information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is his duty to provide the information either to myself or to the Police. I think it is very important to do so because it is money destined for the poor. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, certainly part of the review will be, in fact, to set up a better internal audit procedure.

### **ABBÉ LAVAL STREET, EAU COULÉE - DRAINS/PAVEMENTS**

**(No. 1B/254) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to drains/pavements under construction at the Abbé Laval Street, Eau Coulée, he will state if his Ministry has received a complaint from the inhabitants of the region to the

effect that rain water is being made to run from these drains into a cave and, if so, the remedial measures that are envisaged.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands that the Municipal Council of Curepipe has received a complaint to the effect that the rainwater was being made to run into an underground cave.

The works undertaken by the Municipal Council of Curepipe consist mostly of the construction of pavement along Abbé Laval Street over an existing road side drain with a view to providing security to school children and inhabitants of Abbé Laval.

The Municipal Council has taken measures to divert the drain network away from Abbé Laval Street.

I am also informed that the area of Eau Coulée is prone to the existence of caves which help in dissipating surface water and, according to the Municipal Council, no ponding occurs in the region. But, I have requested RDA to have a fresh look at the situation and to give a helping hand to the Municipality of Curepipe.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned the case of schoolchildren. In fact, we have the St. Esprit RCA School in that street. When the rain water goes into that cave, there are so many overflows that the wastewater manhole is overflowed since water from Eau Coulée main road is diverted into these drains. So, may I ask the hon. Minister whether any particular measure could be taken so that such a volume of water is not diverted into this place?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, the work has been undertaken by the Municipal Council of Curepipe and I have requested RDA to have a fresh look and we will try to see what can be done.

**Mrs Labelle:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the Municipal Council of Curepipe has been requested, on several occasions, to look into the matter, particularly where the caves are concerned because of the high risks of erosions as there are houses near these caves? It seems that nothing has been done yet.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think that the Municipality of Curepipe can do that work. That is the reason why I have requested the RDA to have a look because we have engineers and they can do that work. I will look into it again.

**SPORTS FEDERATIONS - SPORTS ACT - COMPLIANCE**

(No. 1B/255) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, with regard to sports federations registered with his Ministry, he will state if they are complying with the Sports Act and, if not, why not, indicating the actions he proposes to take.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, my Ministry does not register sports federations as such. This is the responsibility of the Registrar of Associations.

However, if the hon. Member is referring to recognition of sports federations, my Ministry, in compliance with section 8 of the Sports Act, recognises sports federations which respect the conditions laid down in the Sports Act.

I have been informed by the Registrar of Associations that some federations registered with his office are not complying with the Sports Act, in so much as -

- (i) they have not amended their rules as required by the Sports Act, and
- (ii) they have not filed annual returns for the last accounting period.

I wish to reassure the hon. Member that such issues are being attended to in the proposed amendments of the Sports Act which will be presented to this august Assembly very soon.

In parallel, I have set up a committee at the level of my Ministry to collect data on the status of the various sports federations with a view to taking appropriate actions against those not compliant with the Sports Act.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre quelles ont été les actions qui ont été entreprises pour inciter ces fédérations, qui ne sont pas en conformité avec le *Sports Act*, de se mettre en conformité.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just informed. In my answer, I said that I have set up a committee at the level of my Ministry to collect data on the status of the various federations with a view to take appropriate actions against those not complying with the Sports Act.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, il y a quand même cinq longues années qui se sont écoulées depuis que certaines fédérations ont eu une dérogation conditionnelle. Je pense qu'on aurait dû, au niveau du ministère des sports, inciter ces fédérations à se mettre en conformité.

**Mr Ritoo:** This situation has not been prevailing since the last five years, but it is like this since the last Sports Act in 2001. We have already prepared all the amendments and they will be presented in the Assembly very shortly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Je peux savoir du ministre quelles sont ces fédérations qui opèrent dans l'illégalité ?

**Mr Ritoo:** Well, out of the 32 registered sports federations, we have 23 like the swimming federation and the table tennis federation which do not comply with the Sports Act.

***DIRECTEUR TECHNIQUE NATIONAL DE NATATION - CONTRACT***

**(No. 1B/256) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Directeur Technique National de Natation*, he will -

- (a) give the terms and conditions of his contract, indicating whether he is complying with same, and
- (b) table a copy of the contract agreement.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the terms and conditions of employment of the *Directeur Technique National* (Swimming) are detailed in the contract itself. I am tabling a copy thereof.

I also wish to inform the hon. Member that as at to date the *Directeur Technique National* is complying with those terms and conditions satisfactorily.

**Mr Quirin:** Est-ce que le ministre peut dire le nombre de cours de formation que le DTN a organisé depuis son arrivée à Maurice et à qui ces cours ont été adressés?

**Mr Ritoo:** All DTN are recruited in consultation with the sports federations. I mean, the specific sports federations. In this case, it is the swimming federation, and he is put at the disposal of the federation which organises all the sports activities; he is supposed to submit a report every month to the Ministry of Youth and Sports with which he has signed a contract.

**Mr Quirin:** Quand on parle du DTN, M. le président, peut-on savoir du ministre la politique de son ministère par rapport au recrutement des directeurs techniques?

**Mr Ritoo:** In fact, we recruit the DTN as and when required. It depends upon the sports federations which require a DTN and it also depends upon the forthcoming major sports events. It is always done in consultation with the federations.

**Mr Quirin:** En ce qu'il s'agit justement du DTN de la natation, M. le président, pourriez-vous nous dire si on a déjà établi une présélection pour les jeux des îles?

**Mr Ritoo:** Well, we are reaching the Indian Ocean Islands Games in one year. So, there should be a pre-selection, of course.

### **DUTY-FREE ISLAND PROJECT - IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY**

**(No. 1B/257) 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 Duty-Free Island Project, he will state whether any impact assessment study has been carried out thereinto and, if so, state -

- (a) the estimated annual revenue losses in customs, excise and other duties as a result thereof;
- (b) estimates of other costs to Government;
- (c) the impact on the local manufacturing industry, and
- (d) if a time frame for its implementation has been set.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the 2005-06 Budget, I announced a historic decision to make of Mauritius a duty-free island. My vision was to -

- open up sustainable new economic space for development;
- create a new and unprecedented dynamism in our economy for investment, business, trade and entrepreneurial activities;
- transform Mauritius into a shopping paradise for tourists and a shopping hub for the region;
- modernise the physical fabrics of our country to position Mauritius among the leaders in sophisticated infrastructure conducive to shopping tourism and sustainable development, and

- enable Mauritian families also to benefit from a wider choice of high quality goods at lower prices.

I also mentioned that the Duty-Free Island Project would be implemented in phases over a period of four years.

A Mauritius Duty-Free Project Blue Print was thus prepared to provide a basis for initiating debates and discussions for transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island by adopting an integrated approach. This would also have involved the implementation of the '*métro léger*' project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the duty-free island initiative was never in my mind only a mere reduction or elimination of customs tariffs as often asserted in some circles; it was an integrated socio-economic development concept that was meant to develop into an economic pillar in its own.

I can but reaffirm, in this House today, my determination and conviction that Mauritius must become a duty-free island and a shopping paradise with top class physical infrastructure. It is important that these visions are implemented concurrently. And I am also happy that I have the full support of the hon. Prime Minister on this national agenda of paramount importance for our country.

Transforming Mauritius into a duty-free island will involve costs to the treasury in terms of duty foregone. There is also the fact that the abolition of duty will remove protection for our domestic oriented enterprises.

But by developing Mauritius into a shopping paradise, we will be creating new economic space for investments, business and trade that will make up for Government revenue foregone. We have gone a long way in cutting down customs tariffs. We need to move further in that respect. However, we would ensure that we maintain a 'Residual Duty' on a very limited number of products for protecting key strategic products manufactured by our domestic industries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the current financial year 2010, an amount of Rs1.6 billion has been estimated in respect of customs duty. This represents some 3 per cent of the total tax revenue.

As regards parts (b), (c) and (d) of the question relating to cost to Government, the impact on the local manufacturing industry and the time frame for implementation of the Duty Free

Island Project, we are, in fact, actually updating the Blue Print that we have prepared some five years ago. I am sure that this will take on board all the concerns of the hon. Member. This exercise will be carried out, of course, in consultation with all the stakeholders.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project, which has been initiated by the Minister during his term of office as Minister of Finance, has clearly been put under lock and key by the previous Government and now that - so to speak - he has taken hold of the key to the project, would he consider it urgent to set up a high-powered committee or a ministerial committee to oversee the implementation of the project so that the image of the country and the image of the project do not suffer from any more credibility problem?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just said, I don't believe that we should have a high-powered committee. What we need right now is to update that Blue Print that was prepared some five years ago, have discussions with all the stakeholders, and get the views of as many people who are concerned and who are willing to come forward with proposals including, of course, any hon. Member of the Opposition and then we will have to move forward. Personally, I don't believe that we should have a high-powered committee on that.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason why I am putting up the suggestion of having a high-powered committee is the fact that there are various conditions for the success of this important project which, as he said, is a national, integrated development project, because the project will have impact on the air access policy, on the project of *métro léger* which has also been frozen for five years and it has also a lot of implications on the visa facilities for neighbouring countries and African countries, the target market. Would the hon. Minister not consider it essential for an important committee of officials not only to revise or revisit the Blue Print, but also to seek the views of experts on the matter, to get qualified and expert opinion and facts and figures for a proper business and marketing plan to successfully implement the project?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of course, I do agree with the number of issues the hon. Member has raised. They would be of concern and they would impact on this project. Probably if I can just rephrase what I have just said, I don't know if there are clearer terms, it is the Government's vision to move forward with the project of making Mauritius a duty-free island, and, of course, discussions will take place with my colleague Ministers. We will come forward as and when the project is ripe and we will not be able to implement it at one go. As I

said last time, when we thought over it, it would have taken some four years. Now, I am sure the hon. Member will appreciate that circumstances prevailing at that time and circumstances prevailing today are quite different. There are a number of common factors, but there are new circumstances that have arisen, but I take the view that, as I have said, any expert advice that we can get, any views that we can get from any quarters, will be looked at and, if positive, will be taken on board.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** I have another question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am sure now that the Minister has taken the driving seat to drive the project forward which has been frozen, put in the *frigo*, can we ask the Minister what would be the approach of the Government with regard to the construction of mega malls and all the big departmental stores with branded products which will be on offer? These will imply the investment of big foreign groups which will be interested to invest in the project. Therefore, would there be a policy of Government to allow the acquisition of land by these foreign groups for the construction of mega malls and the big projects.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, at that time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we brainstormed quite a lot on the issue of shopping malls. I would not like, at this stage, to disclose what the thinking was at that time, more so, I have said that this Blue Print needs to be reviewed. Let me repeat again that what circumstances prevailed at that time are different today. We have to look at it in the light of the new circumstances and come forward, if need be, with any incentives that can be given to foreign and local promoters for the shopping malls as far as these are concerned.

#### NATIONAL SAVINGS RATE

(No. 1B/258) **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 National Savings Rate, he will state –

- (a) its evolution over the years 2005 to 2010;
- (b) the measures being taken to encourage national savings, and
- (c) whether tax reliefs will be re-instated on pension contributions.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2005, the annual savings rate, that is the Gross National Savings as a percentage of GDP at market price, has been as follows -

|       |    |      |
|-------|----|------|
| 17.4% | in | 2005 |
| 17.1% | in | 2006 |
| 21.2% | in | 2007 |
| 16.7% | in | 2008 |
| 13.6% | in | 2009 |

According to the latest estimate of the Central Statistics Office, the savings rate is projected to increase slightly to around 14.2 % in 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, the abolition of the National Residential Property Tax and of tax on interest income should increase the disposable income of the population and encourage greater household savings. Moreover, we expect that the vision we have announced in the Government Programme to stimulate investment and return the economy to its trend growth path should increase income in the economy and reverse the declining trend in the national saving rate. These policies range from enhancing global competitiveness, stimulating private investment both local and foreign, further diversifying the economic base and accelerating investment in public infrastructure. The Macroeconomic Coordinating Committee that comprises officials of my Ministry, the Bank of Mauritius and the Central Statistical Office is carrying out a study on the causes of the decline in the national savings rate and its evolution. The findings of that Committee will enable us to take further actions, if necessary.

As regards part (c) of the question, as I indicated in some of my previous replies in the House, any new tax policy will be announced in the next budget.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so, it is clear from the figures that have been explained by the Minister that the savings rate collapsed to a thirty-year low under the previous Government. Now that the new Minister of Finance is in command, I would just like to add a clarification on national savings rate. National savings consist of corporate savings and personal savings. Now, if the savings rate has fallen nationally, but, as you know, corporate savings have increased because corporate savings are obtained from profits which are not distributed. As we all know, corporate profits have increased tremendously during the last two years, so, it means that personal savings have decreased dramatically. Would the hon. Minister not think that the policies of the previous Government have been very detrimental to savings and, therefore, need to be reversed so that we are now able to get the incentive that was given

previously to encourage people to invest in life insurance products and personal pension schemes?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Savings is not only from households and corporates; it can be from Government also, because when you have a deficit, if the Recurrent Budget is deficitary, then they are low, but if there is a surplus, of course, then we have a saving. But I have global figures. I don't have figures with respect to corporates and households. We have to look at this - I think it is an important point - to monitor whether with regard to the national savings rates, whether household savings have been on the decline. But it is clear, it is a fact, the figures speak for themselves that the rate of savings has been on the decline and I totally agree that we have to take a number of measures in order to motivate people for more savings.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Even some of us here, on this side of the House, agree that the new Minister of Finance will do a much better job on the savings rate issue than the previous Minister of Finance.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, keep silent!

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether with regard to the savings rate, his Ministry intends to conduct a full-fledged study or survey on indebtedness? Is the hon. Minister aware that households in Mauritius - personal savings, as the hon. Member was talking about - are totally indebted *jusqu'au cou*? Will the Minister agree to a full-fledged study on the issue?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I can do is definitely ask the Macroeconomic Committee to set up a technical committee to look at the indebtedness of Mauritians, the households generally.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** One additional question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have not heard the hon. Minister confirming whether he is going to reverse the policies concerning the withdrawal of tax relief on life insurance contribution. But, anyway, the incentives are required to boost personal savings, but more than anything else, the financial planning of households needs to be beefed up and what the previous policies have done is to disrupt the financial planning because when you plan to invest in life insurance, in pension, in taking loan for housing, you get all these tax reliefs, this part is financial planning. In addition to carrying out

that study on savings behaviour, would the hon. Minister consider studying ways of enhancing financial literacy and awareness of financial planning among households, especially as the hon. Member for Quatre Bornes said there is a huge level of indebtedness of households?

**Mr Jugnauth:** The hon. Member must be more attentive. I have replied to part (c) of the question. I have said with regard to tax reliefs on pension, contributions on life insurance and so on, it is a question of fiscal policy. This will be looked at by Government and we will come up with new decisions in the forthcoming budget, if need be. I am sure the hon. Member will appreciate, we won't be able to take piecemeal decisions on each issue of taxes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We move to the next question.

***CONFÉDÉRATION DES TRAVAILLEURS DU SECTEUR PRIVÉ – COMPLAINT***  
**- ILO**

(No. 1B/259) **Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he is aware of the complaint made by the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Secteur Privé (CTSP)* to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in relation to the provision of the Employment Rights Act which makes of Sunday a normal working day and state whether Government has received any recommendations from the International Labour Organisation in relation thereto and, if so, the measures Government proposes to take.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in answer to the question, yes, I am aware of the complaint made.

In fact, in a communication through our Mission in Geneva, the Director of the International Labour Standard Department of the International Labour Office transmitted copy of a letter dated 10 June 2009 whereby the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Secteur Privé (CTSP)* commented on the application by Mauritius of the Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14) and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

In its comments, the CTSP avers *inter alia* that under the Employment Rights Act of 2008, it is now an obligation for workers of the private sector to perform overtime by working on two Sundays in a month.

As requested by the ILO, Government submitted to the ILO, its comments on the points raised by the CTSP.

As regards the second part of the question, Government has received the Report on the Application of International Labour Standards for year 2010 wherein the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has expressed the wish that Government re-examines on the next suitable occasion, the relevant provisions of the Employment Rights Act with a view to bringing them into line with the letter and the spirit of the Convention, in full consultation with the representatives of employers' and workers' organisations concerned.

Government is expressing its reserve, however, on the observations of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations inasmuch as –

- (i) There is no provision in the Employment Rights Act compelling a worker to work on two Sundays in a period of one month. What the law does provide for, is that every worker should be entitled to a rest day of at least 24 consecutive hours in every period of seven consecutive days, and the rest day shall, at least, twice a month be a Sunday, or any other day as may be agreed between the employee and the employer.
- (ii) It is not correct for the ILO to state in its Report that the Employment Rights Act has introduced a permanent exemption of general application so that in reality the basic standard of Sunday weekly rest is for all practical purposes removed from all national legislation. The Employment Rights Act covers around 20% of the workers in the private sector, the remaining 80% - and that is of great importance to note - being covered by the provisions of the 30 Remuneration Order Regulations in force which have specific provisions regarding Sunday work based on the inherent requirements of the respective sector.
- (iii) In its observations, the Committee has itself recalled that the Convention is articulated around, *inter alia*, the basic principle of uniformity, that is, the weekly rest to be granted, whenever possible, simultaneously to all the persons concerned and to coincide, whenever possible, once again, with the traditional day of rest. An interpretation of the provision of the Convention is that it is not mandatory that the weekly rest day be granted on Sunday which is the traditional day of rest.

The Government is already in the process of submitting further explanations to the ILO on the matter.

In conclusion to the answer that I have given to the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me summarise by trying to explain the following. In actual fact, when one reads the observations made by the ILO in relation to this particular issued raised by the *Confédération*, the findings of the ILO have, unfortunately, not tackled the 30 Remuneration Order regulations that are in force. They have based themselves through the provisions only of the Employment Rights Act which, as I have stated, covers around 20% of the workers in the private sector, but they have not taken into account the remaining 80%, therefore and thereby the Remuneration Order regulations and for that particular reason, we are already in the process of preparing further explanations and submissions which we will be forwarding to the ILO, because we believe that it is of utmost importance that when one comes to a finding, one does not limit oneself to the Employment Rights Act, but one also mandatorily should look at what the Remuneration Order regulations provide for.

**Mr Ganoo:** I have listened very carefully to the lengthy answer of the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Even if we accept what the hon. Minister is saying, i.e. that Government has the political will to, in fact, make of Sunday a rest day for the working class of this country, especially in the private sector, does not the hon. Minister think that Government must review the different Remuneration Orders and revisit also - as ILO has asked Government - on the next suitable occasion and ensure that the ERA be in line with the spirit of the Convention? It depends on Government, whether it has the will or not.

**Mr Mohamed:** I have also listened to the interesting remarks of the hon. Member with much interest. Let me make it clear! The fact is that the law in Mauritius states that Sunday is indeed a rest day. That is a fact. Sunday is a public holiday. That is the law. When one looks at all the Remuneration Orders I have earlier referred to, they state it clearly. I will give an example, and here one has to be sector specific. For instance, we have the block-making constructions, stone crushing and related industries' Remuneration Order. In this particular Remuneration Order, there is restriction for performance of work on public holiday. Another example is the Attorneys and Notaries Employees Remuneration Order. In that particular Remuneration Order, once again, there is restriction for performance of work on public holiday. The Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Workshops Remuneration Order; once again, in this particular Remuneration Order, there is a restriction. If I am to go on, there are many other Remuneration Order Regulations where there exist restrictions for working on a Sunday. For that particular reason, Government is sending new observations to the ILO for them to take into

account all our Remuneration Orders, and to come to a complete finding. Once they look into the Remuneration Orders, side by side with the Employment Rights Act, they will come to a reasoned global finding. Once they come up with that finding, we will look into it and tackle it, depending what the finding says. If the finding ever says that, once again, we have to review the legislation, I can reassure the hon. Member and all Members of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we will, in no way, go against the findings of the ILO. But, to recapitulate, I believe it is important that they come up with a proper finding, taking into account 80% of what is relevant in the Remuneration Orders.

**Mr Ganoo:** I understand that the hon. Minister is challenging what the ILO has recommended. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this issue has been raised - hon. Dr. Bunwaree will remember - when the debates were on in August 2008, by hon. Members including hon. Soodhun, who was the mouthpiece of the MSM on labour issue. I had also raised this issue in a parliamentary question, which I put to Mr Chaumière, who was the Minister of labour at that time, on this question of *le travail de dimanche*. But, in view of the fact that the Public Holidays Act states very clearly that Sunday is a public holiday, and in view of the fact that, in the new Act, the law says that ‘where a worker is required to work on a public holiday other than a Sunday’, it is then that he shall be paid additional remuneration’; therefore, doesn’t our law finally make of Sunday an ordinary working day? This is what the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Secteur Privé* is arguing, namely that we should amend our law to make of Sunday a rest day for these workers, and that it is not for the employers to decide, according to their choice, any day as a rest day for the worker.

**Mr Mohamed:** I am thankful to the hon. Member to come up, once again, with this question. As he said, he has put that question before to the previous Minister. That gives me the opportunity of clarifying the situation. To clarify the situation, let me just say, in addition to what I have said, that there are certain industries, for instance, the catering and tourism industry, where it is sector specific. You cannot, in those industries, come up and use the same principles, the same thought and philosophy, as opposed to other industries that have not got specificities as that of the catering and tourism industry or the Cinema Employees Remuneration Order. If that were the case, then we would have all employees of the catering and tourism industry or the cinema industry, the bakery industry, closing shop on Sunday. We have come up with an Employment Rights Act that is, in my humble opinion, very flexible. The only difference that separates us at the moment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a matter of interpretation. In order to

make sure that this difference *ne perdure pas*, that is precisely the reason why we are asking the ILO, as I have said earlier, to take into account the Remuneration Order. And if, once they have taken that into account, they come up with the finding that, once again, it is not in line with the Convention, we will look into the appropriate decisions to be taken. I am of the view that if they take into account the Remuneration Order, their findings would not be the same.

**Mr Bérenger:** I am glad that the hon. Minister chose different words right now, because before he said ‘if the ILO comes with a proper recommendation’, implying that they made improper recommendations. He has corrected himself. Fair enough! Since it is clear that the ILO said that time is of the essence, it is urgent, and they suggested that *il faut corriger le tir* at the earliest opportunity, therefore, can we know when was their report received and when it is expected that Government will make further representations?

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the report was communicated to us approximately seven days after it was issued. I don’t have the exact date with me, but I am informed that it was sent to us approximately seven days after it was received, which was only approximately a month and a half ago. We are ready with our new observations, which we will send to the ILO. I have been in touch with the relevant Department of Standards of the ILO, and I am informed that they will respond to us very rapidly. I totally agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is a matter of urgency. We will act accordingly, and send the new observations for us to get a response as soon as possible. I am not saying that the observations of the ILO are flawed. What I am saying is that they should have all the information on board in order to come with a new finding. That would be a fairer principle.

**Mr Ganoo:** As things are today, can the hon. Minister confirm whether an employer is entitled to request a worker to begin his week on any day, that is, on a Sunday, and that when he is performing work on a Sunday, he is not paid additional remuneration?

**Mr Mohamed:** With regard to work on a Sunday, section 14(5) of the Employment Rights Act provides for a mandatory rest period, as I have stated earlier on, of, at least, 24 consecutive hours in every period of seven consecutive days. Those provisions are in line with Article 2 of the Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention of 1921, (No. 14). Our law also provides and specifies that the rest day shall be, at least, twice a month; it will be a Sunday or any other day, as may be agreed upon between the worker and the employer. This provision, therefore, does not violate Article 2(3) of the Convention, and I must here also state that this flexibility is

present in our law. And this is precisely the flexibility in our law which, unfortunately - I must admit here - in our first response to the ILO, was not clearly shown to the committee. This is what we are trying to show to the committee now, namely that there exists flexibility in our law.

### **SCHOOLS – NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS**

**(No. 1B/260) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to national examinations at Form III level, he will state –

- (a) the purpose thereof;
- (b) when they will be introduced, and
- (c) the options that will be offered to students who fail thereat.

*(Withdrawn)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next item!

### **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 Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth)** rose and seconded.

*Question put and agreed to.*

### **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

#### **RICHE TERRE LAND SETTLEMENT – EX-VEGETABLE GROWERS**

**The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement in response to the intervention of hon. Ganoo on the 23 ex-vegetable growers of Riche Terre Land Settlement at Adjournment time last Tuesday.

The Noël/Ramkissoon Committee was set up to enable Government to take a fair and just decision. We have taken cognizance of the recommendations in the report. The recommendations have been examined and Government has offered a package which is in consonance with what is proposed in the Noël/ Ramkissoon Report.

The package being offered to the planters is, in fact, a better one than the initial package offered to them. In addition to the compensation of Rs120,000 per *arpent* and relocation, the planters are also entitled to support under the Food Security Fund for land preparation, fertilizers and seeds, upgrading of irrigation network, fencing and other upgrading works that may be necessary and which have been estimated to cost around Rs120, 000 per *arpent*, excluding other upgrading works in connection with water logging and access roads being considered by the Food Security Fund. Such assistance has the advantage of providing the planters with the opportunity and better possibilities of continuing in the past activities in a conducive environment and not only continue earning their livelihood but also contribute to improve food security in Mauritius.

In the light of what I have stated and as a decision has already been taken on the matter, I would appeal to the ex-planters to accept the proposal of Government which is in the interest of one and all. The report having been commissioned to enable Government to take a fair and just decision on this issue, I consider that it would neither be judicious nor appropriate to table or release the report.

Thank you.

#### **LE MORNE VILLAGE– SCABIES OUTBREAK – REMEDIAL MEASURES**

**The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mrs S. Hanoomanjee):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the issue raised at Adjournment time by the First Member for Savanne and Black River on scabies on Tuesday 29 June 2010, I wish to make a statement on remedial measures taken by my Ministry to address the problem of scabies at Le Morne.

As I have already mentioned on Tuesday last, on 16 June 2010, I sent a medical team to carry out screening of the pupils of Le Morne Government School and Case Noyale R.C.A. for cases of scabies. The results indicated that 60 pupils out of 144 at Le Morne Government School and 47 pupils out of 199 at Case Noyale had the disease. Pupils of Le Morne Pre-Primary School were also screened and eight cases were detected out of a total number of 43 pupils. An adequate number of vials of medication for the treatment of scabies were provided to the Deputy

Head Teacher of Le Morne Government School to be made available to the parents of the affected pupils immediately.

I personally visited Le Morne Government School on Wednesday 16 June, where I had a meeting accompanied by officers of my Ministry, with all the parents and the pupils. Talks on health education pertaining to personal hygiene and safe sanitary practices to sensitise the parents and the children were given. The parents were explained that all the members of the family need to be treated if one member has been affected by scabies. They were briefed on all precautionary measures and they were also explained that scabies is an infestation of the skin which spreads rapidly where there are unhygienic conditions and overcrowding, leading to frequent skin-to-skin contacts.

During the course of discussion with the parents, I was informed that the inhabitants of Le Morne had water supply problems in the area.

In view thereof, I contacted the Central Water Authority so that an adequate supply of water is made available in the region. I am personally following the issue closely. The list of all households where there is scarcity of water is being finalised through a house to house survey and will be submitted to the CWA which will then make arrangements to provide water tanks to these households.

On 30 June last, that is, two weeks after, another survey revealed that the number of cases at Case Noyale had decreased from 47 to 17, at Le Morne Government School from 66 to 25 and from 8 to 3 at Le Morne Pre-Primary School. 16 pupils at Le Morne Government School were found to be among the previous 66 pupils with scabies. These cases are now being treated with Ivermectin tablet, instead of lotion used initially, in accordance with the new protocol for treatment of scabies.

Regarding absenteeism in primary schools due to scabies, as stated by the First Member for Savanne and Black River, statistics obtained from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources revealed that in Zone 4, there is no increase in the trend of absenteeism for period January to May as the percentage absenteeism was 18.2 in 2009 and 16.4 in 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition to the above measures, my Ministry has also organised a "Training for Trainers" workshop on scabies on Friday 02 July for about 230 officers working in the community, including Social Welfare Officers, Community Development Officers, Family Support Officers, motivators of my Ministry and of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child

Development and Family Welfare. The trainers would subsequently train the NGOs and the Community Health Leaders in their respective localities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of scabies is a national one. In fact, throughout the island, cases of scabies have been reported but the situation is fully under control and my Ministry is monitoring the cases. My Ministry has set up a multi-sectoral committee on scabies with all relevant stakeholders. The committee ensures coordination among all stakeholders and has already come up with the following recommendations –

- I. an aggressive education campaign be launched throughout the island;
- II. pamphlets and posters on preventive actions be prepared and distributed to the public;
- III. the Principal Community Health Nursing Officers in each region to intensify the School Health Programmes in schools;
- IV. screening for scabies be integrated in the National Screening Programme of the NCD;
- V. the Health Inspectorate to inspect those specific areas where cases of scabies are being reported;
- VI. the pharmacy section to ensure availability of Ivermectin tablets and other drugs for the treatment of scabies, and
- VII. mobile clinics be set up in those regions where outbreaks were being reported with a view to easing access to medication as well as to carry out health education sessions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am soliciting the support of all my colleagues who, in one way or the other, are involved with the community and with social integration, without which all efforts pertaining to medical management to contain the disease will not have its impact to remedy the whole situation.

Thank you.

## **PUBLIC BILLS**

*First Reading*

*On motion made and seconded the following Bills were read a first time –*

- (a) *The Supplementary Appropriation (2008-2009) (No. 2) Bill (No. XII of 2010)*
- (b) *The Supplementary Appropriation (2009) Bill (No. XIII of 2010)*
- (c) *The Sugar Cane Planters Trust (Repeal) Bill (No. XIV of 2010)*

## **MOTION**

### **GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015**

*Order read for resuming adjournment debate on the following motion of the hon. Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal (Ms S. Anquetil):*

*“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 08 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved”.*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):**

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for your election as Member of the National Assembly and also as Deputy Speaker of this Assembly.

My congratulation also goes to Mr Speaker and to all the elected Members of the last general election, but my special congratulations to those who have been appointed Ministers, PPS and Members of the House for the first time. I pray that all the new Members of this august Assembly be not arrogant, but very *serviable* to their constituents compared to some who were in this House during the past mandate. Fortunately, most of them are not here today. They did not even obtain a *ticket*; they were not candidates. I had to make this remark and I will ask all the new Members of this House not to follow these examples and to be humble, *serviable à leurs mandants*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been a Member of this Assembly for four consecutive mandates. I know hon. Bhagwan is a Member of this Assembly for the seventh time; the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the eighth time; hon. Ganoo maybe for the seventh or eighth time and there are many on the other side of the House, like hon. Von-Mally, for the fourth time. Some Members, on the other side of the House, are here for many mandates now.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 1982, I have been an MMM candidate for the Municipal election and an MMM activist for the 1982 general election where we had 60-0. Since then, I have been involved in all the Municipal and general election campaigns. Believe me, each election campaign brings its own experience. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during this election, I took cognizance of a change in the mindset of the candidates and the voters because, today, people campaign for personal benefits. There are less and less voters who vote for a vision, for a programme, for a model society and for clear social objectives. Most people today will look for their own interest first.

The *constat*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that some activists may work for a party for an election and for another party for another election. It is a question of money for many of them. Whoever gives more, they will work for them. This shift in the mindset of our activists and voters is very dangerous because this is giving rise to a new class of politicians. The politicians of today have to be financially well secured. They must have plenty of money in their pockets. This may also give rise to rich politicians who have other agendas than to serve their constituents.

People's mindset has changed in the society at large. This makes me very sad, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because this, as I said, will give rise to classes of politicians who will cater for their own interests and will try, by all means, to make as much money as they can to be able to spend more on the campaigns. This is what is going to happen to the politicians in the future if we keep going on this trend as far as campaigning is concerned. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is going to be very dangerous for our society because whatever beautiful words are said in the programmes and in the Budget are going to be *secondaire* because politicians will give prior considerations *ailleurs*.

C'est pour cela, M. le président, que je dis que les débats sur les différents discours-programmes et les budgets que j'ai assistés sont toujours remplis de bonnes intentions, de belles phrases mais, très souvent, il n'y a pas d'actions. Très souvent, cela reste que de belles paroles. Certains politiciens et ministres font des déclarations fracassantes en public. Ils disent beaucoup

de choses pour essayer de redresser la situation et de faire la lumière sur beaucoup de dossiers. Quand ils sont au Parlement, lorsqu'ils doivent répondre aux questions, aux *Private Notice Questions*, ils se contredisent dans leurs propos et dans les réponses qu'ils donnent au Parlement et tout cela sans gêne et sans complexe. Donc, M. le président, c'est chagrinant de voir comment les choses évoluent au niveau de différents politiciens dans ce Parlement. C'est navrant pour l'avenir de la démocratie mauricienne.

Revenant au discours-programme du Président, c'est un récit des intentions du gouvernement pour les prochains cinq ans, mais je ne comprends pas, M. le président, comment les contradictions dans ce discours-programme sont aussi éloquents par rapport aux actions concrètes qu'a menées ce gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale pendant les cinq dernières années. M. le président, je vais citer ce qui est dit à la première page, chapitre 5 de ce discours-programme -

*“The Constitution we inherited from the founding fathers of the nation has served us well. However, no matter how well our institutions may be seen to be functioning, they need to be adjusted to help the country face new challenges. We need a constitutional regime that will strengthen our democracy, promote nation-building and further entrench the fundamental rights and freedom of all Mauritians”.*

M. le président, l'action gouvernementale pendant ces cinq dernières années n'a aucunement épousé la philosophie de ce paragraphe. Expliquez-moi, M. le président, comment, durant les cinq années écoulées, les différents groupes sectaires sont montés en puissance ? Avec la bénédiction de l'exécutif de ce pays, M. le président ! Est-ce que c'est cela la *nation-building* ? Est-ce que cela reflète vraiment ce qui est dit dans ce discours-programme pour les cinq ans à venir ? Nous avons vu ces différents groupes sectaires monter en puissance pendant ces cinq dernières années, que ce soit ethnique ou autre. Ceci démontre que, de par cet état de choses toléré par l'État, on ne peut dire que ce gouvernement est en train de promouvoir une *nation-building*.

M. le président, c'est impossible d'accepter cela. Nous avons vu aussi, ces cinq dernières années, les étudiants descendre dans la rue pour avoir le subside aux *fees* d'examens. 'L'Express' a été boycotté au profit d'autres journaux qui se vendaient rarement car, très souvent, ces journaux sont donnés en cadeau dans le bus quand on voyage le matin. Est-ce que c'est de cette façon que le gouvernement protège nos droits fondamentaux ? Nous avons été informés que des librairies publiques ont reçu l'instruction de ne plus acheter certains journaux du pays. Est-ce

qu'on peut dire que ce gouvernement, en se comportant ainsi, est en train de protéger le droit à la liberté d'expression ? Pourtant, nous savons que beaucoup de Mauriciens, en particulier, des étudiants et des travailleurs, fréquentent ces bibliothèques pour pouvoir lire un maximum de journaux, de publications et des magazines qui sont distribués gratuitement et, malheureusement, pas tous les journaux qui sont permis d'être lus depuis quelque temps. J'espère qu'entre temps ce problème a été résolu. Mais, malgré cela, M. le président, je constate qu'on ne protège pas assez nos droits et nos libertés d'expression. Cette hypocrisie va-t-elle encore durer ? Il faut donc arrêter de baratiner la population avec de belles paroles et de belles phrases parce que les actions ne vont pas suivre.

M. le président, dans le même ordre d'idées – *to add insult to injury* – le chapitre 8 du programme se lit comme suit et je cite -

*“8. Government is committed to supporting the fundamental rights of all citizens, including privacy rights and freedom of expression. A plural, fair and independent media is an essential component of a democratic system. Accordingly, Government will introduce legislation for media law reform. Government will also support greater professionalism in the media and the powers and functions of the Independent Broadcasting Authority will be reviewed to provide for ethical conduct and safeguard of the fundamental rights of all our citizens.”*

M. le président, suivant toutes ces actions, que je qualifierais d'anti-démocratiques contre la liberté d'expression, vient maintenant s'ajouter un paragraphe pour nous faire croire que le gouvernement a vraiment l'intention de professionnaliser, de réglementer, d'assurer notre liberté d'expression à travers le *law reform*. M. le président, nous savons tous ce qui s'est passé en ce qui concerne les journaux tout récemment et aussi notre ami Ananda Raju ; la façon dont il a été interpellé par la police et mené aux casernes centrales. Heureusement que nos amis avocats étaient là. Toutes les actions prises récemment par le gouvernement concernant 'l'Express', 'Le Militant' et, je peux ajouter à cela, le cas du Dr. Rama Sithanen, nous démontrent clairement que ce sont des actions à tuer la liberté d'expression et la démocratie. Comment maintenant supporter le massacre journalier que nous fait vivre la MBC ? Il y a manipulation d'images, campagne à outrance de politique partisane par le gouvernement du jour, malversation financière au niveau de la MBC, petit copinage, protection familiale, abus d'autorité, recrutement à outrance des travailleurs '*kas poseur*'.

*(Interruptions)*

Il paraît que c'est un nouveau métier à la MBC ! Est-ce que c'est cela le professionnalisme dont nous parle ce programme, M le président ? Est-ce que c'est de la bonne gouvernance ? Plus hypocrite que cela tu meurs ! Le programme gouvernemental ne fait aucune mention de télévision privée et je pense que c'est tant mieux, M. le président, parce qu'aujourd'hui, avec la montée en puissance économique, certains groupes essaient, par tous les moyens, d'acheter tous les journaux ; si ce n'est pas les journaux, ils essaient d'acheter les journalistes et, si ce n'est pas les journalistes, ils essaient même d'acheter les conjoints !

*(Interruptions)*

Il y en a des cas ! Alors ils mettent en place des compagnies liées par les mêmes actionnaires et ils font tout leur possible pour acheter ou racheter les actions des journaux. Ils veulent contrôler l'information, contrôler la psychologie de la masse et aussi manipuler à leur guise l'opinion publique. Ce gouvernement peut-il vraiment protéger notre liberté d'expression dans les présentes conditions alors que se dessinent à l'horizon et autour de nous de tels vautours, des compagnies qui montent en puissance et qui essaient de tout acheter et de tout contrôler ?

M. le président, on se demande, avec ce qui se dessine à l'horizon, jusqu'où vont-ils aller pour pouvoir vraiment protéger notre liberté d'expression ? M. le président, comme je viens de le dire, tant mieux s'ils n'ont pas mentionné la télévision privée parce que je sais que cela aurait tombé dans les mains des mêmes vautours ! Alors attendons venir la démocratisation au niveau du média, de l'information et, à ce moment-là, ce serait souhaitable qu'on y vienne une fois pour toutes avec le projet d'une télévision privée à Maurice.

On peut constater un autre cas d'hypocrisie, M. le président, avec la création du ministère de l'intégration sociale. C'est incroyable ! M. le président, je salue cette décision, mais c'est ce même Parti Travailleuse au pouvoir en 2005 qui avait fait campagne contre les décisions prises par le gouvernement MSM-MMM pour l'intégration sociale et je cite « le démantèlement des réseaux des travailleurs des rues ». C'était eux, après les élections de 2005. Qu'est-ce qui n'avait été dit en ce qui concerne les écoles ZEP ? On les avait qualifiés de zèbre ! En ce qui concerne nos actions pour l'autonomie de Rodrigues, vous en souvenez vous, M. le président ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils n'ont pas dit ? Nos travailleurs des rues étaient là pour affronter la racine du problème de la pauvreté dans les différents quartiers de notre île Maurice et de Rodrigues. Pourquoi avoir démantelé tout cela en 2005 ? Pourquoi avoir fait campagne contre les écoles ZEP ? Pourquoi, du côté de l'Alliance sociale, avoir fait campagne contre l'autonomie de Rodrigues et aussi

contre les logements sociaux qu'on avait construits pendant ce temps-là ? Je vous rappelle que j'avais moi-même déposé un DVD sur la table de l'Assemblée Nationale pour bien démontrer tout ce que j'avance et cela s'est passé dans l'une de leurs réunions privées dans le nord dans les années 2005. Il y a des preuves que j'ai déposées à l'Assemblée Nationale par rapport à ce que j'avance concernant cette campagne communale qui avait été orchestrée en 2005 contre toutes ces mesures pour combattre la pauvreté, dont l'intention n'était pas pour une seule communauté. Tout cela avait été très mal compris. Ils avaient fait un amalgame des décisions concernant les écoles ZEP, l'autonomie de Rodrigues, la politique de logement d'alors et même, M. le président, la politique de la réforme de l'éducation qu'avait entamée l'honorable Steve Obeegadoo.

Ils avaient fait un amalgame de tout pour présenter cela comme des actions politiques en faveur d'une seule communauté de l'île Maurice. Le résultat est qu'aujourd'hui l'Alliance de l'Avenir se rend compte de la gravité de la situation. La situation est vraiment grave. Entre-temps, étant donné cette politique de boycotter toutes ces réformes qu'on avait entamées, il y a eu ce que l'ex-ministre Sithanen appelait lui-même, l'*absolute poverty*. Donc, aujourd'hui on constate les dégâts : une société appauvrie et l'émergence de nouveaux pauvres, voire même, comme je viens de le dire, l'*absolute poverty*, comme qualifié par ce gouvernement.

Concernant ces mesures sociales, M. le président, si on n'avait pas démolé tout cela, aujourd'hui on n'aurait pas connu tous ces maux, du moins pas de cette envergure. Il y a eu des problèmes au niveau social. Si on n'avait pas démolé toutes ces réformes au niveau de l'éducation entre autres, si l'Alliance Sociale avait abordé ces problèmes avec moins de décisions sectaires, avec plus de considérations démocrates, serons-nous arrivés à ce point ? Hélas, il fallait plaire à certains, M. le président ! Certains élus de l'Alliance Sociale avaient fini par croire dans leur démagogie et aujourd'hui ils essaient de réparer cela avec la création d'un ministère de l'intégration sociale après avoir eux-mêmes tout désintégré, tout démantelé, M. le président. Concernant le ministère qui vient d'être créé, ils n'ont même pas le *staffing* et les ressources qu'il faut, pas de personnel approprié, ils sont sans repère. Ils sont là, ils essaient de regrouper les différents organismes existants sous leurs chapeaux, mais il n'y a même pas un budget voté à cet effet pour l'année financière en cours. Donc, il y a tout à refaire. Heureusement, qu'entre-temps, l'Alliance de l'Avenir aborde ce problème de la pauvreté avec un regard beaucoup plus mauricien, moins sectaire. Tant mieux, on va voir si on va pouvoir rattraper les cinq précieuses années perdues, M. le président. Il y a tout à refaire, comme je l'ai

dit. Alors, j'espère qu'au prochain budget, ce ministère aura le support financier nécessaire pour une fédération de gens et une organisation à vocation sociale pour s'attaquer aux problèmes avec toute la sincérité possible de ce qu'est le problème de la pauvreté à Maurice. Il nous faut une approche sincère et dépasser tous ces clivages à base communale, les raisons sectaires qui ont accompagné ces raisonnements dans leur politique cinq ans de cela.

Depuis les cinq dernières années, M. le président, un autre secteur qui a été complètement négligé est celui de la pêche. On n'a eu droit qu'à des discours d'intention. Il n'y avait personne pour faire le suivi, pour concrétiser ces politiques d'intention à travers le programme, les différents budgets qui ont été votés ces cinq dernières années. Malgré l'appel pour un ministère de la pêche à part entière, le Premier ministre a fait la sourde oreille. La requête est venue du Parlement, des organisations des syndicats des pêcheurs. Ces pêcheurs sont même descendus plusieurs fois dans la rue pour se faire entendre mais, malheureusement, M. le président, rien n'a été fait. Et pourtant, après cinq ans, on s'attendait au moins que ce nouveau gouvernement accorde un ministre à part entière aux problèmes de la pêche, de nos lagons, de nos protections marines entre autres parce qu'il y a vraiment beaucoup de travail dans ces secteurs. Le ministre fait toujours la sourde oreille et on n'a pas eu droit à un ministre pour s'occuper à part entière des problèmes de la pêche encore une fois. Et pourtant, il y a beaucoup de requêtes qui, depuis ces cinq dernières années, traînent toujours au niveau de ce ministère.

On attend toujours le *Fish Auction Market* depuis cinq ans, M. le président. Pourtant, le financement de ce projet avait déjà été obtenu depuis des années. L'argent est là : R 25 m. du gouvernement de Luxembourg à cet effet. Donc, l'argent dort quelque part, les intérêts s'accumulent et le projet ne démarre toujours pas! Pourquoi cinq ans ? Tout simplement parce qu'il n'y a eu personne pour faire le suivi de ce projet. A un certain moment, ça allait être tout près du Trou Fanfaron. Ils avaient vu que c'était dans le secteur de l'Aapravasi Ghat et qu'il fallait le bouger ailleurs et ça a bougé depuis. Le projet est rédigé sur papier, mais on attend toujours ! Déjà cinq ans, six ans se sont écoulés et on attend toujours le *Fish Auction Market* !

Il y a eu aussi le problème tant complexe de l'aquaculture. Il y a ceux qui sont pour et ceux qui sont contre. Il y a ceux qui sont en faveur pour combattre le problème de l'alimentation pour les années à venir, mais il faut écouter ceux qui sont contre et qui disent que cela peut être un problème d'ordre écologique pour notre environnement. Ils ont leurs raisons ; ils ont des dossiers, ils ont fait des conférences. Donc, il faudrait que le ministre essaie de mettre tout ce beau monde autour d'une table et en discuter afin de trouver des solutions. Allons-nous avoir

une industrie d'aquaculture comme on a déjà commencé à Mahebourg comme un projet pilote ? Est-ce qu'il y aura une continuité dans cette voie ou on va s'arrêter là? Pendant cinq ans, ils n'ont rien fait et on n'a rien eu comme résultat. Valeur du jour, il est difficile à dire s'il y aura des développements du côté de l'aquaculture ou pas. On attend toujours, M. le président. Il y a aussi le problème de la pollution de nos lagons qui ne cesse de s'aggraver. D'année en année, on constate que l'industrialisation ainsi que les hôtels amènent leurs lots de ressources ainsi que leurs lots de problèmes par rapport à notre environnement, à notre écosystème. Donc, les pêcheurs ont attiré l'attention des différents organismes et ministères concernés depuis belle lurette mais, malheureusement, il n'y a pas encore eu une politique concise à cet effet, pour que nous puissions savoir dans quelle direction aller pour les prochains 20 à 50 ans dans une petite île Maurice très fragile, écologiquement parlant.

Donc, toujours concernant nos pêcheurs, il y a le prix, aujourd'hui, du carburant, M. le président. Avec la flambée de cet élément, aussi important dans leurs activités industrielles, la rentabilité de ce métier est très difficile à cause, précisément, du prix du carburant qui est vraiment trop élevé. Ils ont attiré l'attention du ministre et du gouvernement pas mal de fois sur ce problème. Le gouvernement propose-t-il une certaine solution? Le gouvernement va-t-il proposer une certaine politique pour pouvoir subventionner les pêcheurs ou autrement les aider pour l'achat de carburant ? Y aura-t-il quand même des considérations dans cette direction? On attend toujours, depuis cinq belles années, concernant la requête. Il y a différentes requêtes d'ailleurs des syndicats des pêcheurs.

Le *Fish Aggregating Device* est tout le temps hors service, il y a toujours des réparations à faire. On est supposé avoir d'autre FADs, comme on dit, des radeaux autour de l'île. Donc on attend toujours ces radeaux qui tombent en ruine, qui sont cassés et qui ne sont pas réparés. Le nombre de radeaux est en train de diminuer. On ne sait toujours pas si le gouvernement va investir dans le projet concernant la réfection de ces dizaines ou centaines de radeaux qui sont placés autour de l'île, soit 10,000 à 15,000 kms du rivage.

M. le président, il y a aussi le problème du *bad weather allowance* qui est très mal réparti. Le *bad weather allowance* était autrefois payé à tous les pêcheurs dès qu'il y avait un problème par rapport au kilométrage du vent. Je pense, qu'à l'époque, c'était 40 kilomètres. Au delà de 40 kilomètres de vent, tout le monde était payé un *bad weather allowance*. Il était trop risqué de sortir en mer dans des conditions pareilles. Puis, on a révisé cela. Donc, il y a ceux qui pêchent dans les lagons et ceux qui pêchent hors lagon. Ils sont traités différemment par rapport

au *bad weather allowance*. Les pêcheurs sont très mécontents de cette nouvelle politique qui a été appliquée et qui n'est pas du tout rationnelle. On attend toujours d'avoir une certaine rationalité. Donc, les pêcheurs ont beau dire tous leurs problèmes, malheureusement, on fait toujours la sourde oreille par rapport à toutes les doléances qu'ils ont soumises ces cinq dernières années.

Le *Fishermen Investment Trust* et le *Fishermen Welfare Fund*, M. le président, sont aujourd'hui eux-mêmes des bateaux sans boussole. Ils n'ont pas de gouvernail, pas de direction. Donc, des personnes sans conviction, sans expérience sont à la tête de ces organisations. Le contrôle de notre zone économique exclusive est maintenant presque inexistant. J'ai vu dans les journaux que bientôt, on achètera un bateau de l'Inde et qu'on aura trois autres petits bateaux des Etats-Unis. Donc, j'espère que ces bateaux auront les différents professionnels requis et iront en mer, et ne resteront pas au port comme 'Le Vigilant', et qu'ils vont protéger notre zone économique exclusive. Nous demandons cela depuis des années.

M. le président, les pêcheurs qui sont sur les bancs aussi ont des problèmes. Ils n'ont pas d'encadrement légal en ce qui concerne leur profession ; ils ne sont réglementés par aucune *Remuneration Order*. Ils ont pas mal de problèmes quand ils ne vont pas pêcher pendant l'hiver. Tous ces problèmes ont été soulevés et restent entier. Le nouveau ministre responsable du secteur de la pêche est là, et je sais qu'il prête une oreille attentive à tout ce qui se dit par rapport à la pêche. J'espère de tout cœur qu'il donnera une attention spéciale à tous ces problèmes.

Actuellement, M. le président, des bateaux étrangers pillent nos ressources en poisson. Les permis aux bateaux étrangers sont mal réglementés, et le *Memorandum of Understanding* entre le gouvernement et le syndicat des pêcheurs n'est pas respecté, sans compter les pêcheurs qui n'ont toujours pas leurs cartes. Il y a pas mal de pêcheurs qui vont à la pêche et qui n'ont pas leurs cartes de pêcheur. Il y en a d'autres qui, à 70 ans, 75 ans, 80 ans, ne veulent plus aller en mer, mais ont toujours leurs cartes et touchent le *bad weather allowance*. Donc, le syndicat des pêcheurs a fait des représentations et a proposé une solution à ce problème. On a demandé une certaine compensation ou *lump sum* pour ces vieux pêcheurs qui ne peuvent plus aller en mer, de sorte qu'on pourrait récupérer leurs cartes et les distribuer aux nouveaux ou jeunes pêcheurs qui sont en attente depuis des années. Mais, après cinq ans, M. le président, toujours rien à cet effet. Donc, c'est très chagrinant. M. le président, combien de temps faudra-t-il attendre encore pour que le Premier ministre comprenne la nécessité d'avoir un ministre à part entière pour ce ministère ? Moi, je suis désespéré ; on nous parle d'intégration sociale, alors qu'on a vu toutes

ces misères que nos amis pêcheurs, entre autres, ont eues pendant cinq ans. Bref, il n'y a aucun *commitment* du gouvernement pour redresser la situation. Je ne sais quoi dire de plus pour convaincre le Premier ministre de la nécessité d'avoir beaucoup plus d'attention envers ce secteur. Et pourtant, il y a beaucoup de possibilités. Il y a même des possibilités d'investissement, avec des retombés économiques très importants pour des investisseurs mauriciens dans ce secteur, M. le président. Mais, je pense que le gouvernement a d'autres priorités que le secteur de la pêche.

M. le président, autre hypocrisie du gouvernement se situe au niveau de l'administration régionale. En 2005, durant la campagne électorale, l'Alliance sociale avait fait campagne contre le projet de municipalisation de toute l'île Maurice. Ils avaient dit : *zotte pe met taxe rurale lor ou* ; voilà ce que le gouvernement MSM-MMM, avec leurs municipalités, est en train de faire ! Vous allez payer la taxe ! Nous, on voulait tout simplement donner un traitement équitable aux citoyens des régions rurales et des régions urbaines. Malheureusement, l'Alliance sociale avait crié sur tous les toits que ce n'était qu'une stratégie pour faire payer la taxe rurale aux habitants de ces régions. Des campagnes, encore une fois, à caractère communal, que certains avaient propulsées partout, dans des régions appelées 'la campagne' de notre pays.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, je constate que l'Alliance sociale, maintenant l'Alliance de l'Avenir, qui était contre la loi qu'on avait votée en 2003 - quand ils sont venus au Parlement, ils ont rejeté ce projet de loi ; ils ont même révoqué ce projet de loi de 2003 - va venir avec une législation, encore une fois, pour avoir d'autres municipalités à travers le pays. Donc, *which is which?* Où est la rationalité ? Pourquoi avoir révoqué cette loi de 2003 pour revenir avec presque la même loi ? Ils allaient soi-disant travailler pour voir une législation plus appropriée et moderne. Mais, entre-temps, il y a eu l'imposition de la taxe rurale sous une autre forme, notamment la NRPT, et les projets qu'on a entendus pendant cinq ans ne viendront jamais jusqu'à la fin de leur mandat. Et voici qu'on entend parler de nouveau de la création de nouvelles municipalités ! Mais, cette fois-ci, c'est ce même parti politique qui était farouchement opposé au projet de loi de 2003 qui va venir présenter à la Chambre quelque chose qui n'est pas nouveau pour le pays, et encore moins, pour nous, l'opposition du jour. Pourquoi avons-nous, donc, perdu tout ce temps, M. le président, si c'est pour retourner à la case départ ? Donc, les citoyens de ce pays ont droit à des explications, parce qu'ils sont en train de payer très cher l'égoïsme de certains politiciens qui croient détenir le monopole de l'intelligence. Aujourd'hui, M. le président, dans les villes et les villages, les problèmes se sont multipliés. Au quotidien, on entend

sur les radios tous les problèmes politiques, de drains, de rues, d'éclairage, des services de voirie. Une dégradation ! Personne ne peut nous contredire. Pour ce qui est des cinq villes qu'on a aujourd'hui, les gens constatent qu'on a quand même reculé considérablement. A force de faire de ces mairies des institutions de clientélisme politique, on ne s'en sort plus. D'un maire à l'autre, la politique change. Aujourd'hui, il y a une incapacité d'avoir des décisions claires dans les municipalités pour au moins les cinq ans à venir. Par exemple, à Port Louis, sous un maire, des marchands ambulants ne peuvent pas travailler à la rue Desforges, alors que l'autre maire qui lui succède leur dit : « *non, travail, pas de problème, korek sa !* » Alors, vous avez d'autres qui essaient de mettre de l'ordre et d'autres aussi après qui viennent mettre du désordre tout simplement à cause de leur clientèle politique. On ne peut plus gérer comme ça, c'est inacceptable. Les citoyens ont droit à une politique concise, claire et nette - qu'ils soient chauffeurs de taxis, marchands ambulants, nettoyeurs de rues - concernant la politique du logement, le municipal, les loisirs ou le sport. Donc, il n'y a plus de discussions, de visions, de propositions concrètes et concises pour au moins un mandat. Alors, d'un maire à l'autre, il y a des contradictions et ce sont les citoyens qui paient les pots cassés, M. le président. Il y a pourtant quelque chose de très positive que je dois souligner. Durant ces cinq ans les conseillers municipaux sont finalement rémunérés. Ils ont un salaire tous les mois, mais *they are no more delivering*. J'ai été conseiller municipal pendant bien des années. Il y a eu aussi l'honorable Bhagwan et l'honorable Baloomoody, entre autres. Nous étions volontaires. C'était du bénévolat. On a fait le maximum pour l'avancement du pays, tout le monde le reconnaît. M. le président, je dois quand même souligner que si, aujourd'hui, on est en train de payer ces conseillers municipaux, ils devraient donner plus de résultats dans l'intérêt des citoyens.

M. le président, l'autre volet que je souhaite toucher concerne les artistes. Je dois dire qu'ils sont désespérés aujourd'hui car la lutte contre le piratage a pris une dimension beaucoup plus inquiétante. La production des albums coûte entre R 100,000 à R 300,000, dépendant des musiciens, des studios ou s'il y a des clips vidéo qui les accompagnent, etc. Cela demande beaucoup de travail. Ce sont des semaines, des mois et des années des fois avant que des artistes puissent sortir un album. Mais, M. le président, une fois que ces albums sont sur le marché, malheureusement, on constate toujours que ces albums sont piratés au lendemain même de leur sortie et ils sont vendus à R 50 l'unité dans plusieurs de nos rues à Port Louis. M. le président, c'est vraiment chagrinant, décourageant. Cela fait mal aux artistes qui essaient de garder un certain héritage, un certain patrimoine, une certaine culture mauricienne. Ils ne sont pas

encouragés malgré certains efforts intermédiaires ici et là, mais on attend toujours, M. le président, des actions concrètes et soutenues pour pouvoir vraiment combattre ce problème de piratage qui est de plus en plus évident à Maurice. Ce qui est maintenant plus grave c'est que ces artistes se rendent compte aujourd'hui que même un des producteurs à Maurice - pas n'importe qui - qui est très fort, très connu, est en train de pirater les artistes.

*(Interruptions)*

Comment ça se sait ? C'est par certains artistes qui ont travaillé avec ce producteur. Ils ont payé, allons dire, pour 2,000 CD à la sortie d'un album et à la MASA il n'y a que 500 qui sont déclarés. Donc, quand les auteurs/compositeurs touchent leur droit mécanique, ils ne gagnent que le pourcentage lié à 500 CD alors qu'il a eu, au premier tirage, 2,000 CD qui sont sortis.

*(Interruptions)*

Je parle du premier tirage. Il y a en d'autres qui viennent après, qui sont vendus localement aux touristes et à la Réunion principalement. A Maurice aussi il y a un gros marché. On est en droit à se demander où va tout cet argent, comment cela est géré ? Comment se fait-il que ce producteur ait pu s'approprier de ce qu'on appelle le timbre de la MASA, qui est apposé sur ces CD pour montrer que ce sont des produits *genuine*, contrôlés par la MASA. Le problème est là. Croyez-moi, c'est très décourageant pour les artistes. M. le président, je me fais un devoir de souligner ce problème ici dans cette Chambre.

M. le président, la MASA, qui est supposée être une association d'artistes, n'est pas sous le contrôle des artistes aujourd'hui à cause de la représentativité sur le *Board*. La MASA a un budget qui tourne autour de R 13 à R 14 millions par an. Il y a un apport étatique qui est de R 1 million ; alors R 1 million sur R 14 millions, l'Etat a plus de représentants sur le *Board* que d'artistes, ce qui n'est pas rationnel. Cela ne peut pas continuer ainsi. Les artistes sont menés en bateau par l'administration de la MASA et, en ce qu'il s'agit de leur royalties, qu'ils soient à Maurice ou à l'étranger, il n'y a aucune transparence. Il y a une opacité totale. Personne ne sait quand ou comment ces artistes sont payés. Le ministre des arts et de la culture connaît quelque chose par rapport à ce problème. Comment se fait-il que les auditeurs, par exemple, n'ont pas d'audience auprès du *Board* et en ce qui concerne le *performer's fee* pour les artistes tels que le chanteur, le musicien, le chorégraphe, le danseur qui ne sont pas associés à la MASA pour des raisons légales, il y a quand même provision à cet effet dans le *Copyright Act*. Comment expliquer tout cela ? M. le président, il y a pas mal de problèmes au niveau de ce ministère. Je ferai un appel au ministre des arts et de la culture pour qu'il puisse réunir autour d'une table, le président

de la MASA, l'administrateur, les représentants des artistes, les éditeurs, les producteurs - en tant qu'auteurs/compositeurs de la MASA - et moi-même en tant que député.

*(Interruptions)*

Je pourrais moi-même donner un grand coup de main afin de faire avancer les choses, M. le ministre, puisque je suis directement concerné. Quant au *Copyright Act*, depuis des années on attend une nouvelle législation. C'est toujours en attente. J'espère que dans les jours à venir on pourra avoir une première ébauche de ce *draft*. Je demanderais au ministre, avant que cela ne vienne au Parlement, de s'assurer que ce projet de loi soit bien *ventilate* parmi *all stakeholders* et qu'on ait leur opinion pour ensuite venir au Parlement avec un nouveau *Copyright Bill*.

M. le président, avant de terminer, je voudrais dire quelques mots concernant ma circonscription. Dans la conscription No. 1, quatre fois de suite, l'honorable Madame Navarre-Marie et moi-même avons été élus. Notre ami, l'honorable Veda Baloomoody, nous a rejoint et on a maintenant une équipe militante au dans la conscription No. 1. Depuis 1995, on a été en alliance avec le Parti Travailleiste, avec le MSM. On a eu M. Armance du FTS. Depuis des années, les militants de la circonscription réclamaient trois élus du MMM. Je dois dire un grand merci à notre *leader* et à notre bureau politique pour avoir accepté de nous donner trois militants.

M. le président, qu'ils s'appellent Baloomoody, Rajen Dayalah, Oomar ou Shariff, ce qui est plus important pour nous dans cette circonscription c'est d'avoir trois militants et, le résultat, comme vous l'avez constaté, était sans appel malgré que certains nous disaient que '*zot pe donne flanc pou laisse whatever rentre dans No. 1*'.

Je voudrais dire un grand merci à tous ces électeurs qui ont fait confiance à ce trio. Je voudrais aussi attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur certains problèmes qui je pense sont assez urgents. M. le président, le premier concerne la Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile (CMT) à la Tour Koenig où il y a un problème de pollution. A maintes reprises, j'ai soulevé ce problème au niveau du Parlement, que ce soit à l'ajournement ou par le biais des questions parlementaires. Mais je dois dire que très peu d'efforts ont été faits par la CMT pour essayer de résoudre ce problème de pollution à la Tour Koenig. C'est le plus gros problème à la Tour Koenig.

Pourtant les directeurs de la CMT auraient pu aider à assainir la situation en rehaussant tout simplement les cheminées qui sont là-bas. Nous ne sommes pas loin de la mer, ils auraient pu rehausser les cheminées à une hauteur raisonnable et ces particules de fumée auraient été à la mer au lieu d'atterrir sur les habitations de la région juxtaposée. Donc, cela aurait coûté trois,

quatre, cinq ou dix millions de roupies pour sauver la santé de ces bébés, de ces enfants qui sont affectés. Les journaux ont fait état de cela plusieurs fois mais, malheureusement, il n'y a pas eu beaucoup d'efforts de la part de la compagnie pour assainir la situation.

En ce qui concerne l'élargissement du *coastal road* à Pointe aux Sables, ces quinze dernières années on a vu quand même des développements énormes au niveau des lotissements résidentiels – région la Pointe jusqu'à Petite Rivière. Il y a plusieurs morcellements qui ont été développés. Il y a des maisons partout. Il y a beaucoup de gens relativement, je dirais, aisés qui sont venus habiter la région et ils ont tous au moins une voiture, si ce n'est pas plus. Donc, ceci dit, il y a tous les jours un trafic routier de plus en plus important sur la route côtière de Pointe aux Sables. Ce qui fait qu'aujourd'hui pour quitter la route de Pointe aux Sables au niveau du pont de Grande Rivière, c'est devenu une corvée, un casse tête tous les jours pour les habitants de cette région. Donc, l'élargissement de cette route se fait attendre depuis des années maintenant. Je voudrais que le ministre concerné puisse prendre note et faire une descente des lieux avec les élus, PPS et autres parce que tous les terrains qui se trouvent des deux côtés de la route sont des propriétés d'État. Ce sont des *State lands*, ce ne sont pas des terrains privés. Je pense que cela ne devrait pas poser de problème pour acquérir ces terrains qui sont des deux côtés de la route côtière de Pointe aux Sables qui sont des terrains étatiques.

Ceci m'amène à dire aussi que, concernant la congestion routière à Grande Rivière, je me souviens avoir fait des *site visits* dans le passé avec l'honorable Bachoo, le *Deputy Prime Minister*, hon. Dr. Beebeejaun, sous différents gouvernements. Je ne sais combien d'ingénieurs et de techniciens sont venus pour voir comment on pourrait éventuellement soulager le problème de congestion au niveau du pont de Grande Rivière. Les années passent mais, malheureusement, il n'y a toujours pas de solution, M. le président. Je voudrais quand même demander à nouveau au ministre concerné de faire le nécessaire pour qu'on puisse au moins voir la lumière au bout du tunnel parce qu'il s'agit de décongestion routière au niveau de Grande Rivière.

Concernant le projet de tout-à-l'égout qu'on attend toujours à Pailles, il y a eu l'acquisition des terrains, le *way-leave* a été obtenu depuis des années. J'ai vu dans les journaux le *compulsory acquisition* que le gouvernement a fait à cet effet pour pouvoir accéder à ce projet. Depuis il y a eu trente millions de dollars, je pense, d'emprunt qui étaient liés à ce projet depuis 1997, mais jusqu'à maintenant on attend toujours. Le projet ne démarre toujours pas. Donc, je

demandera au ministre concerné d'accélérer ce dossier parce que le besoin de connecter au *wastewater* est de plus en plus important dans ces régions parce que la terre - c'est ce qu'on appelle la glaise - n'absorbe pas vraiment l'eau dans cette région et on risque d'avoir des problèmes assez graves dans les mois qui viennent si on n'arrive pas à démarrer ce projet de *wastewater* dans la région de Pailles. Idem pour le problème de l'eau. J'ai déjà soulevé ce problème récemment mais, malheureusement, j'attends toujours. On va voir dans les mois qui viennent s'il faut revenir avec une question parlementaire, je vais y revenir.

Le problème de l'eau dans ma circonscription, M. le président, s'est aggravé dans pas mal de régions depuis quelques années. Donc, je vais y revenir à travers des questions parlementaires, mais, en attendant, j'attire l'attention du ministre que ce problème est en train de devenir un problème national.

M. le président, concernant le trafic à Camp Chapelon - je vais terminer là-dessus - je me souviens qu'en 2005, beaucoup de ceux qui avaient voté en 2000 pour le MMM étaient très en colère contre nous. Il y en a dans cette Chambre qui ne diront pas le contraire. Les habitants étaient très en colère parce qu'on avait fermé l'accès de l'autoroute pour entrer dans Camp Chapelon parce qu'avec l'augmentation de la limite de vitesse qui passait de 90 kilomètres à 110 kilomètres, les ingénieurs, les techniciens ont vu que le temps qu'un véhicule essaie de négocier le tournant à gauche pour entrer au Camp Chapelon du côté du CEB, la voiture qui venait de Port Louis, n'aurait pas le temps de déboucher et cela causerait des accidents régulièrement. C'est pour cela que les techniciens à l'époque avaient fermé cet accès là. On était dans le gouvernement. Dans cette région, on avait dit: *'Voilà nou pé ferme l'accès dans région Camp Chapelon parski ena enn seul communauté qui habite là'*.

*(Interruptions)*

I swear!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Dr. Beebeejaun knows about it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Silence, please!

**Mr Barbier:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they even said why they did not close the entrance to Cassis near Royal College because there is another community there. This was the campaign that they did in 2005. The hon. vice-Prime Minister who was there in a meeting, knew what he promised to the people there? *'Pas tracassé, deux semaines après quand nou gayne election*, we are going to open this road'. Five years have passed now. No one can open this road because of this problem of access. This is the blunt truth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Today, I know we cannot reopen this road for security reasons, but I am requesting this Government - which promised the people of this region - to at least give access and have a flyover system for vehicles and people to get in Camp Chapelon. This is not my promise. This is Government's promise and I expect that, in the next five years, this will be done.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

*At 4.48 p.m. the sitting was suspended*

*On resuming at 5.26 p.m. with Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs S. Bappoo):** M. le président, je voudrais d'abord remercier et exprimer ma reconnaissance au Président de la République, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, pour le discours-programme. Je voudrais aussi féliciter *Mr Speaker* pour sa reconduction à cette auguste Assemblée et aussi à vous, *Mr Deputy Speaker*, pour votre élection. Je dois aussi féliciter tous ceux, hommes et femmes, qui ont fait leur entrée pour la première fois à cette auguste Chambre et qui se montrent bien-sûr à la hauteur de l'attente de leur électorat et aussi faire la fierté de notre pays.

Mais, M. le président, il ne faut pas perdre de vue également, l'engagement positif, la qualité et le sens de *leadership* du Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qui, pendant ces dernières années, a fait de notre pays, un pays phare, sur le plan régional et mondial. Je suis sûre qu'il fortifiera notre pays avec les grandes réformes à venir, ce qui fera de lui un des chefs de gouvernement qui fera encore honneur à son pays et à son peuple.

Je ne manquerai pas aussi, M. le président, de féliciter notre jeune parlementaire, l'honorable Ms Stéphanie Anquetil, ma colistièrre dans la circonscription de Vacoas/Floréal qui, par son *maiden speech* sur le discours-programme, a fait une excellente performance. Elle représente pour moi, un pan de vie d'une des plus illustres personnalités et grand tribun du Parti Travailleiste, Emmanuel Anquetil, dont les convictions socialistes et travailleistes, créatives et

imaginatives, ont tracé le destin de notre île Maurice. Je souhaite du fond du cœur que l'honorable Ms Stéphanie Anquetil ait une riche et longue carrière parlementaire et je suis certaine qu'elle apportera sa contribution à l'édifice d'une nation mauricienne, prospère et intelligente.

M. le président, le discours-programme est réaliste et honnête. Réaliste parce qu'il s'inspire de la continuité de l'effort dans le travail déjà accompli durant ces cinq dernières années par le précédent gouvernement. Et honnête dans le sens qu'il est fondé sur des mesures qui sont conformes aux aspirations de la population, à la justice sociale, à une bonne redistribution de la richesse nationale aux plus faibles, aux plus vulnérables et à de nouvelles opportunités.

Cela, en dépit des tentatives de l'opposition, et je dirais bien l'opposition MMM, qui ont tout fait pour brouiller les cartes; déstabiliser ce que le gouvernement a construit et essayer de créer un sentiment de malaise social alors que le gouvernement précédent et actuel veut consolider les relations intercommunautaires.

Pour démontrer la mauvaise volonté de cette opposition, on peut parler, M. le président, à longueur de journée de ces missionnaires de la haine qui ont voulu faire accroire, lors de la campagne électorale, par exemple, qu'il existe une division entre les communautés. Cela est très grave. Cette opposition a vécu dans les plus énormes contradictions et qui démontrent à quel niveau d'instabilité elle est prête à s'enliser. Je peux aussi citer un exemple flagrant de ma propre circonscription avec mes deux colistiers, l'honorable Ms Stéphanie Anquetil et l'honorable Nando Bodha où, à la dernière minute, l'opposition, constatant la défaite, a tout fait pour diviser notre électorat, l'électorat bleu, blanc, rouge, en se basant sur une campagne divisionniste et castéiste. On arrive ici pour dire qu'on a des agendas très divisionnistes et communaux. Cela heurte quand je le dis. C'est pourquoi vous dites : « madame, ce n'est pas gentil de le dire. » mais nous avons vécu cette propagande durant les quatre à cinq derniers jours.

L'opposition, M. le président, n'a pas digéré sa défaite électorale. Aujourd'hui, elle nous rabat les oreilles avec des formules creuses car elle n'a pas d'arguments pour convaincre. Qu'est-ce qu'on venait d'entendre tout à l'heure ? Que des contradictions ! Tout est contradictoire pour l'opposition. Ils sont eux-mêmes dans la confusion totale.

*I have listened to a few comments and criticisms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, made by a few members of the Opposition, especially concerning the election which they consider not free and fair. L'opposition avance des chiffres voulant faire croire qu'il est le parti le plus fort, récoltant*

le plus fort pourcentage des votes. Ce qui gêne dans leur observation, c'est qu'elle est banale et réductrice, parfois à la limite même du ridicule, car nous savons tous que toute élection se mesure avec les règles de *First Past The Post*. L'Alliance de l'Avenir a gagné et l'opposition assume sa défaite.

From the very outset, I had the impression that whatever was being said, has been uttered with an intention to create a very bad impression to the effect that Government is responsible for directing elections which were not based on criteria of equity and fairness and that it has been doing nothing to improve the electoral procedures to render elections free and fair.

I would like to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, it has always been the intention of Government to improve electoral procedures and we are going on improving them. We all know that we have transparent ballot boxes and, at the same time, stringent regulations regarding discipline and security procedures are applied inside and outside the polling stations. This makes our institutional organisation more effective and efficient. But my only apprehension, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is - maybe all hon. Members will agree with me - that persons with severe physical disabilities have had a lot of difficulties to cast their votes. I am sure that appropriate measures will be taken by the Electoral Commission to improve this situation.

The Ministry for Social Security has already submitted several proposals to the Electoral Commission for making things easier for disabled persons and why not a special voting room only for persons with severe disabilities at the ground floor of the polling centres. I am sure that my colleague, the Minister for Social Security, will see to these measures together with the Electoral Commission.

When I heard the first Member of Savanne/Rivière Noire telling the House that the last general election was not free and fair *ou a été d'un caractère irrégulier*, this is not correct and it's not true because, if the hon. Member has taken the pains and time to hear what the independent observers from the SADC, from the African Union and the Electoral Commissioner from India - they were all in Mauritius - have said, he would have found for himself that their overall impression was that the last general election was indeed free and fair to their entire satisfaction. They acknowledged that the election provided a fairly comprehensive outline of the electoral systems and procedures in respect of democracy.

Ceci dit, M. le président, permettez-moi de revenir au discours-programme. Le discours-programme 2010-2015 commence par préciser au paragraphe 3, la position du gouvernement en matière de la poursuite de notre politique de démocratisation de l'économie, la transformation de

notre pays en une société d'opportunités qui sont basées sur les valeurs d'unité, de l'égalité et de la modernité. C'est cette vision qui nous permettra de continuer à construire et à consolider nos acquis et nos réels poids politique à l'avenir.

Le programme gouvernemental, au paragraphe 4, reflète cette politique encore plus déterminée, encore plus active en ce qu'il s'agit d'allier avec efficacité économique à la justice sociale. *I quote –*

*« Economic efficiency and social justice will continue to underpin all actions of Government. Government will resolutely work towards strengthening national unity, entrenching democracy (...) and ensure that the population at large becomes stakeholders in national development. »*

M. le président, posons-nous pour un instant la question suivante. Comment serait le pays si on n'avait pas pris les mesures nécessaires pour affronter les difficultés du monde d'aujourd'hui ? La fin du vingtième siècle et le début du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle sont certes marqués par un monde déboussolé où il y a des défis constants au niveau économique, politique, social et culturel. Nous vivons dans un monde très vulnérable. Nous avons devant nous une image de déséquilibre mondial avec les risques d'une détérioration du paysage économique.

The economic downturn which is hitting the world cannot be avoided in our country, Mauritius. The pressure on our economy is very hard and sometimes unbearable. Some of our problems are beyond the control of Government. But, fortunately for us, as the hon. Prime Minister always puts it, *I quote –*

*“Our economy is resilient”.*

Tous les indicateurs économiques et les signaux d'alarme sont au rouge dans plusieurs pays. L'Europe, un des principaux marchés, est confrontée à la crise de l'euro, celle qui frappe les marchés financiers européens et même ceux en Asie. Nous subissons les effets du problème de la dépréciation de l'euro entraînant avec lui, des problèmes de déstabilisation économique partout ailleurs. Pour cela, il a fallu une position ferme avec une détermination qui ne laisse à aucune ambiguïté. D'ailleurs, au paragraphe 81 du programme gouvernemental, il est clairement fait ressortir que, *I quote –*

*« Government will consolidate the country's economic resilience to successfully cope with external shocks and global uncertainties ».*

Dans tous les cas, la population aura apprécié le rôle vital que le gouvernement a joué pour affronter ces problèmes et pour maintenir la résilience de notre économie.

M. le président, je dois féliciter encore une fois, le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, et le précédent gouvernement auquel j'ai eu l'honneur d'assumer des responsabilités. Un gouvernement qui a amené le pays au succès économique durant les cinq dernières années. Ce ne sont pas des contradictions, c'est la vérité des vérités. Le précédent gouvernement a renversé une situation de marasme économique hérité en 2005 avec une relance de la croissance, une baisse considérable de l'inflation, une réduction du déficit budgétaire, la création de 40,000 emplois directs, le maintien des pensions et des aides sociales aux groupes vulnérables évaluées à plus de R7 milliards. *This is costing the fabulous sum of Rs7 billion, although we have been going and are still going through difficult period and have not had the intention either to reduce or to suppress it, as part of our philosophy remains to maintain and to strengthen the Welfare State.*

M. le président, c'est l'équipe - ce n'est pas n'importe qui - gouvernementale.

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, je dois dire que sortir le pays de « l'état d'urgence économique » pour cette ère de prospérité apparente aura été en grande partie grâce à une diplomatie économique à laquelle, encore une fois, le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, a jeté de tout son poids politique à la diplomatie économique. D'abord, pour permettre à notre pays de refaire son image de marque à l'étranger et pour faire bénéficier au pays de multiples avantages découlant des accords de partenariat avec l'Europe et les Etats-Unis pour faciliter l'écoulement de nos produits textiles, la Chine pour les R8,5 milliards pour l'agrandissement de l'aéroport SSR, l'Inde pour sa coopération dans plusieurs autres domaines. Donc, voilà l'illustration, parmi tant d'autres, en termes de bilan de la politique étrangère et la réussite du gouvernement, et nous allons continuer dans cette même ligne.

But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me have a special note now on women candidates in the last election. Since independence, Sir, our country has made great strides insofar as women's emancipation is concerned. As a democratic nation, we have to ensure participation of women in all walks of life. Our nation has achieved great strides as far as education and career prospects for women are concerned. We have achieved, during the last 35 years, greater involvement of women in politics in spite moving from 17.1% in 2005 to only 18.8% this last election. But what has not been said by the Opposition regarding women candidates of l'*Alliance de l'Avenir* to the effect that most of them will be going to l'*abattoir*? Have you heard that in the press conferences?

(Interruptions)

Every night, on the television, we heard that the women candidates from l'alliance *Bleu Blanc Rouge* will be going to *l'abattoir*...

(Interruptions)

C'est ça la place réservée aux femmes en politique ! Aujourd'hui, des grands débats sur femmes et politique ! Mais je ne m'attendais pas, M. le président, à une telle insulte venant d'un parti qui prétend être très avant-gardiste à l'égard des femmes, mais qui nous dit maintenant, que la place de ces femmes est à l'abattoir. On est bien là et trois sont ministres au conseil des ministres, ce qui représente 12%.

(Interruptions)

*M. le président*, this *Bleu Blanc Rouge* alliance has been able to elect nine women, that is, 13.04% and only four to the Opposition, which corresponds to 5.79%. Today, we also have three lady Ministers and this is the trend which we are following as far as women and politics are concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to my Ministry, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. Following the enactment of the Equal Opportunities legislation in this National Assembly in August 2009 and also following what is going on in the international fora, a full-fledged Ministry of Gender Equality has been set up and is tied up with Child Development and Family Welfare. This Ministry will, of course, be the key driver for further achievement of women's empowerment and, at the same time, gender equality. It is a renewed commitment of the Prime Minister and the Government to give gender equality its real place in a modern society and the measures that were spelt out at chapter 11 of the manifesto of the Government –

- (i) to improve the allocation of resources to women for equity;
- (ii) to respond to their practical and social needs;
- (iii) to support gender mainstreaming and, finally
- (iv) to give new impetus for future policy orientation bear testimony.

Since 1995, during the 4<sup>th</sup> UN World Conference on Women in Beijing - I was Minister at that time - member States found that there will still be persistent inequalities between men and women and the performance indicators measuring the status of women worldwide revealed that despite the legislative provision, policies and programmes in place for women empowerment, there is a gap between equality. It was found that the social relations of power between men and

women relegated women to a subordinate position and hindered their empowerment. So, the gender concept was introduced to look at the social relations between women and men and, subsequently, the gender and development approach was adopted on addressing unequal gender relations which prevent equitable development and which lock women out of full participation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, gender equality will not only empower women to overcome poverty but, at the same time, their children, families, the community and the country. We need to engender our development policies. One of the fundamental measures in the Government Programme is stated at paragraph 128 where Government will sustain its policies, programmes and projects from a gender perspective while extending technical assistance to all Ministries for the formulation of gender sectoral policies.

The gender equality does not imply only that men and women are the same, but it measures that the interests of both men and women are taken on board. The National Gender Policy Framework outlines the Mauritius vision for gender equality and women's empowerment. It is results oriented and expresses in broad terms how to translate that vision into reality.

I might say that there has been much progress made over the last two decades, but there is still work to be done and to improve the situation of women in our country. The gap is still too much. Can we imagine that, in our country, only 29.1% of females are in employment compared to 65.1% of employed males? There is need to plug this gap, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. You will be astonished to note that 44.1% of females are still homemakers. This potential must be tapped for women's participation in various sectors of the economy. The last figures from the CSO about unemployed people reveal that 60% of the unemployed persons registered at the employment office are women compared to 40% for males.

This Government believes strongly in women empowerment, women entrepreneurship, and has taken bold initiatives to improve the business environment and promote this entrepreneurial culture in our country. There are today some 2,200 women entrepreneurs registered at the Entrepreneur Council. My appeal is that potential women entrepreneurs should not hesitate to contact the National Women's Entrepreneur Council for information, counselling and advice. They must be encouraged to join in. I also want to promote technology-intensive for this sector so that in the long run, we have a modern entrepreneurship sector, capable of producing new and innovative and broader range of products.

Women are not to be seen involved only in informal sectors or in sort of "hobby-type businesses", but they must be seen in high value-added enterprises. So, there is a lot to do as

regards empowerment of women, education, and elimination of gender discrimination, to enhance women's influence in key decisions that shape their lives and those of their children in three distinct areas, that is, their home, their workplace and also the social and political spheres.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the strength of our economy depends how strong and competent our people are. I mean here, both men and women, as they are our only assets; we do not have other natural resources. Our asset, *c'est notre nation, la population*, and they are both men and women together. Our society must be strong. We can only achieve a sustainable strong economy when our men and women are given the same opportunity to create wealth. There must be national inclusiveness, and not exclusiveness. We need to enact policies that will eliminate social disparity between sexes. We need to understand about the pressures which mothers, women, have to face in trying to put work and family together. This is very important for the survival of families, to understand what the woman, the mother has to face in putting together work and family. It is very tough to work in a highly pressurised environment and deal with family issues at the same time. That's why my Ministry's ongoing programme, which is known as "men as partners" will be revised, reviewed and consolidated so that, at level of families, both men and women, husbands and wives, boys and girls, can share better responsibility at family level.

We have already launched a National Sensitisation Campaign for gender equality on 24 June 2010. It was marked with great success. We had with us the public sector, private sector, NGOs, non-State actors, trade unions, and the civil society. We are going to bring it at the level of the island everywhere, creating a consciousness on the need for a change in mindset, at changing gender roles and the need to bridge the unequal power relations that remain the root causes of inequality between men and women.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me quote here from the UNDP Policy Note 2005 which says

-

"When development is not engendered, it is, of course, endangered."

So, we must be cautious, and prevent us from this danger.

My Ministry will continue to boost up women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming with a view to achieving gender equality and gender equity. To that end, the Government's Programme speaks about it, and my Ministry will soon proceed to the setting up of a Research Centre for Gender Equality; *une sorte d'observatoire sur le genre*. This centre will provide both advocacies, education, support services to both women, including adolescents and

men, in the interest of sustaining an inclusive and equitable community, and Government's objective is to make the centre as a gender regional hub for the region. I have already requested UNDP for necessary expertise, and I happy to inform the House that UNDP has been very responsive to my Ministry's request, and has already approved necessary technical and financial resources.

M. le président, je ne voudrais pas terminer sans mentionner d'autres aspects du discours qui touchent l'enfance, l'adolescence, la famille, la violence domestique et la pauvreté.

Paragraphs 132 and 133 of the Programme state that -

“Government will intensify its action to better protect the child”.

The child, by definition of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is 0 to 18 years. *Donc, quand je parle de l'enfant, je ne le dissocie pas avec l'adolescent, les jeunes, que ce soit les garçons ou les filles.* If we want to build a society based on the principles of human and child's rights, it is imperative that its legitimacy, growth and development be reckoned with respect, dignity, equity and social justice.

Tous les jours, nous entendons parler des problèmes qui traumatisent le pays tout entier. Face à des problèmes de société qui touchent à la délinquance, la violence conjugale, les agressions sexuelles contre les enfants, les viols, il y a un élément humiliant. Je ne vais vous citer, M. le président, que quatre cas ; deux pour les enfants et deux pour les adultes. Vous allez vous-même vous rendre compte du degré d'humiliation des familles et des enfants.

Des dizaines de cas d'enfants et de jeunes en danger sont référés à mon ministère tous les jours. Nous avons un problème infernal ; un manque de personnel atroce au sein du ministère. Je ferai appel au ministre des finances au moment des préparatifs du budget. Nous avons un manque de personnel, parce que les cas augmentent tous les jours. Souvent, les adultes, supposément responsables de ces enfants, mettent en péril leur sécurité, et commettent des atrocités contre eux. Il y a eu, par exemple, le cas de deux fillettes de sept et neuf ans référé à mon ministère. Pouvez-vous imaginer, M. le président, que deux sœurs qui vivaient avec leur papa ont été abusées sexuellement, et cela à plusieurs reprises, par leur oncle paternel qui vivait sous ce même toit avec le papa ? La mère a repris la responsabilité des deux fillettes. Cependant, elle vit avec un concubin qui la violente physiquement. Quel est l'avenir de ces enfants? Quel est l'avenir de cette mère de famille?

Il y le cas d'une fillette de six ans qui a été ébouillantée par sa maman. Vous réalisez, ébouillantée par sa maman! Quand mon ministère avait effectué une enquête, ils ont découvert

que la sœur de l'enfant, âgée de 14 ans, est enceinte de cinq mois de son beau-père, soit le concubin de sa maman. Quel cercle vicieux ! La mère qui, elle, est enceinte de quatre mois du même concubin, âgé de vingt ans, nie être au courant de la grossesse de sa fille ainée. La fille, ainsi que la maman, est enceinte de ce même concubin et ce jeune homme n'est pas à son premier délit sexuel. Il a aussi abusé sa voisine de onze ans. C'est cela notre société d'aujourd'hui ! Où allons-nous?

Au niveau de la violence domestique, il y a le cas rapporté d'une habitante de Triolet, une femme battue par son époux et, lors de ses démêlées, elle a eu deux doigts fracturés et des brûlures au dos avec un fer à repasser. Malgré son état, le mari a refusé de l'emmener à l'hôpital et l'a séquestrée en lui proférant des menaces de mort. Tout cela se passe tous les jours.

Il y a le cas de cette autre femme de 41 ans qui est aussi poignant. Elle a rendu l'âme après avoir été agressée aux cisailles par son concubin, un alcoolique. Elle devait mourir une semaine plus tard à l'hôpital et, laissant derrière elle, quatre enfants.

M. le président nous avons un abri pour les enfants à Pointe aux Sables. Je suis très peinée quand je visite cet abri : des bébés qui sont là sans parents, pas de maman, pas de papa, des conditions difficiles, des enfants d'âges pré-maternels, primaires et secondaires. Des problèmes de société qui se répètent tous les jours.

*(Interruptions)*

*'Pas cinq ans ! Non ! Excusez-moi ! Cela se répète tous les jours. Ce ne sont pas des choses qui se sont passées pendant les cinq ans écoulés.*

*(Interruptions)*

*Je vais vous expliquer. L'honorable membre est avocat. Vous connaissez bien les cas qui sont référés à la cour en tant qu'avocat.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Address the Chair, please !

*(Interruptions)*

Silence, please ! No cross-talking!

**Mrs Bappoo:** Excusez-moi, M. le président. Ce sont des cas parmi des centaines qui traumatisent le pays chaque semaine et chaque mois. C'est la déchéance de la moralité. C'est une insulte à la dignité de l'enfant et de la femme. Cette situation nous interpelle tous. Au-delà des discours et de bonnes intentions, il est urgent, M. le président, qu'il y ait action, l'engagement, la détermination et la sincérité, et un soutien honnête du gouvernement et de l'opposition et les

médias et, bien sûr, le public, dans cette bataille. Ce n'est pas de la politique partisane pour parler des enfants abusés ou sexuellement violés etc.

*(Interruptions)*

Ce n'est pas de la politique partisane et faire de la publicité sur ces cas qui traumatisent notre pays. M. le président, permettez-moi de parler un sujet qui touche au fond la société mauricienne. Là, j'arrive avec les adolescents, répertoriés comme étant difficiles, c'est-à-dire, *children in conflict with the law*.

Plusieurs ministères, tels que le ministère de l'éducation, notre ministère, le bureau de l'*Attorney General* et tout le monde se plongent sur ces législations pour voir comment pouvoir protéger ces enfants. D'abord, il y a une perception que tous les étudiants adolescents font l'école buissonnière ou du vagabondage hors de l'école, ce qui n'est pas vrai. Mais il existe en même temps un problème qu'il faut accepter et analyser et prévenir toute étiquette ou stigmatisation contre les enfants et les adolescents liés aux modes d'une société moderne. Je viens de parler à mon collègue, le ministre responsable de la nouvelle technologie. Il faut que tout le monde soit acquis à l'idée qu'il faut faire quelque chose pour pouvoir protéger nos enfants.

Il y a plusieurs personnes qui sont motivées par de réels intérêts à sauvegarder notre société. Nous sommes une société libre, mais pas permissive. Il y a un groupe d'opportunistes, les jeunes ou les moins jeunes, qui n'ont aucune idée de la moralité et des valeurs morales d'une société. Je peux vous dire que mes consultations avec la Brigade des Mineurs de la Force policière qui, d'ailleurs, sera renforcée, de nombreux parents et femmes qui sont actifs dans les centres des femmes, les *ONG* qui luttent contre ces dérives, me permettent de dire que la situation est suivie de très près. Tout un élan s'est fait autour de l'urgence de mettre en place une plateforme permanente, un *Children's Committee* - un comité pour les enfants - avec les étudiants, les collégiens. On travaille directement avec mon collègue, le ministre de l'éducation. La *National Children's Council Act* qui prévoit un *Children's Committee* pour donner à ces enfants un forum pour les éduquer, les informer qu'ils ont des droits, mais qu'ils ont aussi des responsabilités. J'invite les parents, les enfants agressés, ceux qui subissent la maltraitance et la pédophilie, à faire appel au service d'écoute et d'encadrement de mon ministère sur le *Hotline* 113. Il faut développer la présente génération à l'école de la discipline et du respect. Il faut arriver à cela. Il faut que les enfants et les adolescents adhèrent à l'école de la responsabilité sociale et la discipline et pour cela les parents ont aussi un rôle très important à jouer. Il faut

aussi développer cette culture parentale. A ce sujet, je compte instituer les écoles des parents en collaboration avec mon collègue ministre, l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree, dans tous les centres de femmes, même au niveau des *PTA's* des écoles, des associations parents et profs, des centres sociaux, des centres communautaires, qui permettront aux parents d'avoir une connaissance et les techniques de communication permanentes avec leurs enfants.

M. le président je dois vous dire que pour être parent, c'est comme apprendre un métier. Si vous voulez travailler, il faut se former. La formation est primordiale. Cela s'applique aussi pour les parents ; devenir parents, oui, mais il faut connaître ses responsabilités d'où la formation à travers les écoles des parents dont je me suis prononcée depuis mon arrivée au ministère. Et là, je me permets de répondre à certains doutes exprimés, ici et là, pour ce qui est de l'exploitation sexuelle des adolescents. Le doute alternera avec mes convictions profondes. Je sais avec certitude, par exemple, que le gouvernement viendra sous peu renforcer l'arsenal légal contre ce nouveau fléau. On passera à l'action. La Brigade des Mineurs sera renforcée. On travaille déjà en étroite collaboration avec les *ONG*.

Un *Emergency Team*, composé d'officiels de mon ministère, des *ONG* et des membres de la société civile, a été mis sur pied pour mieux encadrer les victimes des cas de maltraitance ou d'abus sexuel en cas d'urgence. Même dans le cas des deux enfants suite à l'incendie à Belle Mare hier, très tôt le matin, l'*Emergency Team* du ministère était présent à Belle Mare. Je veillerai à la formation du personnel qui fait partie de cette équipe car il y a nécessité de se mettre continuellement en question et de voir si elle dispose des atouts et des outils à appréhender les nouveaux enjeux liés à la protection des enfants. M. le président, c'est là que le gouvernement travaille sur un *Consolidated Children's Bill* qui soit conforme avec les provisions de la Convention des Nations Unies sur les Droits de L'enfant.

*Pour terminer, M. le président, en ce qui concerne le Family Welfare, this is another main concern of my Ministry. Of course, Government will sustain its policies for the promotion of the family welfare and the protection from domestic violence with the implementation of its National Plan of Action. The Domestic Violence Act was amended in 2007, but not yet proclaimed.*

M. le président, je lance un appel à mon collègue, l'honorable *Attorney General*, à ce que cette loi soit promulguée au plus vite car le nombre de cas de violences domestiques ne cesse d'accroître et je tiens à faire savoir à la Chambre qu'il existe, à travers les six *Family Support Bureau (FSB)* du pays, un service d'écoute, de *counselling* et de support psychologique en

rappelant sur le *hotline 139* pour des cas de violences domestiques et le *hotline 119* pour les problèmes familiaux au *Family Support Bureau* de Bel Village.

Never before has such a plan been set up and such a societal problem been addressed. My Ministry is already implementing the National Strategic Planning and Capacity Building Programme to combat domestic violence. I do believe that the formulation of a Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy, as it is being worked out by the Ministry, will give sound results. My Ministry is already implementing a project called ‘Men as Partners’, but which will be reviewed and consolidated for the participation of men in all family affairs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the road to combat societal problems is a relentless struggle. To meet the problems of child pregnancy, child birth by mothers below the age of 15, monoparental families, the Ministry is finalising the study on teenage pregnancy. This study will provide an in-depth analysis of the prevalence of teenage pregnancy, give a comprehensive outlook on the possible causes and consequences of early teenage pregnancy and enable Government and stakeholders, including NGOs and religious bodies, to adopt a holistic approach to support teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers and also reduce teenage pregnancy. This report will, of course, examine the well-being of the future generation.

One of the fundamental measures is the provision for better achieving women’s empowerment in all sectors of development. I will come up with a new National Women’s Council Bill with the various amendments which are being worked out. We will be coming up with the construction of a new Women Empowerment Centre at Rivière du Poste; a Women Centre at Bel Ombre and a new Women Centre at Vacoas. The one which already exists, France Boyer de la Giroday Women Centre, has already been pulled down because of its old structure and a new building will be constructed. The construction of a Women Empowerment Centre at Plaine Verte is also in the pipeline.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, never before has such a scale of empowerment towards women been targeted. This is the outcome of the result of Government’s vision and policy.

As regards to poverty, Government is fully conscious that some people are living in poor condition. At paragraph 67, it is said that –

*“Government pledges to redouble its efforts to combat poverty (...)”.*

We will not forget that when we speak about poverty, we have the problem of feminisation of poverty which we have to tackle. On that record, I fully welcome the setting-up of the new Ministry that is, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, to

enhance the quality of life of these vulnerable groups. We have already, both Ministries, embarked on some joint projects together to meet the needs of these poor families. Opportunities will be given to them to move out of the poverty trap and measures will be taken to solve the problems linked to women and children empowerment, including *la féminisation de la pauvreté et la protection de la petite enfance*.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would say that the Government Programme represents a road map which will take the country to its next level of socio-economic development. So, we have to adhere to it. We need to go for implementation. We need to monitor, evaluate and give results. In the elaboration of the Programme, we have certainly been guided by the three key words of *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*, that is, *l'égalité, l'unité et la modernité*. We will have to build on the solid foundation established. The standard of living, the quality of life, the social environment and the democratic fabric have always been a reference in this part of the world as well as globally. We are bent to treading on the same path.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we mean what we say and we say what we mean. So, we will succeed, and I thank you for your attention.

(6.14 p.m.)

**Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien):** M. le président, laissez-moi vous féliciter, ainsi que le *Speaker*, pour votre élection à la présidence de l'Assemblée Nationale. Laissez-moi aussi féliciter le Président de la République qui a rendu public le programme du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir lors du discours-programme prononcé le mardi 08 juin dernier. Mon appréciation va aussi à tous les députés responsables qui étaient présents ce jour-là.

M. le président, les amis de l'autre côté de la Chambre pensent que '*Mahen ene vendeur*'; Mahen n'est jamais un *vendeur* et '*zamin li pas pou vendé*'. Pendant cinq ans - quand j'étais dans l'opposition - j'ai fait mon travail en tant que député de l'opposition et j'ai assumé ma responsabilité pleinement en tant que député de l'opposition. Aujourd'hui, le MSM est dans le gouvernement, j'assume ma responsabilité pour défendre ce gouvernement. Le Premier ministre, mon *leader* et le gouvernement peuvent compter sur Mahen Jhugroo pour les défendre pendant les cinq ans à venir. *Mahen pas ene vendeur et la famille Jhugroo zamin ti ene vendeur !*

Before I proceed, allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to welcome all newly elected Members.

M. le président, c'est avec beaucoup d'espoir et de fierté que ce gouvernement – fort du soutien indiscutable obtenu aux dernières élections – abordera l'avenir avec sérénité, détermination et confiance. Ce peuple averti et intelligent s'est donné à fond pour reconduire l'équipe PTR/PMSD/MSM au pouvoir. Je profite de cette occasion pour remercier le Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, ainsi que mon *leader*, le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, pour leur confiance placée en moi, en me nommant *PPS* pour s'occuper des circonscriptions numéros 12 et 14.

Je dois aussi remercier profondément l'électorat de la circonscription No. 4 pour la confiance placée en moi durant les cinq dernières années. Je tiens à souligner, qu'à la requête de mon *leader*, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, je n'ai pas hésité de me porter candidat dans la circonscription de Mahebourg/Plaine Magnien où j'ai été élu avec mes deux colistiers, l'honorable Dr. Vasant Bunwaree et mon ami, l'honorable Thierry Henry. Je remercie infiniment l'électorat de cette circonscription qui a placé leur confiance en cette équipe. Comme promis, le jour de la proclamation des résultats, je réitère ma détermination d'être le député de tous les habitants de cette circonscription indistinctement de leur sensibilité politique et nul besoin de dire que je suis déjà un député de proximité.

M. le président, lors de la campagne électorale, le *Leader* de l'opposition, dans un *meeting*, avait déclaré que l'électorat du numéro 12 allait me jeter dans la rade de Mahebourg, en se demandant : '*Eski li kon nazé meme ça ?*'

Aujourd'hui, M. le président, ce sont ses trois candidats qui ont été emportés par la lame de fond 'Bleu-Blanc-Rouge'. Il en est de même pour ces autres aspirants – *ramassis* - premier ministres, tels que : '*Gro Fey, Pagla Mamou, Razwar et Pak Pak! Kot zot!*'

*M. le président, on reconnaît que le Premier ministre est non seulement un rassembleur, mais aussi quelqu'un qui est à l'écoute de toutes les bonnes suggestions.* I wish to recall here that when my party, the MSM, was in the Opposition, we were not only criticising the Government, but we also came with concrete and good propositions. We wish to thank the hon. Prime Minister who entertained our suggestions and included them in the Government Programme 2010-2015, like the abolition of the NRPT, the removal of tax on interest on savings, the phasing out of the National Pay Council and the reinstatement of the tripartite mechanism, the transformation of Mauritius into a duty-free island and the reconsideration of the Métro Léger Project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are all aware that six months preceding the dissolution of the National Assembly, we have witnessed very sweet and *comique* PNQs, *spécialement faites pour séduire le Premier ministre*. And the nation knew very well the aim of the Leader of the MMM. The hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, as a wise Prime Minister, took the right decision and at the right time, *pour ne pas revivre l'histoire de la tortue et du scorpion*. *Comme on le dit, le MMM est un parti foncièrement de l'opposition, qui a débuté dans l'opposition, grandit dans l'opposition et qui sera toujours durable que dans l'opposition*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to the Government Programme. The consolidation of the law and order is still one of the top priorities of this Government. In order to tackle crimes, rape, abuses and aggression, and to deal with offenders, some 5,000 Police Officers will be recruited during this present mandate and the installation of CCTV cameras will be extended to other high risk areas. We all know the positive results that the CCTV cameras are giving in the Flic en Flac and Quatre Bornes regions. This Government is also envisaging to review and to reinforce the existing law in view of making penalties tougher. The legal framework will be reviewed to combat criminality in general.

This Government will come with a new Police Act and Police procedures and Criminal Evidence Act whereas the present Bail Act will be reviewed and the wearing of electronic bracelet on suspects *en liberté conditionnelle* will be introduced. *En passant*, I would like to seize this opportunity to put on record, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the effectiveness and quickness of the Police Force in recapturing the escaped detainees from the Grand River North West Prison. Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police Force on the whole will bear major reforms and will result in its shifting from a Force to a Service, as pointed out in the National Policing Strategic Framework.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an integrated strategic plan for sports will be prepared soon in collaboration with all stakeholders. The Sports Act will be amended to address weaknesses in the existing legal framework. New sport complexes will be built in different parts of the island. The construction of a new football stadium of international standard in the South of the island will be most welcomed. In view to encourage the development of sports culture, this Government will come forward with a policy to boost the sports sector for the maximum utilisation of all sports infrastructures in the country. Our sports have always been a great source of satisfaction and pride, and this Government will focus on reinforcing all opportunities for our athletes to shine in competition, be it at regional, African and world level.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, inhabitants of my Constituency, namely those living in Trois Boutiques and Mare Tabac, are at present facing serious problems of flooding during heavy rains. While implementing the derocking project, the existing drains were destroyed thus causing overflow from the incoming water, *leur faisant subir des problèmes énormes*. Being conscious of these problems, I shall ensure with the help of my colleague, the hon. Minister Anil Bachoo, and my two elected friends, that appropriate actions would be taken before the coming raining seasons and appeal to Government to move very quickly. This will go in the preventive aspect and I am sure nobody would like to experience potential repeats of damages after torrential rains in recent past at Mon Goût.

I note in the Government Programme, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there is mention of a port in Mahebourg. This project is a long and outstanding one. It will expand the Freeport activities and trans-shipment. The Government will pursue with the modernisation of the Port, including cargo handling and storage facilities. Government will take necessary measures to improve logistics, information flows and customs processing. I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is high time that we seriously consider delocalising some of the activities from Port Louis to Mahebourg and part of the traffic congestions to and from the capital will be partly relieved.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a representative Member of Constituency No. 12, it is an honour and privilege that this Government is investing massively in the expansion and modernisation of the SSR International Airport. I am sure that this will transform our present airport into a modern and sophisticated one in the region. It is worth mentioning that a second runway will be constructed and will be used only for landing of aircrafts. This project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will definitely create thousands of new jobs, and I hope that job seekers living in the vicinity will be given due consideration for employment and priority as mentioned by my friend, hon. Dr. Bunwaree.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think it is time that Mauritius starts to concentrate beyond the seafood hub. Mauritius has a sea territory of 2,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Coming from a pharmaceutical background, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am convinced that new efforts should be deployed to make Mauritius a pharmaceutical hub for Africa where there is a growing demand for generic drugs.

New technologies will enable the manufacture of high value added pharmaceutical products from sponges found in the sea and fish by-products. The growing of pearls should also

be envisaged accordingly. Eventually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a whole new array of industries can grow out of new sources. Thousands of jobs can then be created.

In regard to the local authorities, it is high time that new income generating activities be thought of. For example, in the context of Maurice Ile durable, the municipalities and district councils can come with strategies to sell the enormous amount of waste for the manufacture of compost and eventual energy and recycling concerns being contemplated.

M. le Président, dans notre souci d'alléger le fardeau social de ceux considérés économiquement faibles, ce gouvernement procèdera à la livraison de 550 maisons d'ici fin février 2011 et aussi construira 10,000 logements sur les 1,000 arpents obtenus dans le cadre de l'accord avec la MSPA.

M. le Président, je salue l'initiative de notre Premier Ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, de créer un ministère *full-fledged* pour l'intégration sociale afin d'améliorer la qualité de vie des gens vulnérables et la lutte contre l'exclusion. Nous savons qu'il existe 229 poches de pauvreté absolue. Des actions énergiques doivent être entreprises pour les loger, les éduquer, les former et aussi élaborer un plan en leur faveur.

M. le Président, l'île Maurice ayant toujours eu une vocation agricole, il est essentiel de poursuivre une politique agricole agressive en vue de réduire nos importations agro-alimentaires qui bouffent une bonne partie de notre budget et, en même temps, fragilisent notre économie.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in relation to the tourism sector, I know that my very good friend, the hon. Minister of Tourism, hon. Nando Bodha, is working with new strategies to attract more tourists from the East like India and China. Air connections should rapidly be established with several cities in China. Emphasis should also be put to keep the European tourists to visit us, as they represent our bigger market share. The hotels industry should reinvent its business model and cater for eventual growing numbers of visitors from India. The new tourism economy developing worldwide demands and warrants a new mindset. We just have to look and adapt at what the Emirates have been doing with the tourism industry in the past 15 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the new Water Resource Bill to be presented in this august Assembly, due care attention will be given to reduce the water leakage in our distribution network. Two new barriers at Bagatelle and Rivière des Anguilles and also a new water treatment at Pailles will be constructed. *Les travaux entrepris par le Waste Water Authority pour*

*l'implantation du système de tout-à-l'égout à travers le pays continuera pendant ce présent mandat.*

Et, aujourd'hui, M. le président, en ma qualité de patriote, je réitère mon attachement au sens de discipline et de dur labeur de tout un chacun pour faire progresser notre pays. Soyez assuré, M. le président, que je vais travailler sans relâche pour atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés ainsi que pour le bien-être des habitants de ma circonscription.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without aiming at frustrating the Opposition, we all know that the last election was free and fair, as pointed out by the favourable report submitted by the international election observers. But the episode of Mr Hossen Atchia and hon. Reza Uteem, the two candidates of the MMM in Constituency No. 2, confirms the saying of hon. Ganoo that the elections were not fair in only that constituency.

Before resuming my seat, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure that this Government, under the staunch leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and with hon. Pravind Jugnauth, as vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, will drive Mauritius towards new heights in the field of social economic development. *Je vous rappelle que notre gouvernement a toujours eu les bonnes intentions et que seuls les actes seront les juges de nos bonnes intentions.*

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(6.37 p.m.)

**Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to present my congratulations to you for being chosen unanimously as Deputy Speaker, and also my congratulations go to the incumbent Speaker, Mr Purryag, for the way the debate has been conducted so far in – to quote the words used in the speech from the President - a spirit of equity.

As a newcomer to this House, I wish to thank the Clerk of the National Assembly and the staff for having made us feel welcome.

I must thank, first of all, my Constituency No. 17, Curepipe/Midlands, for having been elected. I also came to this Assembly thinking that I would find a theatre of hope, a theatre of dreams, and it is quite unfortunate that, in the course of debates, I feel that many MPs need to be reminded that the elections are over, that there is some work to be done and that our priority remains the poor people of this country. In a spirit of poverty alleviation, poverty is not always

being the absence of riches or richness. Actually somebody once said: "Poverty is like heat. You cannot feel it, you cannot touch it. You can only go through it."

Having gone through the election, all of us, on both sides of the House, have known the difficulties, the hard times, all those hours we spent fighting each other, but I feel that there is absolutely no point gargling about recriminations - past and present - because, at the end of the day, you end up with mouth ulcers. These are my first impressions of what is an august Assembly,

I remember, during the time I was doing my HSC, when we ran out of teachers at the college, we were asked to be present at the assembly to learn about General Paper. Hon. Kee Chong Li Kwong Wing was my contemporary and we came to learn a lot from this assembly. We learned the art of debating. We learned the art of looking forward. Maybe the insults of the day were quite almost the same, less toxic, but quite pertinent. It is my intention on the occasion of this maiden speech to restrict myself to the health sector, feeling - using the words free and fair, I think elections being free and fair are not free and fair - that the quality of treatment in our hospitals has to be free and fair. What we actually have in our hospitals right now is that, if you don't know someone, you don't go to the hospitals. The Minister has a lot of good intentions, but then the Assembly is a museum of good intentions. If good intentions could cure this country, we would all be very happy. What we expect is value for the treatment invested in the hospitals.

The quality of the service in the hospitals has to be bridging the gap between the private sector and the public sector, not building bridges out of the public sector into the private sector. Many doctors, the majority of doctors, are hard-working professionals as is the nursing staff, but you do have a certain amount of doctors who seem to consider the hospitals as being catchment areas for private practice with patients having, at least, to pay one visit privately to be entitled to public treatment freely. These are the bare facts of life in our hospitals and we need to have private practice regulations.

I am quite agreeable if they could go for what is in the Government Programme, that is, state-of-the-art paediatric hospital, state-of-the art women's hospital, but we need to have the art to improve the state of what we already have. There is no point trying to build a geriatric hospital when you have to take medicine to the people rather than take people to medicine. A geriatric hospital, while desirable, while advisable, while maybe affordable - I do not hold the purse strings of finance - will it answer to it? I would have hoped that the Minister straightaway orders all hospitals to at least clear two wards for geriatric population of this country in every single

hospital. Geriatric patients should not be ferried from the far north or far south to a centralised geriatric centre where they will be left almost unattended, because we have a culture of visiting patients, a culture of attending to patients, a culture of bringing food to patients, and the amount of food we bring to patients, takes me to another line of thought, when I start asking myself: how much does Government spend on food in the hospitals?

The amount of wastage at the level of food in the hospitals is tremendous and we also need to review the specialist care. Being seen by specialists does not mean you are being seen by God. Certainly not! We need to review the quality of specialist care both in the private sector and in the public sector and then to be able to control all that. I would be most grateful if we have had less political appointees, if we could have a Healthcare Commission, an independent Care Commission that would be able to ensure that we have a quality control. Right now, quality control in our hospitals, whether we like it or not, is by the independent radios - '*explik ou cas*' or '*explik cas ou camarade*'. We need to have all these independent commissions on the health care system to be able to review the standard of care in the private sector. I mean most MPs are concerned with the 'Shok Samachar' road death list that comes out every morning because we have to see whether anybody is dying in our Constituency as we have to attend funerals. This seems to be the order of the day in many Constituencies even though some people might not agree, but we need to review the death in the hospitals - private and public sectors - and have, at least, a death conference to ensure maximum efficiency. Did the person who died could avoid dying? Was the right treatment given?

Then we have to go forward, we have the famous Medical Council - I think the Minister mentioned in the course of her intervention that it was a bulldog *sans dents*. I mean I love bulldogs. They are lovely dogs. They scare people. They look ugly and this is the Medical Council. It looks ugly, scares people, but is lovely at heart. But the Medical Council is not a bulldog *sans dents*. It is a bulldog wearing dentures, which dentures are in the custody of the Ministry of Health which chooses to fit it with the dentures to bite as and when the Ministry requires. I find there is a note in the Government Programme to the effect that the terms of reference of the Medical Council Act will be reviewed towards the certification of specialists only. I see no other change. We pride ourselves in having one of the rare Medical Councils which can take action only against doctors of the private sector and the doctors in the public sector are not answerable to the Medical Council. There is basically almost no discipline at this level and if the Minister is keen in reviewing on changing, if the Government is keen on

changing the terms of reference of the Medical Council, we, on this side of the House, have no intention to object to this kind of change, provided the patient improves. We need to have a certain degree of discipline in the profession for too often people are becoming specialists by long-distance learning and are employed in the private sector. It's absolutely amazing. I almost regret my career as a forensic pathologist. Life was good, my overtime was excellent.

We also see there is going to be a change in advising on the healthy lifestyles of this country and the Minister even earlier intervened on scabies – *la gale* – in the Black River District and ensured that the water supply was improved. Do we now have to rely on having *la gale* to have an improvement in our water supply in this country? I am sorry, but this is the type of service we have been having from the CWA almost every day. Almost at every sitting we have MPs complaining about the lack of water supply in their Constituencies. We should aim, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, towards eliminating wastage in the health sector at all levels - food, drugs. We only have to walk in the hospitals of Mauritius, outside the Government pharmacies and we will see the amount of pills that are thrown, because the person came for some other reasons and the pills are just wasted. “*Ça pas travay*” and they just throw the pills and they go away. The level of wastage is incredible and we are trying to convert Mauritius into a medical hub. To use a term dear to the Minister, staggering the patients, but in Mauritius we keep having the stars staggering in to have their hair transplants. This is almost the only form of medical hub we are having. Again, there is quite a good intention - I am not objecting to good intentions - but I am just trying to explain whether they can be realised.

As to converting regional hospitals into teaching units, I would like to see whether we can do that, whether we should not consolidate. I have my fellow MPs from Rodrigues and they should be the ones to be able to tell about the quality of the medical service in Rodrigues, in Agalega before we start improving and dreaming too much over here. We should learn, Mr Speaker, Sir, to walk before we run. We should, first of all, think about what are the priority areas of medicine. If I were to ask the Minister of Youth and Sports what are his priorities, he would tell me sports medicine. I am sure he has a lack of sports medical officers. We have a lack of doctors even in the prisons. Even a prison doctor should be a kind of psychologist to be able to tackle the problems at the very root. Do we have the statistics, before we start dreaming, of how many people actually are studying medicine outside Mauritius or in Mauritius? We have now doctors made in Ukraine, made in China, made in Mauritius, and the variety of the quality. I am not going to comment on medical schools. It would be presumptuous on my part to comment on

the quality, but can we standardise? Should we not instead create a medical hub of our own doctors, provided for the day when we are in excess of the product to be able to export them to those areas of Africa where they might be recognised and they might work. We have an excellent nursing profession, but a lack of nurses in all fields. We seem to have inherited a system, we are not a pure Mauritian system, we have to be adapted. We have inherited a kind of a National Health Service from the colonial days which has not adjusted itself to the time, to the years, to the age, to the year that we are living.

I read again in the programme that we are going to invest in machines - fair deuce! I fully agree, but before investing in machines, we should invest in maintenance. Take a look around any of the hospitals and see all the apparatus which are broken down! There is a lack of maintenance; there are some companies who have flogged their products on our market. I even helped the Ministry of Health on one occasion. I was in Japan and tried to locate the company which had sold the apparatus. The company had literally disappeared, as had its website. We have to be very careful.

We have to look at the pharmaceutical products in this country. I am glad the preceding orator talked about all the pharmaceutical products that could come from the sea. Believe me, we have a lot of pharmaceutical products which could go into the sea, which are substandard! We have to return them to the sea, from where they should come from eventually. We have substandard drugs. We should maintain the quality of the drugs. This is not, I hope, a political speech. This is a maiden speech in the interest of the suffering public, of the electors; those people who come to us almost every time, with a major health problem. I have yet to talk about dental care. I hope that no one over here has a toothache by night. There is no dental service available by night in this country, unless the dentist happens to be your relative. So, we need to...

*(Interruptions)*

Somebody is mentioning Dr. Sorefan. He is a good Member. This is why, maybe, he was taken on board.

*(Interruptions)*

I think it is about enough from me on the medical scene to fill your stomach, prior to the football match later.

*(Interruptions)*

Je pense que même le ministre des administrations régionales m'a compris, parce qu'il a dit 'enfin' ; il a faim. C'est bien de se faire comprendre des fois. Je vais continuer en français ; je serai mieux compris à l'avenir.

Je voudrais bien terminer en parlant de ma circonscription No. 17, Curepipe/Midlands. L'honorable Dr. Bunwaree est un francophone, il comprendra lui aussi. Je crois que je vais terminer avec la circonscription No. 17, ville lumière, qui n'a plus trop de lumière, ville très humide qui a besoin d'infrastructures sportives. C'est une ville où la nuit arrive très vite, où il faut beaucoup de lumière pour que les jeunes puissent pratiquer leurs jeux. C'est une ville en état d'abandon. J'ai toujours dit qu'au lieu d'éliminer cette horreur qu'était le marché de Curepipe, le marché a été réparé sans toilettes ; il faut être constipé pour aller au marché, généralement. Je crois qu'on est en train de contempler un *food court* au-dessus du marché. Il y a un élevage de rats dans la cour de la municipalité, et des rats qui apprennent à nager dans le Lake Point.

*(Interruptions)*

Mais, s'il aime les animaux ! On a le droit de nourrir des rats!

C'est une ville qui a besoin d'attention, et je souhaite que les ministres responsables nous aident, surtout dans une ville où il y a environ douze cités ouvrières, où il y a des rues dont les noms d'éminentes personnalités sont en train de garnir les plaques ; les noms dans cette ville ont besoin d'aide. Je crois que c'était : 'Maurice, c'est un plaisir'. Je me demande si cela pourrait s'appliquer à Curepipe par un jour de pluie d'hiver.

M. le président, je vous remercie.

**Mr Khamajeet:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move for the adjournment of the debate.

**Ms Deerpalsing rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun):** Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 13 July 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

*At 6.54 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 13 July 2010 at 11.30 a.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### DRIVING LICENCE – ISSUE

**(No. 1A/1) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to persons suffering from temporary and permanent disabilities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether there is any special condition attached to the issue of a driving licence.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that applications for driving licences are processed by the Licensing Officers of the Traffic Branch. The Licensing Officer may request any person suffering from a temporary or permanent disability who applies for a driving licence to be first medically examined by a Police Medical Officer. The latter may refer the person to a Government Medical Specialist if the need arises. Thereafter, the Licensing Officer determines the type or class of vehicle, if any, that the applicant may be authorised to drive. After passing the necessary driving tests, the applicant is granted a driving licence. In other instances depending on the degree of the disability, the Police may vary the conditions for the issue of a licence. The specific conditions that are normally applied are –

- (a) the driver will only drive the vehicle in which he passed his driving test;
- (b) if the applicant drives a car with automatic gear transmission or an adapted car, the registration number of the car as well as other conditions imposed by Police Medical Officer are typed on his driving licence, and
- (c) the driving licence is renewed on a case to case basis upon the submission of a medical certificate by a Government Medical Officer and examination by the Police Medical Officer.

### **VEHICLES REGISTRATION PLATES – TENDER**

**(No. 1B/261) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the replacement of existing vehicles registration plates by yellow ones, he will state –

- (a) if any tender has been launched for the supply thereof, indicating the date, and
- (b) if it has been awarded and, if so, the name of the successful bidder and details of the contract.

**Reply:** I am informed by the National Transport Authority that, to date, no tender has been launched for the supply of the replacement of the existing vehicles registration plates by yellow ones.

### **PERSONS (DISABLED) – WHEELCHAIRS – ALLOCATION**

**(No. 1B/262) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether she will state the number of disabled persons who have applied for the allocation of wheelchairs since last year and who are still on the waiting list and say -

- (a) when the last order for wheelchairs was made;
- (b) the number received to date, and
- (c) whether any tender has been launched for the supply thereof and, if so, when.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that 2,705 persons have applied for a wheelchair at my Ministry from January 2009 to date. 2,184 of these persons have already been provided with a wheelchair and the remaining 521 persons are now on the waiting list.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, the last order for wheelchairs was placed on 5 October 2009 for 875 wheelchairs (775 adult and 100 junior) and the wheelchairs were received on 24 December 2009.

As for part (c) of the question, new tenders were launched on 26 February 2010 for 2000 wheelchairs (1700 adults and 300 Junior).

The consignment was due for delivery on 18 June 2010, but due to some shipment problem it will arrive around mid July 2010. This will enable my Ministry to meet all the requests till December 2010.

### **PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL THEATRE - RENOVATION WORKS**

**(No. 1B/263) Mr R. Issack (Fourth Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Port Louis Municipal Theatre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) if the renovation works thereof have started and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the expected date of its re-opening.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that renovation works to the Port Louis Municipal Theatre have not started due to the fact that the consultants have not yet been selected by the Central Procurement Board.

I wish to inform the House that bids for Consultancy Services for preparation of bidding documents for the project were launched in February 2010 by the Central Procurement Board and the closing date was 25 May 2010. A Bid Evaluation exercise of the Consultancy is presently being carried out by the Central Procurement Board. The renovation works are estimated to cost around Rs350 m. and a matching grant of Rs50 m. is already available to start the project. The remaining sum requested to undertake the project is actively being looked into with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, it is difficult at this stage to indicate when the Theatre will be re-opened to the public.

### **INDUSTRIAL LEASE AGREEMENT**

**(No. 1B/264) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the State Lands, he will state if Article 18

of the Industrial Lease Agreement for the lease thereof has been amended and, if so, why and, if not, whether Government intends to amend it.

**Reply:** Initially Article 18 provided for an Industrial Site Lease to be automatically cancelled “*de plein droit*” in case of change in ownership or shareholding structure of a company which may impact on the control of the company.

While this provision served its purpose in discouraging developers from speculation over State lands, it has also acted as a hindrance for genuine promoters wishing to bring substantial Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for implementation of projects. In many cases injection of FDI from renowned companies would *de facto* necessitate a change in the shareholding structure and control of the beneficiary company.

In this context, it has been decided to amend Article 18 to provide for the Industrial Site lessees to seek approval for any change in ultimate beneficial ownership or any change in beneficial ownership or shareholding, that may impact on the control or management, at least 15 days before such change.

The application is then scrutinised by a Technical Committee comprising, *inter alia*, representatives of the Prime Minister’s Office, of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and of my Ministry.

In addition, following representations made by various stakeholders, including *Associations des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs – Ile Maurice* (AHRIM), in March 2010, Government decided that proposals for cases of industrial site leases for which the projects have already been developed and have been operational for at least one year, will be allowed to change the shareholding structure in the normal course of business.

The above conditions are also included in letters of reservation and Letters of Intent, so that lessees do not have recourse to a change in shareholding structure prior to the signature of the Lease Agreement.

#### **BALACLAVA - KOHINOOR INVESTMENT HOLDINGS LTD – LAND LEASE**

**(No. 1B/265) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State Lands in Balaclava, he will state if Kohinoor Investment Holdings Ltd has been granted a lease of a plot of land thereat and, if so, state –

- (a) when the reservation letter was granted;
- (b) the Letter of Intent was issued;
- (c) the extent thereof, indicating the annual rental value;
- (d) the terms and conditions, indicating the purpose of the lease;
- (e) the amount of taxes and levy paid to Government;
- (f) the nature of the project, and
- (g) if the lease has been transferred.

**Reply:** I am informed that, following a statement made to the Police last year by the hon. Member himself, the Police has been conducting an enquiry on a number of leases allocated on State land including the lease of State land at Balaclava to Kohinoor Investment Holdings Ltd.

As the Police enquiry is on, it would neither be in order nor proper to make any further statement on this matter at this stage.

### **SUGARCANE FIELDS – BURNING**

(No. 1A/2) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the burning of sugarcane fields during the crop season, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association, information as to –

- (a) whether a Protocol in relation thereto has been discussed and agreed to, and
- (b) if it is proposed to stop the practice in line with the Maurice Ile Durable project.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association has an established code of procedures for burning of sugarcane during the crop season. All sugar estates have adopted the code which determines the timing and site of burning, the preventive measures and the required notifications and authorisation.

As regards part (b) of the question, this issue was raised at Government level and consultations are ongoing at the level of my Ministry with the Mauritius Sugar Authority, the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association, the Farmers Service Corporation, the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, the Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board and the Police.

**MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS – STAFF – OVERSEAS MISSION**

(No. 1A/3) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he will give a list of the staff of his Ministry who have proceeded on overseas mission since 01 January 2009 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) purpose;
- (b) duration, and
- (c) the per diem allowances.

**Reply:** The information relating to Parliamentary Question No. 1A/3 is being compiled and will be tabled in the National Assembly shortly.

**GOODS (FROZEN) – NET QUANTITY**

(No. 1A/4) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to packed frozen foods, he will state the measures being taken to prevent overweight of the ice content therein, indicating if there are any regulations to control any abusive practice in relation thereto and, if not, the measures he proposes to take.

**Reply:** The Legal Metrology (Pre-Packed Commodities) of 2006 Regulations provide for the control of pre-packed goods as regards their labelling and accuracy of net quantities. Net quantity as defined in the Regulation refers to the quantity of pre-packed commodity contained in the package exclusive of the package or any material packed with such package. Ice content of frozen goods is not taken into account in the net quantity of the product as controlled by the Legal Metrology (Pre-packed Commodities) Regulations. Inspections and verifications are carried out by officers of Legal Metrology Services to look into net quantity of frozen foods and ensure that there are no abusive practices.

**M1 ROAD - POINTE AUX SABLES & PETITE RIVIÈRE – BRIDGE**

**(No. 1A/5) 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, in regard to traffic flow to and from Port-Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to, if consideration will be given for the construction of a flyover or an interchange at the junctions of the M1 Road and -

(a) the road leading to Pointe aux Sables, and

(b) the road leading to Petite Rivière.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Road Development Authority that instead of a flyover or an interchange at the junction of A1 and the roads, leading to Pointe aux Sables and Petite Rivière, it is proposed to construct a major bridge between Belle Etoile and Soreze. This project forms part of the Road Decongestion Programme, and is expected to alleviate traffic congestion in the area.

#### **CITÉ MARTIAL MARKET FAIR - TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

**(No. 1A/6) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he is aware of the traffic congestion occurring at the Cité Martial Market Fair at Military Road, Port Louis and along roads in the vicinity during fairs and, if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Reply:** The TRMSU has informed that the Cité Martial Market Fair was constructed with a parking space for a number of vehicles. However, the demand for stalls exceeded the number for which provision was made and the Municipal Council of Port Louis authorised vendors to use the parking space to run their business. Hence, vehicles are being parked on the street which is, indeed, hindering the smooth flow of traffic.

Nonetheless, the TRMSU has put in place a number of traffic measures to combat the traffic congestion problem. These are -

(i) parking and standing of vehicles are prohibited on both sides of the Military road, as from its junction with Sir Abdool Mohamed Street;

(ii) delivery is allowed only a stretch of road of about 170m in front of the Market Fair, and

(iii) Kleber and Indian Streets, adjacent to the Market Fair have been converted into one way roads to ensure a smoother traffic flow.

### **CUREPIPE ROAD TAXI STAND - PUBLIC TOILET**

(No. 1A/7) **Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if consideration will be given for the putting up of public toilets at the Curepipe Road Taxi Stand for the convenience of the public.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that no decision has been taken for the time being for the construction of a public toilet at the Curepipe Road taxi stand. However, they did exist in the area a public toilet, which was demolished with the realignment of the taxi stand. There is definitely a need to put up a public toilet in the area, but at a location to be suitably identified.

### **SCHOOL BUSES AND VANS (PRIVATE) – ACCIDENTS**

(No. 1A/8) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to private school buses and vans, he will, for the period 2005 to date, state -

- (a) the number of registered vehicles, and
- (b) the number involved in road accidents, indicating the number of casualties

**Reply:** The Road Traffic Act does not specifically provide for the registration of private school buses and vans. However, the number of registered vehicles operating under a PSV (contract bus) licence for the conveyance of students is as follows –

|          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| Prior to | 2004: 634 |
|          | 2005: 691 |
|          | 2006: 699 |
|          | 2007: 713 |
|          | 2008: 722 |
|          | 2009: 780 |
|          | 2010: 780 |

The Commissioner of Police has informed that since year 2005 to date, seven accidents involving private school buses/vans have been reported to the Police. Eleven children were injured and one died following those accidents.

A breakdown of cases is as follows –

| Year               | No. of accidents | No. of casualties   |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 2005               | 2                | 1                   |
| 2006               | -                | -                   |
| 2007               | 2                | 9 injured + 1 fatal |
| 2008               | 2                | 1 injured           |
| 2009               | -                | -                   |
| As at 04 July 2010 | 1                | 1 injured           |

#### **PETITE RIVIÈRE - IRRIGATION CANAL**

(No. 1A/9) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the covering of the irrigation canal at Petite Rivière from the Princess Margaret Street to the Nundloll Lane, he will state where matters stand.

**Reply:** I am informed that the irrigation canal crossing the residential area in Petite Rivière also known as the Nermont Branch of the Magenta Canal is maintained and used for distribution of irrigation water to planters by the La Ferme and Magenta Water Users Association. I understand that due to major way leave issues, the Ministry of Public Utilities had not been able to undertake the project. The National Development Unit is proposing to have consultations with all the stakeholders for the implementation of the project.

#### **EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT – WORKERS – LAID OFF**

(No. 1A/10) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Employment Rights Act, he will state the number of workers –

- (a) who have been laid off, and
- (b) whose contract has been terminated since the proclamation of the Act.

**Reply:** Under section 37(6) of the Employment Rights Act 2008, a written notice has to be given to the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment where an employer –

- (a) intends to reduce any number of workers or to close down his enterprise for reasons of an economic, technological, structural or similar nature, and
- (b) terminates the employment of a worker for any other reason.

On the basis of the notifications received, the number of workers whose employment has been terminated since the proclamation of the Employment Rights Act, are as follows –

| Period                | Termination of Employment - Economic Reasons | Termination of Employment – for other reasons | Total |
|-----------------------|--|---|-------|
| Feb 2009 to June 2010 | 3,509  | 900   | 4,409 |

### LES SALINES – PAS GEOMÉTRIQUES – ACCESS

(No. 1A/11) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Les Salines public beach in the village of Rivière Noire, he will state if he is aware that private landowners have blocked access thereto and, if so, will he state the remedial actions that will be taken.

**Reply:** As at date, there is no proclaimed public beach at *Pas Géométriques* Les Salines, Black River.

The access that is being referred to in the question is on private lands and, therefore, members of the public have to seek permission from the landowners.

In order to remedy to the situation, my Ministry has taken the following measures -

- (i) a plot of State land of an approximate extent of 5A61P has been earmarked at *Pas Géométriques* Les Salines and action has already been initiated to proclaim this site as a public beach, and
- (ii) a strip of land of an approximate extent of 2A33P has been acquired for the creation of an access from the Black River/Savanne Coast Road to the proposed site for a public beach.

### CASE NOYALE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1A/12) **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 the inhabitants in the region of Case Noyale do not have an adequate water supply 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:** I am informed by the CWA that Case Noyale is supplied from Bois Puant service reservoir of 2,000 m<sup>3</sup> capacity, which is fed from Yemen borehole, with a yield of 4,000 m<sup>3</sup> /day.

Due to low rainfall, there is currently a decrease in the yield of the Yemen borehole, which supplies the regions extending from La Preneuse to Le Morne including Case Noyale. The hours of supply are presently from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and from 2.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

To address the water shortage in these regions, additional water resources will be transferred from La Marie Treatment Plant to Bois Puant service reservoir and some 20 km of pipeline will be constructed. It is expected to invite bids for the works in August 2010.

### SECONDARY SCHOOLS – INSPECTORS

(No. 1A/13) **Mr S. Obegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Secondary Schools, he will –

- (a) give the number of inspectors in post for State Secondary Schools, and -
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Private Secondary Schools Authority, information as to the number of inspectors for Private Secondary Schools.

**Reply:** In regard to part (a), the number of Inspectors in post for State Secondary schools

- (i) Pedagogical Inspectors : 4
- (ii) Inspectors (Pre-Vocational) : 5

Three Pedagogical Inspectors are currently attached to the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division. Following the recommendations of the PRB Report 2008, a Quality Assurance and Inspection Division has been set up in the Ministry.

The structure of the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division is made up of -

- (i) a Director, Quality Assurance who is currently in post in an acting capacity;
- (ii) one Senior Quality Assurance Officer, and
- (iii) eight Quality Assurance Officers.

Procedures for prescribing the scheme of service of the grades of Director, Quality Assurance, Senior Quality Assurance Officer and Quality Assurance Officer have already been initiated. Once the schemes of service are prescribed, action will be initiated for recruitment.

In regard to part (b), there are no Inspectors as such at the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA) since 2001. The Inspectorate Section at the PSSA has been restructured in a Supervisory Unit which is actually manned by -

- (i) 3 Principal Supervisors;
- (ii) 1 Principal Supervisor (Acting), and
- (iii) 9 Supervisors/Senior Supervisors.

### **PRIMARY EDUCATION – COMPLETION RATE**

**(No. 1A/14) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Primary Education, he will give, in each case, for the last ten years -

- (a) the Primary Completion Rate, and
- (b) the Net Enrolment ratio.

**Reply:** As regards part (a), the Primary Completion Rate for the last ten years is as follows –

| Year                   | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Completion Rate</b> | 9    | 8    | 5    | 9    | 00   | 9    | 8    | 8    | 7    | 5    |

As for part (b), the Net Enrolment Ratio for the last ten years is as follows –

| Year       | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>NER</b> | 5    | 5    | 7    | 8    | 7    | 6    | 6    | 5    | 5    | 5    |

### STCM LIMITED – SUPPLIERS

(No. 1A/15) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to STCM Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the names of the suppliers and the value of commodities imported by the Company since its incorporation, and
- (b) if any tender exercise was effected and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, the name of the suppliers and value of commodities imported by STCM Ltd are as follows –

| <u>Product</u>    | <u>Supplier</u>                     | <u>CIF Value USD</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| UHT Milk          | Gujarat Cooperative Milk Federation | 117,984              |
| Lima Beans        | Tetra Fruits                        | 41,342               |
| Refined Salt      | Ojas Exports Pvt Ltd                | 3,360                |
| Lima Beans        | Dalian Happy Fortune Trading        | 28,746               |
| Yellow Split Peas | A1 Online Trading                   | 54,775               |
| Cloves            | Adson Ltd                           | 66,000               |
| Lima Beans        | Tantsaha Mihary Menabe              | 491,048              |
| Milk Powder       | Qingdao United Dairy                | 200,182              |
| Black Eye Bean    | Sarelacos Co. Ltd.                  | 54,990               |

|              |                      |                  |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Lima Beans   | NK Import Export Ltd | 54,990           |
| Basmati Rice | S&S Impex Ltd        | 11,613           |
| Basmati Rice | Wali Co. Ltd         | 77,788           |
| <b>Total</b> |                      | <b>1,202,818</b> |

The total value of commodities imported is USD 1,202.818.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as per STCM Limited procedure, suppliers were requested to send their quotations before making purchases.

### **TOURISTS - 'MAURICE SANS PASSPORT' INITIATIVE**

(No. 1A/16) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the decision to allow tourists visiting Mauritius without a passport, he will –

- (a) give the number of such visitors who have entered Mauritius since the implementation thereof, indicating the category and nationality of the visitors, and
- (b) state whether –
  - (i) any study has been carried out to assess its impact on the Tourism Industry
  - (ii) it will be maintained and, if so, for how long, and
  - (iii) consideration will be given to extending same to tourists from China and India.

**Reply:** I am informed that the decision to allow French tourists to visit Mauritius was taken in the context of the social unrest which took place in Les Antilles (French department of Martinique and Guadeloupe) in February 2009. The social unrest was associated with severe internal problems and unstable political situation which caused many French tourists, including those from Réunion Island, who planned to spend their holidays in that region to cancel their hotel bookings and to change their travel plans.

It was considered that this constituted an ideal opportunity to bring additional tourists to Mauritius, especially that during the same period, Mauritius started to suffer from the adverse consequences of the global financial crisis which had a direct serious impact on tourist arrivals, especially from our traditional long-haul tourist generating markets.

However, certain conditions would have to be fulfilled. In fact, since these tourists travelling to Les Antilles do not need a passport and travel only with their identity card, there was need to waive, as an exceptional measure, the requirement for a passport for these French travellers, in order to facilitate the re-routing of these French tourists to Mauritius.

In this context, following approval conveyed by the Prime Minister's Office, the French tourists, including those from Réunion Island, were allowed to come to Mauritius as from February 2009 on the basis of their identity card only, provided they fulfill certain conditions namely -

- (a) the French nationals should meet immigration requirements, i.e a return air ticket, enough money to sustain themselves during their stay and a hotel reservation;
- (b) the same airline company conveying the tourists should return them to their country of origin, and
- (c) a list of passengers with full personal details should be submitted 3 days in advance for necessary formalities.

The measure was also extended on 27 February 2009 to nationals of Italy not possessing a passport and who have cancelled their planned trips to Les Antilles, under the same conditions, as applicable to French tourists.

In view of the positive impact that this measure has produced on the French market, in that it has helped to mitigate the adverse effects of the prevailing economic crisis on tourist arrivals from that country, it has been decided to extend the measure up to 31 December 2010.

However, concerning the Italian tourists, since there has no significant positive impact in terms of tourist arrivals from Italy, the measure was not extended on its expiry on 31 January 2010.

Concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed that some 9,469 tourists belonging to various social and professional categories have visited Mauritius without passport, as follows -

| Country | Year 2009<br>(Feb to Dec) | Year 2010<br>(Jan to June) | Total |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Reunion | 2400                      | 1737                       | 4137  |
| France  | 2978                      | 1383                       | 4361  |
| Italy   | 917                       | 54                         | 971   |
| Total   | 6295                      | 3174                       | 9469  |

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that a preliminary study has been carried out in relation to a sample of some 1,225 French tourists who travelled to Mauritius during the period 23 February to 30 May 2009. The study has revealed the following main findings -

- 83% of the visitors travelled through Travel Agents and 17% through Tour Operators.
- The top Tour Operators (Exotismes, Nouvelles Frontieres-TUI, Tourinter) have generated 82% of tourists. The remaining tourists travelled through some other 18 Tour Operators
- Some 13% of the tourists came from Paris and 87% from other provinces of France.
- Some 59% travelled with Corsairfly and some 37% travelled with Air Mauritius/Air France, and the remaining 4% used Air Austral, Emirates and Condor to travel to Mauritius.
- The tourists coming to Mauritius came from different social categories, and stayed mostly in middle range hotels, even though there have been some cases where they have stayed in leading high class hotels.
- To date, some 9,469 tourists have travelled to Mauritius through 'Maurice Sans Passport' initiative. On the basis of the findings of the last survey on outgoing tourist, that a French tourist spends around Rs 41,804 for an average stay of 10 days in Mauritius, it is

estimated that the additional 9,469 tourists spent a total of Rs395,842,076 for an average stay of 10 days.

Furthermore, Mauritius benefitted from a wide international media coverage when the measure was implemented, thus generating enhanced visibility for the destination through the publicity given to the initiative taken by Mauritius.

Concerning part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the decision to renew this measure will be taken in consultation with all stakeholders concerned and in the light of the benefits accruing therefrom.

With regard to part (b) (iii), I am advised that it is not proposed to extend the measure to tourists from China and India, being given that according to laws and regulations prevailing in these two countries, their nationals need a passport to travel overseas.

### **ROBERT EDWARD HART AVENUE/OLLIER AVENUE, QUATRE BORNES – ACCESS ROAD**

(No. 1A/17) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether consideration will be given to the opening of an access road for pedestrians or vehicles from Robert Edward Hart Avenue to Ollier Avenue in Quatre Bornes for the convenience of the inhabitants of Résidence Beau Séjour and Robert Edward Hart Avenue.

**Reply:** The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has informed that the access road being referred to is a private road and the owners are not agreeable to declare it public.

### **PRE-HAJJ MISSION - MONEY SPENT**

(No. 1A/18) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the forthcoming Hajj pilgrimage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to –

- (a) the total amount of money spent on –
  - (i) air tickets;

- (ii) per diem allowances in respect of each member of the pre-hajj mission;
- (b) the names of the organisers and officers who will be attending the training on the new transport system in Saudi Arabia, and
- (c) whether the Centre has requested the Saudi Authorities that the quota per organiser be restricted to a maximum of 200 pilgrims.

**Reply:** With regard to the forthcoming Hajj pilgrimage, I am advised as regards part (a), the money spent in respect of members of the pre-Hajj mission is as follows –

| <b>Member Pre-Hajj Mission</b> | <b>Air Ticket</b> | <b>Per diem</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Dr F. Aumeer                   | Rs 41,674         | Rs 27,125       |
| Mr I. Jeeawoody                | Rs 41,674         | Rs 27,125       |
| Mr R. Soobadar                 | Rs 22,158         | Rs 63,444       |
| Mr H. Beebeejaun               | *                 | *               |

\*

All the costs were met by Air Mauritius as per its policy pertaining to duty travel of staff.

As regards part (b), the training on the new transportation system in Saudi Arabia has been postponed. The participants will be designated in due course.

The answer to part (c) of the question is no.