

No. 2 of 2011



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 29 MARCH 2011

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	<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>
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Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
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Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

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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 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. 2 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 29 March 2011

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 Energy Efficiency Bill (No. XVI of 2010);
- (ii) The Courts (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2011);
- (iii) The Assets Recovery Bill (No. II of 2011), and
- (iv) The Revision of Laws (Amendment) Bill (No. III of 2011).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Stamp Duty (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 38 of 2011).
- (b) The Transcription and Mortgage (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 39 of 2011).

C. Ministry of Housing and Lands –

- (a) The Declaration of Planning Area Order 2011 (Boundaries of the Township of Port Louis 1990-1991) (Government Notice No. 40 of 2011).
- (b) The Declaration of Planning Area Order 2011 (Description of the Boundaries of Planning Area No. 2A) (Government Notice No. 41 of 2011).

D. Ministry of Arts and Culture –

- (a) The Annual Report 2008/2009 of the National Library.
- (b) The Annual Report of the Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians (MCRL) for the financial years 2005-2009.

E. Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues –

The Annual Reports and Accounts of the Fishermen Welfare Fund for the period 30 June 2001 to 30 June 2009.

F. Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms –

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Public Officers' Welfare Council for the years ended 30 June 2004 and 30 June 2005 (In Original).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

INFLATION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to price increases since the beginning of the year, he will state if Government proposes to take new urgent measures to control inflation and support the population's purchasing power, including –

- (a) changes to the Value Added Tax regime;
- (b) subsidies on rice, flour and cooking gas to be provided for, in the budget;
- (c) an increase of the additional remuneration that took effect as from 01 January 2011;
- (d) boosting food production, and
- (e) strengthening the Competition Commission and the Monetary Policy Committee.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance & Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole world is living through a period of inflation induced by rising food, energy and commodity prices. Moreover, unexpected geopolitical developments and the situation in Japan are adding to the inflationary pressures. Both advanced and emerging economies are facing inflationary pressures. Mauritius is very exposed to such pressures as we import most of the commodities we consume. These include mainly food and energy products. As a result, headline inflation in Mauritius has very closely followed the global trend rising to 3.6% in February 2011.

Government is closely following price developments at international and domestic level and has been consulting the relevant stakeholders on the appropriate course of action that needs to be taken in the short-term and in the longer-term. As the House is aware, we have already taken mitigating measures.

First, the Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection, has set up an '*Observatoire des Prix*' to provide consumers with information on prices at different selling outlets on a comparative basis so as to help them to make the best buying choices cost-wise.

Second, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has had meetings with different importers and local manufacturers to see how the prices of goods which are regularly consumed by people are reduced or at least not increased in the short-term. These importers and manufacturers reacted very positively by compressing their margins and consequently the retail prices of some 132 items have so far been reduced. The reduction has reached up to 28%. These include rice, milk powder, pulses, noodles, canned vegetables and cheese. These initiatives are helping to alleviate the burden of consumers, more particularly those of the lower income groups.

Third, an Advisory Committee has been set up by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce under the Chair of Mr Pierre Dinan to come up with recommendations about pricing policies and strategies that could be adopted by Government to effectively deal with price increases of goods of regular consumption. The Committee consists of members from the private sector, the consumers' Associations and the public sector.

Fourth, a Ministerial Committee under the Chair of my colleague, the Minister for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, has been set up to follow up the issue of prices, particularly the pricing of essential commodities. The Committee also includes the Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection, the Minister of Tertiary Education, the Minister of Agriculture and myself.

Fifth, we have significantly increased the level of subsidies on rice, flour and cooking gas. These subsidies would reach an estimated amount of Rs1.45 billion this year against Rs800 m. last year.

Had we not provided these subsidies -

- the price of one pound of rice would have been Rs2.95 higher;
- the price of one pound of flour would have been Rs2.50 higher;
- the price of '*pain maison*' would have been 60 cents higher, and
- the price of cooking gas cylinder of 12 kilos would have been Rs200 higher.

Sixth, as I announced on 18 March 2011, the monthly income support for our vulnerable citizens has been doubled to Rs246 per head. For an average family of four persons the total annual income support from Government will amount to Rs12,792. This is an unprecedented measure which speaks volumes of this Government's determination to provide support to our most vulnerable citizens and promote the cause of social justice.

Seventh, as regards part (e), I have announced in the Budget Speech at paragraph 23, I quote "the Monetary Policy Committee has been operating for over three years now. And it has, along with fiscal policy, an increasingly important role to guarantee macroeconomic stability. To

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

Sir Alan Budd has been appointed as independent consultant to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the role and performance of the MPC. He has already had consultations in Mauritius with stakeholders. He is planning to submit his report to Government by the end of April.

Eighth, regarding the Competition Commission, I am advised that the legal framework is in line with international norms and duly empowers the Commission to effectively investigate and check cartels, monopoly abuses and mergers resulting in substantial lessening of competition. The Commission, with a budget of Rs35 m., has been endowed with adequate resources to fulfill its mission. The Commission is currently strengthening its human resources and capacity for analysis, investigation and enforcement.

Ninth, the various components of the Food Security strategy are being implemented. In this year's budget an amount of nearly Rs200 m. has been provided for the various subsidy and loan schemes, investments and other incentives. Out of the 1,000 *arpents* earmarked from the sugar estates, some 200 *arpents* are being prepared for various activities, including potatoes, onions, other crops and livestock production. As regards rice, which is a staple commodity, I am informed that Vita Rice has put 125 hectares of land leased from Rose Belle under cultivation and the first harvest will amount to about 700 tonnes.

Tenth, regarding the additional remuneration, it has always been the practice to provide the yearly wage compensation on the basis of loss of purchasing power for the preceding financial year. For the financial year 2010, the rate of inflation estimated by the CSO at the time of tripartite discussions was 2.7%. In spite of the difficult economic times, Government has in 2011 provided compensation at the rate of 3.2% for all those earning up to Rs5,000 per month, which is well above the inflation rate. The same higher rate of compensation of 3.2% has been granted to all old age pensioners and all recipients of basic invalidity pensions, basic widows' pension and social aid. For any loss in the purchasing power in the current financial year, compensation will be determined by the National Tripartite Mechanism for implementation as from 01 January 2012.

As regards the VAT regime, its rate has remained unchanged since the 2001/02 and 2002/03 Budgets when the rate of VAT was increased from 10 to 12 per cent and from 12 to 15 per cent respectively. These increases were applied at a time when the rate of inflation was 4.4 per cent and 6.3 per cent. Additionally, the VAT which was levied on petroleum products at wholesale stage only was extended to the retail price as from October 2002. We could also have increased VAT to reduce the budget deficit and Government debt. But we precisely chose not to do so as to avoid further pressures on the purchasing power of the consumer.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to all these measures already taken by Government to alleviate the price burden on the population, I have the pleasure to announce on behalf of Government that we are taking yet another significant measure. It concerns the price of Mogas (*l'Essence*) and gas oil (Diesel). This will have an important impact on curtailing the price increases and contain inflationary pressures.

Despite the fact that international oil prices have continued to soar in the past five months, Government has decided to temporarily reduce the charge in the petroleum price structure for refund of hedging losses as follows -

from Rs3.00/L to Rs1.00/L for diesel, and

from Rs3.00/L to Rs1.25/L for Mogas.

After taking into account the VAT impact, this measure would be translated into a price reduction as follows -

For diesel from Rs43.50/L to Rs41.20/L - (a reduction of 5.3%)

For *l'essence* from Rs51.30/L to Rs49.30/L – (a reduction of 3.9%)

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government will closely monitor the situation as regards petroleum prices and make adjustments accordingly.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I can start with the Value Added Tax regime. Only last week, MRA put out official figures that showed that total VAT revenue to Government in 2010 increased by more than 10%. Therefore, Government clearly has room to manoeuvre. Instead of that, in the last Budget, excise duty on petroleum products were increased by 10%. With that kind of VAT revenue increasing by more than 10% in 2010, will Government consider bringing down the excise duty and bringing down VAT which is *frappé* even on the hedging losses? Will Government consider bringing down excise duty to where it was on petroleum products and bringing down VAT?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, now that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is in the Opposition, he is asking this Government to reduce VAT and excise duties. But, in June 2001, let's see the rate of inflation....

(Interruptions)

The rate of inflation was 4.4%; VAT was 10%. The Government of that day increased VAT from 10% to 12% in July 2001...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Jugnauth: ...having an impact of plus point 9 percentage point on inflation rate for 2002 to 2003. That was not all, Mr Speaker, Sir. The rate of inflation climbed from 4.4% to 6.3% in June 2002. In spite of that, the Minister of Finance of that day increased VAT from 12% to 15%, having an impact of 1.4% percentage point on inflation rate.

(Interruptions)

Now the hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking Government ...

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: ... when the rate of inflation that has been established as at end of February to be 3.6 %, to reduce VAT and excise duty. I think this is very contradictory of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that Government now confirms that we will not bring down excise duty or VAT on petroleum products as far as products in general are concerned, with that kind of room to manoeuvre - which I have just quoted, more than 10% increase in VAT revenue from one year to the next - is Government prepared to consider

changing that regime, either to have a variable VAT rate according to different products or removing VAT from the essential products which are still hit by that?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, again, I don't understand the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He says 'removing VAT on essential products' when he, himself – it is good to quote what he said with regard to the VAT Amendment Bill ...

Mr Speaker: No! Can I inform the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that he has some latitude in answering the question, but he cannot go on quoting? He must just give the gist of what was said at that time.

Mr Jugnauth: What I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the contradiction of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Leader of the Opposition himself said that it would have to extend the purview of the VAT on a number of commodities. Therefore, the issue does not arise today. As I said, we are in a very difficult situation. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that we have room to manoeuvre. I don't see how and where is the room to manoeuvre. In fact, we are in a very tight situation. Inflation is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, could you please stop interrupting the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance when he is answering? He is explaining his position, that's all.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't see the remark of the hon. Leader of the Opposition saying about Rs144 m. ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I will not allow one single more minute on this PNQ if Members continue like this! Let the hon. vice-Prime Minister answer!

Mr Bérenger: He is wasting our time

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No! Can I for the times state in the House that I have no control on the answers given by Ministers? I can just draw the attention of the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that he cannot go on quoting, he has to state the gist of what he has said, that's all. I have already called the Minister's attention to that effect.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was saying that we are in a very difficult situation today as the world is witnessing inflation. For example countries, like China, where there was deflation, is experiencing and forecasting inflation. India, Europe, worldwide, countries are experiencing inflation and Mauritius, as we know, is no exception. Therefore, taking into consideration that a number of food commodity prices are going up, taking into consideration that price of petroleum has been soaring and has been going up, it would be irresponsible for the Government just to come and review the VAT and the excise duty. Of course, as I said in my answer, we are going to monitor. We will look at the situation and, just as I have announced, Government has decided, therefore, we will, in fact, reduce that part of the hedging loss in order to alleviate the burden on the population.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: ... the vice-Prime Minister to break here and not replying to my question where I asked whether he would provide for subsidies on rice/flour and cooking gas in the Budget, and for good reason. But why will he try keeping on fooling the people by giving the impression that Government is giving so much subsidy on rice/flour and cooking gas when it is,

in fact, the consumers of petroleum products who are paying for that? If it was provided for in the Budget, it would allow us to bring down the prices of petroleum products by so much.

Mr Jugnauth: Again, I don't understand. Mr Speaker, Sir, let us be clear. STC is charging a fee in order to cross-subsidise for the price of flour, rice and Mogas. Why is that so? Because STC is importing those commodities! I don't ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Member answering? Please, keep quiet!

Mr Jugnauth: According to the Leader of the Opposition - we could have done that - we could have increased excise duties up to that amount, that money would have gone into the Consolidated Fund and then we would have removed that money again to give to STC for the purchase of rice, flour and Mogas. I would say, this is not new, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let's look at 2003 and 2004. That was the time again - that is why I don't understand. The hon. Leader of the Opposition is complaining why we are going like this today but, at his time also, there was a surplus from STC - Rs76 m. - that was used to cross-subsidise with relation to prices.

(Interruptions)

It does not stand to me! I think it is childish to say that we should have taken the money and given it back to STC.

Mr Bérenger: Sir, it is the consumers that are subsidising rice, flour and cooking gas. On part (c) of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, increasing the additional remuneration that took effect as from 01 January 2011, in two months, January and February, the cost of living has gone up by 1.8%. In two months! Therefore, 60% of that meagre 3.2% that was granted as from 01 January has already evaporated and we know that inflation is going to be above 7%. The hon.

Minister is presenting the doubling of the income support as help to those who are affected by these recent price increases. Has he forgotten that, that measure - doubling the income support for about 100,000 beneficiaries - was announced in the December 2009 Budget by the then Minister of Finance, hon. Sithanen? It was not implemented. It is implemented now when the cost of living has got up at 1.8%.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: In the same logic, why are not *les pensionnés*, all those benefiting from social aid, *les handicapés* not benefit also from an increase in their allowances, being given the rate of inflation since January?

Mr Jugnauth: When we gave salary compensation of 3.2%, we have increased the social benefits also as from January. It is only the regulation that appeared that was signed recently, but I must say that this has always been the tradition.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jugnauth: This has always been the case. In fact, I don't know if I have the details, but I can tell the House that every time there has been salary increase, it has taken a few months after, before the Minister signs the regulation. Now, with regard to income support, I can answer for this Government under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. I can't answer for what has been done before. Just to compare, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has doubled the income support to Rs246 per individual per month, but when inflation was on the rise in 2001/2002, it

was not income support at that time, it was food aid. It was Rs30 and for three years. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance and he did not

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has made his point.

Mr Bérenger: On part (d), boosting food production, which is an obvious way of helping, keeping prices of food products down, the Minister gave the impression that *tout va très bien madame la marquise*. Is he aware that the last figures from the CSO are the following: 8% decrease in vegetables over one year in 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir; 20% decrease in fish production and fish from the banks has gone down by 25%. We are heading for catastrophe. So, can I know what new measures are going to be taken? Instead of allowing food production to keep on decreasing, as official figures show, what new measures will be taken on? In the same breath, reference has been made to Vita rice; can I know what kind of support - if Government is convinced that this is un projet *d'avenir* - is being given? I understand that first crop will be sold at a price of some 15% more than imported rice. Can I know what new measures will be taken to boost food production in general, instead of food production going down and down and what special assistance will be extended to Vita rice if Government is convinced that this is a *projet d'avenir*?

Mr Jugnauth: What the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, in fact, stands to reason in one aspect because we have to be careful. We want to increase production as much as we can, but that production must be cost-effective also. It must be economical. What happens when you give support to people who engage themselves into an economic activity is that they produce a product which is, after all, not competitive with regard to importation. We have to be very

careful. We have to see to it that whatever support we give - because it's public funds - that we use it judiciously. Therefore, we are looking at a number of products that can be either cultivated, or produced in Mauritius. That is why I have said that out of the 1,000 *arpents* of land, 200 *arpents* have already been prepared for a number of activities like potatoes, onions, some of the crops and livestock production. Of course, Government stands to assist in whatever way it can, those who are going to engage in those activities. As regards rice, there is a private operator who has, in fact, started on a pilot basis, the cultivation of rice, and Government has given maximum support because we consume rice. It is a staple commodity and, of course, with bigger production, we hope that there will be economies of scale. We are not looking at production locally, we have, in fact, been looking at production in some neighbouring countries. Of course, I won't give the details now, but there are discussions that are ongoing so that, at the end of the day, rice can be produced at an economic price.

Mr Bérenger: The last part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir: the Competition Commission and the Monetary Policy Committee. We know that consumers suffer because of certain monopolies, cartels and also some unhealthy - not all of the importers - arrangements between importers and their own distributors. I heard the Minister saying that the Competition Commission has the required staff? It doesn't to really do a good job. They are doing a great job, but to really do a good job as far as consumer goods are concerned, will the Minister agree with me that they need an increase in staff. As far as the Monetary Policy Committee is concerned, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he agrees with the definition? Unfortunately, in the law, there is no definition of monetary policy. The Governor defines monetary policy as interest rate policy and excludes foreign currency, foreign exchange rate policy. Therefore, what we do

on that side, we can undo on the other side. Can I know from the Minister whether he agrees that there is need to see to it that monetary policy includes exchange rate policy?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, the Competition Commission, in fact, has been set up under the hon. Prime Minister. I must say that is an independent Commission. We cannot interfere with the work of the Commission. I understand that they have about 15 analysts and they are, as I said, looking at strengthening the human resources that they have. With regard to the Monetary Policy Committee, I have just answered, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Je ne vais pas usurper le travail qu'on a demandé à Sir Alan Budd de faire parce qu'il est en train de revoir le fonctionnement après plusieurs années d'expérience.* He is a person who has great experience. In fact, he was so much involved in the Monetary Policy Committee in England and, of course, we will be looking at his recommendations and, eventually, Government will have to act on them. But, I know consultations are being held by Sir Alan Budd.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bérenger: The Minister has referred to the past in different situations. He has also referred to the whole world experiencing problems and so on. Will he agree with me that the right mix of fiscal monetary and other measures will allow us to perform like, for example, Singapore? The hon. Prime Minister likes quoting Singapore. It is a small island like us. It imports everything like us. Is the hon. Minister aware that this week Singapore's estimates of its inflation rate for 2011 is 3.2% only with the right mix of policies? Is he aware that in the UK, precisely VAT on petrol products has just been brought down? In India, all sorts of measures have been taken along the lines that I have suggested, that there is room to better control inflation and, at the same time, increase the purchasing power of the population.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Leader of the Opposition is mentioning India. Mr Speaker, Sir, the tax on gasoline in India is 44 per cent and Singapore has got a different economic structure than Mauritius. We can't just compare like that. Therefore, I will again ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to be patient. Sir Alan Budd is doing the study and will come up with recommendations and then we will see.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/96 with regard to Freedom of Information Bill will be answered by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Ameer Meea!

DRUG SCOURGE

(No. B/54) 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 drug scourge, he will state if Government proposes to set up a Commission of Inquiry to look into all the aspects thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the drug problem is a global challenge. We are all affected by this problem and there is need for concerted and coordinated efforts to tackle it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on many occasions stated in this House that the fight against the drug problems is not the sole responsibility of Government.

Government needs the support of all the citizens of this country, be they teachers, parents, community groups and everyone who cares about the future of our country and our society. As I have stated previously, we should refrain from giving a political twist to this issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are no “quick fix” solutions to the drug problem. We have to address the drug problem on different fronts. Our drug control strategy focuses on enforcement, prevention, treatment, and very importantly rehabilitation.

We are determined to reduce drug supply further through a coordinated response across the law enforcement agencies. Intensive collaboration is being maintained among agencies such as the Customs Department, the Mauritius Post Limited, the Mauritius Ports Authority, the Financial Intelligence Unit and other departments to detect and prevent smuggling of illicit drugs into the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are providing the law enforcement agencies with the necessary tools and resources to do their work. Training of personnel of law enforcement agencies in areas related to combating drug trafficking and money laundering have been stepped up. In that respect we get assistance from friendly countries.

We are having recourse to new methods and technologies. CCTV cameras have now been installed in all operational areas in the Port, in the Airport and Parcel Post Office. Scanners are in operation at the Port, Airport and Parcel Post Office for screening of luggage, courier and cargo. Sniffer dogs from the Police and the Customs Department are also being used at the Port, the Airport and the Parcel Post Office. By the end of this month, we are commissioning a Coastal Surveillance Radar System which will provide surveillance cover on a 24-hour basis off mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega and St Brandon against any illegal activities in the Mauritian waters. We will also be commissioning a new Digital Radio Communication System with more than 3,000 terminals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the prisons, we have strengthened our intelligence capability and increased security measures to prevent access to drugs. We have now the jamming system - which is now in place - to disrupt unauthorised use of any mobile phone. We will continue to put in place new security measures to prevent drugs from entering the prisons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, because of the complexity of the drug problem, international cooperation and coordinated action are essential. We have thus signed multilateral, regional and bilateral agreements for exchange of intelligence and expertise. This has led to some important seizure of drugs which had entered the country.

We will not, Mr Speaker, Sir, give a moment of respite to drug traffickers. The law has been toughened to increase the penalties and the terms of imprisonment. We want to be tough with the drug traffickers. The legislative framework is continuously being reviewed to deal effectively with drug offences. In 2008, we amended the Dangerous Drugs Act to provide tougher penalties for drug offences and other unlawful activities.

In the Government Programme of 2010-2015, we have stated that the existing legislation will be amended to provide for even stiffer penalties for those found guilty of drug trafficking and drug dealing offences. We are in the process of consulting the State Law Office on this.

I mentioned in the past that we will be coming with a new Asset Recovery Bill. In fact, this Bill is on the Order Paper for First Reading today. The new Asset Recovery Bill addresses difficulties currently being encountered for the forfeiture of assets of drug dealers. The Bill will provide for the recovery of assets which are proceeds or instrumentalities of crime, of terrorist property, even in the absence of a criminal conviction. Applications for Restraining and Restriction Orders, and Ancillary Orders, will be made by the Enforcement Authority.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the measures taken by the law enforcement agencies have yielded positive results. The number of persons arrested in connection with drug-related offences has increased from 1,504 in 2000 to 1,899 in 2010. Large quantities of illicit drugs are being seized, for instance, in 2010 about 3 kg of heroin, 55 kg of cannabis and 20,301 tablets of subutex were seized, having a street value of around Rs92,440,000.

We have also observed that the demand for heroin has decreased since drug addicts are now opting for subutex. The number of heroin cases has dropped from 605 in 2007 to 208 in 2010. There were 787 cases of subutex cases in 2007, 795 in 2008, 830 in 2009 and 660 in 2010. So, clearly we can see the difference.

On the demand reduction and prevention side, we have to create an environment where people who have never taken drugs continue to resist pressures to do so and at the same time we are taking measures to make it easier for drug users to stop. We have to protect our youth, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are fully aware that all young people need the most appropriate drug education so that they have a thorough knowledge of their effects and harms. Schools have a clear role to play in drug prevention activities. Drug abuse prevention has been introduced within the curricula of both primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, NATReSA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other educational institutions, runs a Prevention Programme on all the ill-effects of drugs and alcohol targeting specially students and out-of-school youth.

In regard to treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, I am informed that NATReSA, in collaboration with other NGOs, is providing such facilities through ten centres, including two

in Rodrigues. In addition, there are three drop-in centres which provide counselling and support services.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also introduced as from 2006, Methadone Substitution Therapy and the Syringe and Needle Exchange Programme as part of the harm reduction programme; this, with the help of the Clinton Global Initiative after I raised the issue with former President Clinton.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we recognise the good work being done by some NGOs and volunteers in prevention, care and treatment, and rehabilitation of drug users. We will continue to support these organisations.

We believe that we have the appropriate legal, institutional and administrative set-up to address effectively the problem of drugs and we are continuously reviewing these arrangements to meet the changing and emerging challenges. Mr Speaker, Sir, we will continue to take action in a comprehensive, sustained and concerted manner.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the fight against drugs. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are providing and will continue to provide the relevant institutions with all the logistics and other relevant support that they require to fulfil their mission in the relentless fight against the drug problems. Under the prevailing circumstances, the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry is not warranted.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, despite all the measures that have been announced by the hon. Prime Minister in his reply, is he aware that Mauritius has been ranked first in Africa for

the second consecutive year for drug abuse as per the latest World Drug Report of the United Nations office on drugs and crime?

The Prime Minister: There was a question last week which did not come up, but which I have sent. I suggest the hon. Member to look at the answer. We do not agree with the report. This has happened before; when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was, himself, Prime Minister, there was a similar report which he rejected and I reject that report as similarly as he did before.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that there is an urgent need to update our database of information against drug trafficking since the last Commission of Inquiry dates back to 1986, that is, some 25 years back and that we need to give us all the means and information to combat this evil that is affecting the whole of Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: As I have explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are updating all our systems. We need to allow the institutions also to work and see what results are. We are, in fact - without getting into the details - having discussions at this very moment with top officials from abroad who are concerned with these issues to identify whatever weaknesses we might still have in the system, be it at the airport, at the port or at sea.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister has given us a long list of measures already taken. He has also given us figures. When you are out there, you know that these days there is the surge in subutex importation and sale across the country. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what has been done to break *l'axe Paris/Maurice*? It is a very special axis. We all

know who is concerned. We all know what trafficking is done in France itself. There are few guilty doctors and pharmacists. We all know *la filière*. How come *l'axe Paris/Maurice*, in spite of all those measures, is functioning as if business as usual?

The Prime Minister: It is not functioning as business as usual, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me say, first of all, that when we sent top Police officials to France their reaction was - I suppose I can say it - "why are you getting so worried? It is better that these people take subutex than heroin". That was their attitude. But, in any case, we have pursued the matter. As you know, we had a High-Powered Committee on these things especially after the Caterino affair. We have sent officers again to France. I have talked to them when I was in France myself. We are getting, at least, the first stage in our attempt to see remedial action is actually giving positive results.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned prevention rightly so to protect our youth and this has to start in our schools. The school has a major role to play. Will the hon. Prime Minister liaise with the Minister of Education to review this prevention campaign? Presently, NGOs go and have talks in schools. They are volunteers, but do we have a permanent prevention campaign for drugs? Because we all know that the consumption age is decreasing. Will the Minister review the prevention campaign in our schools?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that this is constantly under review. I understand it is not just the NGOs which go and talk to young people in the schools. It is not constant, I must say, but there is campaign through *affiches* and also in the television. But, it is constantly under review and it is my understanding that, at the moment, there is a review of this.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question refers to enquiry. Given that what is noticeably lacking in the struggle against drugs is that we do not have reliable statistics, our knowledge is anecdotal, the information is incomplete - there is no proper database - will the hon. Prime Minister agree to the suggestion made by the MMM that Government should urgently consult the University of Mauritius and foreign expertise to launch an in-depth study relating both to drug consumption and to drug user profile so as to have the hard facts and figures to found an effective policy against drugs in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: I must agree with the hon. Member it is very difficult to get all the facts and figures on this for the reasons that we know, but that is the suggestion I can take on board, yes.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, at our last sitting in December, I asked the hon. Prime Minister to consider live broadcast of destruction of the drugs and now that we are informed that such a huge amount has been seized, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House where matter stands as at now?

The Prime Minister: I think this was done before. That was the point the hon. Member was trying to make that in the past this was done. I think this is a good suggestion.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister if he will be able to inform the House of the number of arrests concerning drug dealers and the number of them who have been convicted?

Mr Speaker: I think it will be fair for the hon. Prime Minister to have notice of the question.

FLIC EN FLAC REGIONS - LARCENY

(No. B/55) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to larceny, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof perpetrated in the Flic en Flac regions not covered by the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Street Surveillance System, since May 2009 to date, indicating in each case the region concerned.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, Since May 2009 to 25 March 2011, 16 cases of larceny have been reported at the Flic en Flac regions which are not covered by the Closed Circuit Television Street Surveillance System as follows -

- 14 cases in Morcellement Anna, and
- 2 cases in Morcellement Safeland 3.

Mr Speaker, Sir, although the access points to these areas are covered by CCTV cameras, the police are taking additional measures to reinforce their presence in these areas. The regular police as well as their specialised units, such as the personnel of the Emergency Response Service, the Anti-Drugs and Smuggling Unit, the Criminal Investigation Division and the Police Bike Patrol have been asked to increase vigilance in the different areas of Flic en Flac to ensure the safety and security of the inhabitants.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, since larceny is more likely to occur in places that are not covered, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister to consider extending the CCTV system

in these areas and also to check the figures because I was informed that there are 40 cases not covered.

The Prime Minister: These are the official figures which I got from the police, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are priorities that the Police look at, for example, the number of criminal cases which have occurred in these areas previously. They also look what are the commercial and financial activities are taking place in these areas, whether any tourist goes to these areas and whether there are places of entertainment. Of course, we have financial constraints, but we tried to extend where we think we should extend.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure the hon. Prime Minister gets the point. The point is: is there a shift? As we have put CCTV cameras here, the larceny is committed next door. This is the question about Flic en Flac, but I am sure, on the basis of that question, the hon. Prime Minister must have asked the Police whether there is that shift taking place?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we are not saying it is not happening, but it is relatively low if you compare. The figures that I have just given are from May 2009 to 25 March 2011. They are relatively low. It is already noted that there is already a shift. People tend to avoid the areas where there are cameras, and they are shifting to other places, and that is why we are continuing reviewing the process.

MAHEBOURG - (CCTV) STREET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. B/56) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mahebourg, including the Mahebourg waterfront, the adjoining areas and

the public beaches of the surrounding regions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Street Surveillance System thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System is a very effective tool, as we just said, for the Police in the fight against crime. It enables the monitoring of criminal activities as well as traffic control thereby improving public security and safety. The use of CCTV Surveillance Systems fits in the overall vision of the Government for a safer Mauritius and already we can witness, as we just said, significant improvement at the level of security and also a decrease in street crimes in those areas where there are CCTV cameras.

We have financial constraints, of course. It costs a lot of money not only to buy the equipments but also to continue to service those equipments. For example, I can tell you - perhaps hon. Members would be surprised, I think I have the figures somewhere - that it costs I think Rs20 m., if I am not mistaken, just for the Flic en Flac project, to continue to service the system.

The police, therefore, intend to extend the CCTV Surveillance Systems to other regions of the island, while giving priority of consideration for the criteria that I have just mentioned, that is, what are the areas that are crime prone, what are the regions with heavy traffic congestion as well as places of tourist resorts.

In line with the above criteria, the Police have already worked out a list of priority areas for the extension of the system. This will be implemented gradually upon availability of funding

naturally and I can say, for example, among those lists, there is the Mahebourg waterfront and the adjoining areas. the towns of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill and their adjoining areas, the tourist area starting from Belle Mare passing through Palmar to Trou d'Eau Douce, including Ile aux Cerfs, the town of Curepipe and its adjoining and lateral areas; also in the 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. We are also looking at extension to the adjoining and lateral areas of the town of Quatre Bornes and, as I say, the region of Mahebourg is on that list.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad to hear that the CCTVs are quite effective and serve as a deterrent against crime. Given the rate of crime is on the upside, can we expect that the time frame has been set to install those CCTVs in those areas identified?

The Prime Minister: Again, as I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to look at our priorities. We can do everything that we wish to do. I am just relooking at the figures. Just the recurrent and maintenance cost for the Flic en Flac project is costing us Rs20 m. annually and the Capital Project was for Rs50 m. and that was for 83 surveillance cameras, as far as I remember. So, again, we will look at priorities. We will try to extend as much as we can. We have heard the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance say that we have financial constraints. We have to look at what our priorities are.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS - LIVE BROADCAST

(No. B/57) 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 live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House on radio and television, he will

state the progress achieved as at to date in relation to the proposed introduction of the motion in the House for the setting up of a Select Committee to look thereinto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that this idea of live telecast of the proceedings of the Assembly originates from us, from the Labour Party. In fact, it was hon. Shakeel Mohamed who first proposed the idea. I am sorry, also hon. Lormus Bundhoo. I have also indicated that I am all in favour of it. I have said it many times, Mr Speaker, Sir. I believe that the live telecast of parliamentary debates can contribute to strengthen our democracy. If we want to further modernise and consolidate our democracy, we need to use every means available to open up our Parliament and bring it as nearer to the people as we can.

But the introduction of live telecast raises many complex issues which will have to be addressed beforehand. For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, I'm sure you are aware of what happens in countries where there have had live broadcast. There are clear rules of coverage which will have to be established, not only to ensure a fair and balanced telecast, but above all, to preserve the dignity of the House as a working body, rather than a place where you can play up to the gallery and a place of entertainment. It is not my job, but it is for the Select Committee to draw from international experience in this regard.

Mr Speaker Sir, the motion was on the Order Paper on 15 December 2009 but, unfortunately, it could not be taken up due to the demise of hon. James Burty David and then we had the general elections.

I now propose to give notice of the motion for the setting up of the Select Committee at the earliest convenience.

Mr Guimbeau: *I believe* le moment est arrivé, M. le président, où ce gouvernement doit tourner le dos à la dictature.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, you are making comments, you are not putting questions. Put your questions.

Mr Guimbeau: We would like to know from our hon. Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, when is that Select Committee going to be set up? When?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The Prime Minister just replied when he is going to set up the Select Committee - soon.

(Interruptions)

Order! I think the Prime Minister said soon. So, you may ask about how soon is soon?

Mr Guimbeau: That is what I am going to ask, Mr Speaker, Sir. How soon is the 'soon' of the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: I would like to tell the hon. Member that he is not talking about Zimbabwe here; he is talking about Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

He should know why I am referring to Zimbabwe, Mr Speaker, Sir. I said soon, and I have explained that I had it in December 2009 and then we had the general elections, and we will do it as soon as it is convenient.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on the very same point. Given that reporting of proceedings of this Assembly are subjected to blatant spin doctoring...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. I am not going to allow the hon. Member to comment. He should put his question, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that in any self respecting democracy and in true democracy, live coverage of parliamentary debates...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: In a lengthy reply, the hon. Prime Minister said that live broadcasting is good to bring Parliament nearer to the people, to consolidate democracy; he has given all the reasons. The question is about when he is going to bring the motion. He has said that he is going to bring it soon. Now he will have to wait a little bit.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have not finished my question, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister, for the third time, since the last general elections, has given the very same answer - soon. So, my point to him is: if he is aware that in any true democracy for citizens to have unbiased access to the work of Parliament that this matter is of the utmost urgency and that he should act?

Mr Speaker: Yes!

The Prime Minister: I explained that myself, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, he was talking about spinning. Spinning happens also in different quarters in the media. So, let's not forget. I also should say, I am in favour because then the spinning too will stop. But I must say that the

MBC does give full coverage of the PNQ at least, except when I suppose there is unruly behaviour.

(Interruptions)

Every week they do.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Bhagwan: I have a supplementary.

Mr Speaker: As soon as the hon. Prime Minister has answered, according to the rules, the first supplementary should have come from you. Please, come on now.

Mr Bhagwan: You were not looking at me. As Minister responsible for the MBC/TV - although the responsibility falls under you, Sir - can we make an appeal to you also that the population and we are not satisfied the way the MBC is carrying its works?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Out of order! Out of order! Next question, hon. Ganoo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing! I think you are intervening a bit too much. So, please sit quiet. Hon. Bhagwan, do you know that, according to the Standing Orders, a Member cannot refer to any foreigner in the House?

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Ganoo!

POLICE FORCE - VACANCIES

(No. B/58) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communication whether, in regard to the Police Officers in each of the grades from Chief Inspector of Police and above, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof who have left the Police Force or retired therefrom, since April 2008 to date, indicating when the vacancies will be filled.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since April 2008 up to 25 March 2011, the number of Officers in the grade of Chief Inspector and above, who have retired from the Force on the grounds of age or after fulfilling their length of pensionable service of at least 25 years, is as follows -

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF OFFICERS</u>
Commissioner of Police	1
Deputy Commissioner of Police	3
Assistant Commissioner of Police	10
Superintendent of Police	24
Assistant Superintendent of Police	17
Chief Inspector	10

No officer in the grade of Chief Inspector and above left the Force for other reasons.

In regard to the filling of vacancies, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. B/6 and B/18 of last week, wherein I stated that the Police are currently carrying out an overall promotion exercise for all grades in the Force.

Mr Ganoo: Can I just draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to the urgency of the situation? He has himself listed the number of gazetted officers who have retired as from April 2008. Is he aware that, at the moment, for example, in the southern division, there is only one Chief Inspector who is supervising six to seven Police Stations, whereas it should have been one or two stations only? Several divisions are also headed by only one Superintendent, and this is because vacancies have not been filled during all this time. I trust that the hon. Prime Minister will do the needful.

The Prime Minister: I explained some time back that there has been a complete review of the whole administration of the Police and how we are going to do it. There was a national policing strategic framework which was launched, in fact, by me. It was not just me and the Commissioner of Police sitting down to decide. We had expert advice and assistance from top UK police officers to look at the whole organisation of the Police Force. One of the pillars of this strategic review was the human resource management and career path of police officers. We also want police officers to know what are their possibilities; that they have a career path. In the past, we have seen some police officers feeling that they are stuck in a position and that they never get a chance. It is more complicated than people think, but there is the history assessment that has been done. This policing strategic framework has also been completed; the experts have come back and given new advice on how to deploy the human resource structure of the Police,

and that exercise has been completed. The whole promotion exercise is being carried out, as I explained last week, and these are being done.

Mr Ganoo: Can I just ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that the situation will be rendered more difficult in view of the fact that, according to my information, 12 Superintendents of Police will be retiring from the Police Force by the end of this year?

The Prime Minister: We are not talking about the end of this year; we are talking about days. This has already started.

Dr. S. Boolell: In view of the fact that there is a Disciplined Forces Service Commission, what is the point of not allowing them to proceed with the nominations as and when they occur while waiting for any framework policy?

The Prime Minister: We are not talking about other people, but about Disciplined Forces here. Vacancies are never automatically filled, neither promotions automatic in the Disciplined Forces. That is why I said that this is being done. If I go into the details, I am sure the hon. Member will agree with me, because I know his views. Very often, things have not gone according to what it should have been so that we get a real effective Police Force.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! PQ No. B/96, which was going to be answered by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, has been withdrawn. Questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

CHILD POVERTY - MEASURES

(No. B/66) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard

to child poverty, he will state if a study has been carried out to assess the number of children living in -

- (a) absolute poverty, and
- (b) households with no income earnings and, if so, indicate the measures Government proposes to take to assist them.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, the well-being and development of vulnerable children are high on the agenda of Government and constitute a priority for my Ministry and the National Empowerment Foundation.

Much attention is being devoted to the subject by my Ministry and a whole panoply of facilities and programmes have been devised at the level of the NEF, to support the cognitive and non-cognitive development of deprived and vulnerable children.

The support of all stakeholders, be they community institutions, NGOs, *Forces Vives* and CSR companies have been enlisted to ensure effective implementation at grassroots level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as my reply is extensive and lengthy, I propose with your permission to table it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this question refers specifically to child poverty. When we know that the last survey by the CSO revealed that 45% of people qualified as poor in this country are below the age of 20, will he tell us as a fact whether the research institute that he talked about setting up some time back, headed by a young gentleman returning from France, has looked into child poverty as a priority, so that measures are taken to address this problem?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said - and I have said this many, many times - the issue of child poverty is central to the policy of my Ministry and to Government. In this respect, we have carried out a survey in all the pockets of poverty, of all poor families. It depends what you describe as poor. Poor is a word, you have to describe it and set the parameters. For our Ministry, we calculate that the absolute poor families should earn a maximum of Rs5,000, excluding social aid, etc. We have identified some 5,000 families under the poverty line living in pockets of poverty, excluding families scattered around the country. We are identifying now the scattered families, and this will give us exactly the number of poor children. At the moment, we know that in the pockets of poverty there are above 9,000 children living in families with income below the poverty line.

Mr Obeegadoo: Whatever the definition of poor we adopt, the official figures of the CSO tell us that single parent families with small children are the most affected. May we know whether his Ministry has so far recommended any measure in terms of reviewing existing social benefits to support young children stuck in poverty, especially in single parent families headed by women?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, there is a whole panoply of things that we are doing for children, and that is fairly lengthy. I would advise the hon. Member to read what we have to set out in my written answer, and then to come up with any questions with great pleasure. What we are trying to do basically is to break the cycle of poverty. As regards social benefits, that is more a question for my colleague.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether his study includes the street children who have no family, and does he have the statistics available for the street children?

Mr Duval: Street children in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, are not street children that you may have overseas. The majority of street children are just street children during the day. They usually have somewhere to sleep at night, but just wander around during the day. There are policies; there are NGOs which are being funded through CSR, etc, to deal with street children.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister review the cases of orphan students who are above the age of 18?

Mr Duval: Yes, I will look at it.

Mr Uteem: Is the hon. vice-Prime Minister aware that, up to now, in various parts of the island, children have not received school materials that are usually distributed every year?

Mr Duval: Yes, but it has always been the case that school materials which concern some 20,000 children are not distributed on the same day; they are distributed all through the year. What I can say this year is that we will finish much earlier than last year.

CHILDREN - DIABETES - MEASURES

(No. B/67) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to diabetes, she will state the number of children suffering therefrom, indicating -

- (a) if screening and early detection of diabetes are carried out on children;
- (b) the number of hospital admissions of children for diabetic conditions, and

- (c) the measures and policies she proposes to take, together with all the stakeholders, to provide additional assistance to pupils with Type 1 Diabetes in schools.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to health records, 121 children, that is, those aged less than 18 years old, are currently following treatment for diabetes in Government hospitals.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to point out that, under the School Health Programme implemented by my Ministry, students of Std I and Std V in primary schools and those in Form III and Lower VI in secondary schools undergo a general medical examination every year. Furthermore, the students who are found to be at risk of diabetes, namely those who are obese and have a family history of diabetes, are referred to health centres and hospitals for confirmatory tests, further investigations and counselling.

As regards part (b) of the question, the number of children, that is, those in the age group 0-18 years who were admitted for diabetic conditions in Government hospitals in 2010, was 60.

Concerning part (c) of the question, I wish to highlight that my Ministry is already working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, as well as Non Governmental Organisations, in order to provide support to children suffering from diabetes.

In this respect, my Ministry is already providing counselling and support to students with known Type 1 Diabetes under the School Health Programme. In addition, I have to add that children with Type 1 Diabetes are now provided with the latest insulin analogues, glucose meters and test strips. Besides, they are seen and counselled in each Regional Hospital by a team comprising Paediatricians, Nurses and Psychologists as required. Additional support is also

provided to the children through the NCD Secretariat in each hospital, in terms of nutrition counselling and proper techniques of insulin injection.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry also organised an open day at the Diabetes and Vascular Health Centre Souillac for all Type 1 Diabetes patients in July 2010. Some 89 patients, mostly children, from all over the island along with their parents attended the open day. The programme consisted of education on Type 1 Diabetes, healthy lifestyle, foot care, insulin therapy and blood glucose monitoring as well as measurements of height and weight and visual acuity, blood and urine tests, dental and foot care and retinal screening.

Another open day is planned for this year in August 2011 where emphasis will be laid on assistance which each stakeholder will have to provide to children suffering from diabetic conditions.

Furthermore, with a view to empowering teachers to provide appropriate support to pupils with Type 1 Diabetes in schools, a training workshop will be organised in August 2011 for teachers having students with Type 1 Diabetes.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that the children with Type 1 diabetes need injections to manage their conditions and are too small to administer them themselves, can the hon. Minister inform the House if her Ministry may consider to provide a full-time qualified nurse from Health Centres for every primary school with children with diabetes to support them?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think this is a very tall order. In view of the staff situation that we have, it will be very difficult for us to provide each school with nursing assistance.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, for emergency cases during school days, can the hon. Minister inform the House if her Ministry may propose training to teachers and support staff to administer insulin injections?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have just said in my reply, Mr Speaker, Sir, that training is planned for teachers; we are empowering teachers to provide appropriate support to pupils with Type 1 diabetes.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, along the same lines of the hon. Member, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she could consider providing a special type of syringe, a pen set which is a type of gadget which helps better, that the child can actually use instead of a syringe which needs to be filled.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is being considered actually by medical specialists.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the figures are alarming and the key, of course, is prevention. Is the hon. Minister in a position to tell us whether there is any monitoring of Government policy on school canteens, especially food sellers from outside who come and provide inappropriate food to children?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe this is already ongoing.

VACOAS-FLOREAL – SOCIAL HOUSING

(No. B/68) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to social housing for the region of Vacoas-Floréal, he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to the -

- (a) number of units thereof which have been completed over the last five years;
- (b) number thereof under construction;
- (c) the number of applications received for the acquisition thereof, since 2007 to date, and
- (d) when the housing units will be delivered.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this PQ.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information obtained from the NHDC, the Company has, to date, completed the construction and allocation of some 11,682 housing units and some 299 serviced lots across the island.

As at 2009, 100 Firinga-type housing units at Glen Park and 156 units at Henrietta have been constructed and delivered respectively. Furthermore, at Glen Park, some 60 housing units are under construction and infrastructure works for 63 serviced lots are under way, and will be delivered by end May this year. These housing projects cover the region of Vacoas/Floreal as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware social housing programmes also include the casting of Roof Slab Scheme which was introduced in 1997 under the leadership and vision of the then Prime Minister, who is also the actual Prime Minister. This scheme was meant to assist low-income families who persevere to construct a house of their own, on land owned either

privately or through leasehold rights. Over the years, some Rs1.8 billion have been disbursed to 45,322 families. For the region of Vacoas-Floreal over 5,325 families have benefited from the Roof Slab Scheme to whom some Rs181 m. have been disbursed during the period 1997-2011.

With regard to applications received for the purchase of housing units since 2007 to date, I am informed that some 661 applications from families residing in the region of Vacoas-Floreal have been registered at the NHDC. Mr Speaker, Sir, there are equally demands for housing across the island. Due to scarcity of land in high demand areas, land is presently being identified under the 2,000 *arpents*...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, can I stop you here? You must inform the Permanent Secretary who has written the reply that it relates to Vacoas-Floreal and the answer has to be confined to Vacoas-Floreal.

Mr Faugoo: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, land is presently being identified under the 2,000 *arpents*, land put to our disposal under the deal with the MSPA and Government.

Ms Anquetil: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can he inform the House if priorities will be given to the local inhabitants of Vacoas-Floreal?

Mr Faugoo: I take note of the point raised, Mr Speaker, Sir.

COURT USHERS

(No. B/69) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Court Ushers, he will state if it is proposed to bring changes to the profession thereof and, if so, give details thereof.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, following the recommendations made in the Mackay Report as regards the profession of Court Ushers, it is indeed proposed to bring changes to the profession.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the outset, to brief the House on the role of Court Ushers. At present, the profession of Court Ushers is governed by the Court Ushers Act which dates back to 1952. They are all public officers appointed by the Public Service Commission and they play an important role in the administration of justice. Under the current system, Court Ushers are attached either to the Supreme Court, Intermediate Court or a District Court.

Generally, Court Ushers are Court Officers and their tasks are mainly to ensure the proper and efficient functioning of the courts, that is, maintaining order and discipline in courts, calling cases, parties and witnesses, and administering oaths to such parties and witnesses. In addition, Court Ushers are responsible for serving or executing judicial and extra-judicial processes, such as serving summonses, executing writs, orders and warrants of the court and effecting sales of forfeited and seized articles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is obvious that Ushers have major responsibilities in the day-to-day functioning of courts. There have, however, always been complaints that cases are delayed due to a lack of Usher services, more particularly in relation to the service process. I should add that

this is inevitable since Ushers are primarily required to perform court duties and as such very little time is available for their other activities.

To cure that problem, the Mackay Commission has recommended the liberalisation of the profession of Ushers by authorising persons, who are not public officers, to perform the functions of Court Ushers to serve process or execute judgment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the views of stakeholders have been sought and obtained on the changes proposed to be made to the profession. Comments and proposals were received from the hon. Chief Justice, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Law Reform Commission, the Bar Council, the Mauritius Law Society and the Chamber of Notaries, and they are all agreeable to the changes recommended by the Mackay Commission. However, the Ushers themselves are split on this issue of liberalisation.

A decision will be taken shortly as to the changes to be brought to the profession.

Mr Speaker: If there is any supplementary question, we will continue after lunch.

At 1.01 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

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

The Deputy Speaker: We are with the supplementary of PQ No. B/69.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Attorney General - being given that we do not know exactly when the new Bill will come forward before the House - what action can be taken to ensure that litigants can retain the services of independent? Because now we know that the ushers are not doing any *constat*, they have been warned by the office that they are not allowed

to do so. What action is being taken to ensure that litigants can have the services of somebody to do *un constat du dossier*? This is creating considerable prejudice to litigants.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of *constat* does not relate directly to the question, but I am ready to reply to the hon. Member. The matter has to be dealt with the rules actually, and it should be done by the Chief Justice, as far as the *constat* is concerned.

Mr Baloomoody: Do we understand that in the new Bill the ushers will only be involved in the service of documents and not with regard to *constat*?

Mr Varma: I would request the hon. gentleman to be patient, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and wait for the Bill.

Mr Baloomoody: I am patient.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please. This is a general question concerning the appointment of ushers and whether we want to liberalise the profession. I take it that your point relates to a particular function which, in the past, has been effected by ushers and you will have to come with specific questions. This can also be taken whenever the Bill is before the House.

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, but the hon. Minister has informed the House that there is no consensus among the ushers themselves as to whether they want this Bill. In the meantime, we must have the services of somebody to do the *constat* which will be admissible in Court. As you are fully aware yourself, as a solicitor, we are facing much difficulty.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point is noted, and I will come forward with a solution.

MOKA BY-PASS – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/70) **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 the Moka by-pass, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tenders will be launched shortly.

L'AGRÉMENT, ST PIERRE - DRAINS

(No. B/71) **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 drains at l'Agrément, St Pierre, he will state when works thereat will start.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, action will be taken once all emergency works are completed.

PROVIDENCE QUARTIER MILITAIRE FOOTBALL GROUND - LIGHTING

FACILITES

(No. B/72) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the lighting facilites to be extended to the Providence Quartier Militaire football ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to where matters stand.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this Question. I am informed by the

Moka/Flacq District Council that the project for the lighting of Providence football ground is being implemented by the National Development Unit and it is at tender stage.

VERDUN - FLOODING

(No. B/73) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the occurrence of over flooding on the main road at Verdun, near the bridge and, if so, will he state the measures Government proposes to take in relation thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the construction of the bridge in 1998, flooding occurred only on 24 and 25 February 2011. The existing culvert was completely choked by debris such as scrap refrigerators, fans, drums and mattresses. The RDA repaired the damaged footpath, parapet walls, embankments and handrails. To avoid recurrence of flooding problems, the public has also to pay a civic role and refrain from throwing its waste in public drains and rivers.

CASTING OF SLABS SCHEME – INCOME CEILING

(No. B/74) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Casting of Slabs Scheme, he will state if he has received representations for an increase in the income ceiling from Rs8,500 to about Rs14,000 for eligibility thereto and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given thereto.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this Question. I am

informed that representations have been received to review the eligibility criteria and these include requests for an upward revision of the family income eligibility threshold, which currently stands at Rs8,500, especially from applicants whose requests have been turned down due to their household income being above the eligibility threshold of Rs8,500.

Provision has been made in the 2011 Budget to increase the grant for castings of slabs from Rs60,000 to Rs65,000. Although, the decision to review the criteria of eligibility is normally taken at Budget time, I shall look into these representations to see how these can be addressed.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would just like to know if in determining the income ceiling, very often we use all the income generated by the applicant, including the overtime and we all know that, at times, when someone is building a house, he looks for overtime to get more money to complete the house. Is it possible to exclude that overtime in the income determining exercise so that they can benefit from that privilege?

Mr Jugnauth: This request will have to be looked at and we will have to see what are the implications in taking such a decision. We will look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has been informed that PQ No. B/97 has been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS -

NGOs/*FORCES VIVES* - SCHOOL MATERIALS

(No. B/75) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard

to the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups unit of the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Foundation, information as to -

- (a) the number of Non-Governmental Organisations/*Forces Vives* which have received funds therefrom, for the distribution of school materials for the year 2011, indicating the dates on which the materials were distributed, and
- (b) if he will table a list of the said NGOs/*Forces Vives*, indicating the number of children who have benefited therefrom.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that it is the policy of the National Empowerment Foundation to provide school materials comprising school bags, stationery, uniforms, shoes and socks on an annual basis to needy students coming from families living under the poverty threshold.

I am informed by the NEF that some 18,000 students in mainland Mauritius are covered under the current scheme for school materials. I am also informed that until last year, this exercise was conducted primarily through the services of NGOs and Parent/Teacher Associations whereby they assumed responsibility for purchase and distribution of the school materials to the needy students, whereas the Trust Fund met the cost thereof and supervised the distribution process.

However, in the wake of a reorganisation of its programmes along functional lines and also for reasons of accountability and transparency, the NEF decided for the current year to

undertake the procurement of school materials through a tender exercise. The distribution, which is at present ongoing and scheduled to be completed by the end of April, is being carried out with the collaboration of NGOs, where applicable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed that in the light of the change in procedure adopted by the NEF for the current year, no funds have been disbursed to NGOs operating in mainland Mauritius. However, for practical reasons, the new procedures have not yet been extended to Rodrigues where the procurement and distribution of school materials are being carried out through NGOs and Parent/Teacher Associations.

Information pertaining to Rodrigues and involving some 3,845 children is accordingly being tabled.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that in two days it will be the end of the first term, which means that, the neediest children have been deprived of school materials for the whole first term of their academic year?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, it has been like this. These sorts of school materials are distributed all along the year. I think that the hon. Member herself asked a question last year. In fact, the last materials were distributed in September.

This year, although we started a bit later - and the NEF apologised for some of the delays last week - we will be ending much earlier. In fact, we should be ending by the first week of April and that is much earlier than previously.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, must I take it that needy children should not expect to receive the school materials at the beginning of the year because it has been usual practice to give them these materials late?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did not say that. I said that it is going to be better this year and, hopefully, it will be perfect next year.

Dr. S. Boolell: I would like to ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he will not agree that the school materials should be extended to include two uniforms and two pairs of shoes for the year.

Mr Duval: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do provide school materials like stationery, bags, etc, and we do give a voucher for two school uniforms and a pair of shoes. So, these are included already.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there is no way of reviewing the system completely, to ensure that, henceforth, school materials be made available at the beginning of the first term. Is that possible? If so, can that be envisaged for next year?

Mr Duval: I cannot agree more, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that, for the sake of accountability, the NEF has reviewed the way of distributing these materials. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has received cases of malpractices from NGOs, and whether any action has been taken in such cases?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been various claims and counter claims last year. But I must say that - without naming any NGOs - in fact, on certain items, we are making very large savings. For certain items, we are paying half the price we would have paid last year. Even for stationary like pen, pencils, etc, we are paying about a quarter of the price; but not for everything, I must say. So, for some items there is a big difference in price, and that is a good thing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that this year we have given the child the choice of choosing his/her own uniform and his/her pair of shoes from a list of approved suppliers. So, not all poor children are going to have the same shoes. They can actually choose, and if they wish to top up, they can top up.

TRAINING PROGRAMME ON CARE FOR THE ELDERLY - TRAINEES

(No. B/76) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Training Programme on care for the elderly, run by her Ministry in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Health, since November 2009 to July 2010, she will state the -

- (a) number of trainees who have completed the course;
- (b) profile of the target group in terms of gender, age, academic background, and
- (c) number of those who have found a job or have been on job placement after completion of the course.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that no training programme on care for the elderly was carried out by the Ministry during the period of November 2008 to July 2010.

However, I am informed that a training programme in “National Certificate for the Care of Elderly and Severely Disabled” was run by the Ministry, in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) during the period July 2008 to April 2009, for a group of 30 trainees.

Regarding parts (a), (b) and (c) of the PQ, the facts are as follows -

- 27 trainees completed the course;
- no gender discrimination was made during the selection exercise, and
- the age limit was 50 years. The required qualification was that the candidates should have read up to School Certificate.
- I would like to emphasise that the Ministry did not take any commitment to employ the trainees after completion of the course. However, following requests for trained carers received from the charitable institutions, clinics and other private institutions, the Ministry used his good offices to enable the 27 trained carers to obtain employment in these charitable institutions and clinics.

Moreover, in view of the ageing population and in line with Government Programme 2010-2015, which provides for the training of 500 carers over a period of five years, another training programme leading to a National Certificate for the Care of the Elderly and Disabled is being run by my Ministry. A communiqué was issued in August 2010, inviting applications for training of carers. The training programme started in October 2010 and is expected to end in April 2011.

- (a) Out of the 50 selected candidates, 43 are presently completing the course.
- (b) (i) No gender discrimination was made, as the application was opened to all.

- (ii) The applicants were required to have read up to Form III, and the age limit was 50 years.
- (c) No commitment for employment has been taken by my Ministry.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems that the hon. Minister is not aware of this training programme, which was given from November 2009 to July 2010. Must I take it that it is not her Ministry? Of course, there was another Minister there who took this initiative of having such programme.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: If the hon. Member listened carefully to my answer, I mentioned that a training programme was carried out by the former Minister, but the timing was not the same. I mentioned it was during the period July 2008 to April 2009 instead of November 2009 to July 2010.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to insist, and may I ask the hon. Minister if she will check this information and let us have it again? I was to bring a copy of the certificate of this training but, unfortunately, I forgot it; otherwise, I would have tabled it.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that my Ministry carried out the training programme during the period July 2008 to April 2009. Right now, there is another course being run by the Ministry in collaboration with MIH. But I do understand that there are other institutions and other bodies, which do carry out such courses on a private basis.

LAND-BASED OCEANIC INDUSTRY - PROJECTS

(No. B/77) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Land Based Oceanic Industry, he will state -

- (a) the phases of the project completed as at to date, and
- (b) if he is aware that any of the promoters thereof is the subject of any police inquiry.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that -

- (i) The LBOI project, which consists of harnessing cold sea water for commercial exploitation was initiated in 2006, and there was no responsive bid to the first call for proposals in 2008.
- (ii) Consequently, the project was revisited in 2009 to exploit primarily the coldness of deep sea water on the west coast of Mauritius for cooling of a data centre of 10,000 m².
- (iii) The project is being developed by the Mauritius Land Based Oceanic Park Ltd (MLOPL) as a public-private sector partnership on an initial portion of land of 56.5 hectares in Flic en Flac. So far, the formalities for land acquisition have not been concluded.
- (iv) Following an expression of interest in June 2009, inviting equity participation in the project, the MLOPL retained Thompson Chalon and Associates. The latter partnered with Total Sites Solutions, USA.
- (v) On 10 March 2010, a shareholder's agreement was signed between Total Sites Solutions (Mauritius) Ltd, represented by the Chief Executive Officer and Director respectively, and the State Investment Corporation.
- (vi) Following a statement by an officer of the Prime Minister's Office, Mr Trevor William Chalon was arrested by the police on 02 February 2011 on a provisional charge of sending a fraudulent email, in breach of the Information and

Communication Technologies Act. On 22 February 2011, the shareholder's agreement was terminated and a new expression of interest is being floated. In the meantime, police enquiry is in progress.

I also wish to inform the House that no public funds have been or will be used on offsite infrastructure, until such time that there is an effective investment and transfer of capital by the promoters.

Mr Ganoo: Was any screening done before these investors were allowed to come to Mauritius?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, I am informed that due diligence was done with Trevor Chalon, and nothing was found. Recently, a new partner came in and also did a due diligence, and found nothing unusual.

**RODRIGUES - TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE
GROUPS – SOCIAL HOUSING**

(No. B/78) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the projects carried out by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund -

- (a) information as to -
 - (i) if any immediate improvement is envisaged to the design of social houses for a more adaptive one and, if not, why not, and
 - (ii) who recommends the approval thereof;

- (b) table an updated list of the contracts awarded as at to date, indicating, in each case;
 - (i) the amount of money earmarked and disbursed, and
 - (ii) the names of the bidders and that of the successful bidder.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) as follows.

With regard to part (a) of the question, no change in the design of the social housing unit in Rodrigues is envisaged for the time being. The housing unit consisting of two rooms is built around a basic core design with concrete walls and Corrugated Iron Sheets (CIS) roofs.

Since the State is putting the land at the disposal of the beneficiary against a nominal fee and the housing unit completely free of charge, the beneficiary family on its part is encouraged to improve and adapt it as and when it so wishes. Moreover, the system has the advantage of extending this facility to a greater number of persons whilst enlisting the participation of beneficiaries in the budget.

I am given to understand that the design was developed following consultations between the Trust Fund Representatives and the Rodrigues Council of Social Services, village committee representatives and the Resident Engineer in Rodrigues and was subsequently approved by the Management Committee of the Trust Fund.

I am also informed that according to the procedures prevailing in Rodrigues, NGOs submit project proposals, including particulars of persons in need of housing assistance for

consideration of funding by the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund field staff thereupon conducted a socio-economic assessment with emphasis on the living and housing conditions as well as family income of the potential beneficiaries and complete all internal processes leading to approval of the project by the Programme Manager, upon recommendation of the Social Facilitator.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that according to the system put in place in Rodrigues, the Trust Fund does not award contracts through the construction of social housing units, so the question of the successful bidder does not arise.

In fact, housing units are constructed by the beneficiaries themselves with the assistance of volunteers and with building materials provided by the Trust Fund through NGOs to further support the beneficiaries in their construction. The Trust Fund is, since the beginning of the year, disbursing an amount of Rs5,000 per beneficiary to meet labour costs. Since June 2008 to date, some 452 houses have been constructed through funding by the Trust Fund and we expect to finance the construction of some 400 of such houses in the course of the current financial year.

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I thank the hon. vice-Prime Minister. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether there has been a study carried out on the evolution of social houses for a more adapted design for the society being given that there is this question of cultural and sociological values that need to be taken into consideration, instead of just donating a social house based on economic factor as if they were just looking at cost?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the economic conditions in Rodrigues at the moment, I must say Rodrigues is benefiting more than people in mainland Mauritius so far as social housing is concerned. The house is given on State land and it is completely free. Now, it is

a core house and we do expect the beneficiary to construct and add on because nothing is free completely. We believe that people must contribute a little bit at least to the house. I must say that this is something new from January and we are giving these Rs5,000 towards the cost of enlisting construction workers to build the house.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, henceforth, beneficiaries are going to have to sign a social contract so that they respect basic norms in their families.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that this horizontally existing model of social houses in Rodrigues - the concrete walls and CIS - the surface area of the house is around 25,000 m² and that dates back since 2000 and the Rodriguans society is changing and people have different needs. Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister be agreeable to increase these 25,000 m² to 36,000 m², including a kitchen and a basic toilet? This is quite achievable because the Commission for Social Security in Rodrigues was financing a toilet space without any amenities and on a piecemeal and politically biased basis from public funds.

Mr Duval: I don't know about the political bias, I don't want to go into this. What I can say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that obviously there is quantity and quality; you have to be able to match both. There is quite a long list of about 400 families that we are going to cater for. Obviously, there is a cost to that and the bigger the house that you construct, the less you can expect. But I really must say that even if we had the money, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that people must contribute some of the cost of whatever it is given to them.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair has been advised that PQ No. B/80 has been withdrawn. We move now to PQ No. B/79. Hon. François!

FISHERMAN INVESTMENT TRUST - RODRIGUAN FISHERS - DIVIDEND

(No. B/79) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the fishers community, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fisherman Investment Trust, information as to the -
 - (i) capital active shares held by the Rodriguan fishers, since 2006 to date, and
 - (ii) total amount of dividend paid to the Rodriguan fishers over the past five years, and
- (b) state -
 - (i) the number of registered fishers who have lost their lives during their fishing activities over the past five years, and
 - (ii) if Government proposes to amend the Fisherman Welfare Fund Act and the Fisherman Investment Trust Act with a view to improving the fate thereof.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fisherman Investment Trust, a body corporate, was set up under the Fisherman Investment Trust Act 2006. The Act was proclaimed on 31 January 2007.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised by the Fisherman Investment Trust that -

- (i) 594,300 shares representing a total value of Rs5,943,000 have been allocated to fishermen in Rodrigues with effect from 31 January 2008, i.e., 300 shares per fisherman valued at Rs10 per share for 1,981 registered fishermen;
- (ii) no dividend has been paid so far to any fisherman either in Mauritius or in Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed that 25 fishermen, including six fishermen in Rodrigues passed away at sea over the last five years.

Regarding part b (ii), I wish to inform the House that in the context of the Fisheries Master Plan which is being prepared at the level of my Ministry, the views of stakeholders, including the fishermen community were taken on board during “*Les Assises de la Pêche*” held on 10 March 2011 in Mauritius. A similar exercise has been scheduled for Rodrigues on 06 April 2011. Following these exercises, all proposals will be given due consideration by Government on the way forward regarding any amendment in the existing legislations of the Fishermen Investment Trust and the Fisherman Welfare Fund with a view to improving the fate of the community.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister. As the hon. Minister replied, there was no dividend on return of investment as it is a long term process, which implies that the interest of fishers from Rodrigues might be in jeopardy. May I ask the hon. Minister how many off-lagoon fishing boats have been earmarked by FIT and whether he is agreeable to put one of these off-lagoon boats to Rodrigues, so that the fishers from Rodrigues can have some returns on investment?

Mr Von-Mally: We will consider that also and this is why we are having “*Les Assises de la Pêche*” in Rodrigues. Surely, this also will be taken into consideration. I would like to add that there are several boats that have been built through IFAD Funds for Rodrigues. By September, the five cooperatives in Rodrigues will have five big boats, which will cost about Rs52 m.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. vice-Prime Minister aware that the interest of Rodrigues has not been represented on the FIT Board since the departure of Mr ‘X’ and even though another fisher has been elected, thus living the interest of Rodrigues fishers at stake? Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House when will the new FIT Board be constituted, so that the interest of Rodrigues might be taken into consideration?

Mr Von-Mally: We are in a transitional period. We are working on that because we are really revamping both the Fishermen Welfare Fund and the FIT for the interest of the fishermen.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister how many of these boats have been delivered to the fishermen in Mauritius and in Rodrigues? I suppose in Rodrigues none, but in Mauritius how many and to whom? I would also like to know whether the FIT is actually commercially active. We are talking of dividends. If there is no commercial activity, how can we have dividends? We have delivered shares to fishermen since long now, and we are still waiting for some commercial activity to happen so that there can be some distribution of the dividends.

Mr Von-Mally: I know that there are a series of projects in the pipeline of the FIT and concerning the boats, there are three in construction at the Grand River North East Boat Yard and these will be delivered soon.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question! Hon. François!

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister give the guarantee that one of these boats will be given to Rodrigues? Secondly, considering the FIT Act 2006, there is the lot of shortcomings in this Act. Will the hon. Minister consider buying back shares for those people who have many heirs in the interests of their families so that we can give the dividends to these people?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, this is catered for in the Act already. Concerning the first question, can the hon. Member please repeat it?

Mr François: Can the hon. Minister give us a guarantee that one these boats will be given to Rodrigues?

Mr Von-Mally: I take note and I will pass on the message to the FIT and, if need be, they will give one boat to Rodrigues. If we can give more, we will do so.

COMMODITIES - PRICE CONTROL

(No. B/80) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether he will state if Government proposes to increase the number of goods which will be subject to price control either by price fixing or maximum mark up, and if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

STUDENTS - LAPTOPS - DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/81) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Scheme for the distribution of free laptops to the students of Lower VI, he will state if any tender has been launched and awarded for the supply thereof and, if so –

- (a) give details thereof, and
- (b) indicate when same will be distributed.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as of now no tender exercise has been carried out with regard to the implementation of the distribution of laptops for the benefit of Lower VI students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that, in August 2010, a Committee comprising officials of my Ministry and those of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology was set up to look into the technical specifications, including the modalities and the various implications for implementing this programme.

A proposal for the funding of the project, estimated to cost about Rs420 m. was made to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in November 2010, but funds could not be made available in the context of the last Budget exercise due to budgetary constraints and numerous other school IT projects evolving at the same time.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, my Ministry had already embarked, as part of the digital revolution in schools, on the digital interactive board project known as the Sankoré Project. This will digitally empower not only the students but also educators as well, through access to interactive e-learning materials. The Sankoré Project will

cover all classes of Primary and Secondary Schools of the Republic without exception. Thus, students, without any distinction, will have the possibility of learning otherwise, through the digital mode.

Being given the urgency of the start of this project, the Sankoré Project, with the collaboration of the French Government and according to MoUs signed, funds had to be made available and funding has accordingly been provided for this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the many projects to be implemented or being implemented already and simultaneously, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has, I believe justly, recommended that an appropriate study be carried out, covering the different ICT projects envisaged for implementation by my Ministry, to avoid duplication and other problems. Funding to the tune of Rs3 m. has been provided for this study.

The modalities are being looked into by my Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Sankoré Project provides not only for the provision of only hardware but also, and more importantly, for the e-content-part and especially on digitally oriented pedagogical methods through the use of interactive boards and laptops in the classroom. Furthermore the system provides for safeguards to ensure no misuse and adequate control of the digital systems, thus, assuring safety of utilisation.

Mr Uteem: I listened carefully to the answer of the hon. Minister and the question was very simple and we want a simple answer. When will Government come and implement the

promise to give one laptop to each student of Form V or of Lower VI or has this project been scrapped altogether?

Dr. Bunwaree: When funds will be made available, if the hon. Member has understood well.

Mr Uteem: Will the scheme then be retroactive so that it can be extended to HSC students because the Lower VI students will now have moved onto HSC and will no longer be in Lower VI?

Dr. Bunwaree: So far, I know Lower VI is part of HSC. It is the first year.

Mr Uteem: They were in Lower VI this year. If you don't implement the scheme this year, next year they will be in Upper VI. So, if you decide to implement the scheme, would those students - who are presently in Lower VI - benefit from the scheme if you implement it next year?

Dr. Bunwaree: When we get the funds, then we will implement the whole project.

Mr Uteem: Will the funds cover only laptops or also the operating system, Microsoft or else?

Dr. Bunwaree: The Committee is working on that. That is another problem and, in fact, as I said, the Sankoré Project will cover the laptop also. Sankoré Project includes laptop in classrooms.

(No. B/82) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Report of the Form III National Examinations 2010, he will state –

- (a) if same has been published and made available to the colleges involved, and
- (b) the outcome thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ No. B/304 on 13 July 2010, I informed the House that the National Form III Assessment would be implemented on a pilot basis and that a common assessment would be held in four subjects, namely English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies with the marking done at school level.

I am pleased to inform the House that the pilot phase for the year 2010 has been successfully implemented in 33 schools (both State and Private) in the four Zones. The assessment has been introduced so as to reflect the level of achievement of students after the completion of three years of schooling. It is meant primarily to have a formative purpose and help identify weaknesses and strengths in the knowledge and skills, the students are expected to have acquired.

I wish, at the outset, to clarify that the results of the assessment was not meant for publication nor to serve as an exercise for comparison or benchmarking of the performance levels of participating individual schools.

As such, it was not intended to produce a public report on the National assessment which by itself is not an end of cycle examination. Besides, its coverage does not include all subjects

and the results of the remaining subjects not assessed at national level are taken on board at the school level itself.

In this context, I wish to stress that schools having participated in the pilot phase have taken cognizance of the performance of their students and of the need to take any remedial actions, as appropriate.

In fact, during discussions with the stakeholders of the sector, particularly the Federation of Union of Managers of Private Secondary Schools, the latter made a plea for confidentiality concerning results and for these not to be made public nor used for comparison purposes. My Ministry agreed to this.

In line with the above, each of the 33 pilot schools was given the responsibility to scrutinise at its own level the results of its students and gauge whether or not the competencies level had been reached. In fact, this was clearly enunciated in the guidelines that were given to Heads of Schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the pilot schools were also requested to submit their comments on the overall performance of the students of their schools to MES so that further refinement could be brought subsequently to the pilot programme for this year.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am happy to state that the National Assessment at Form III was generally well received by the schools involved in the pilot project. It did give a sense of direction to the different stakeholders and brought a degree of uniformity in the exercise at a key point in time, that is, at the end of lower secondary.

Nonetheless, from feedback obtained, students have performed relatively well in the languages (English and French) with the question papers catering for different ability groups.

The overall performance in Computer Studies/Literacy was satisfactory with the paper being viewed as giving an opportunity for students of varying abilities to demonstrate understanding. However, it was in the Mathematics paper that students generally lacked a number of basic competencies, although they were tested in a straightforward manner.

This assessment has acted as an eye opener in that it has diagnosed some fundamental shortcomings in the teaching and learning of Mathematics at a critical stage at secondary level.

As a follow-up action, my Ministry in collaboration with the MES, will be having a meeting with Rectors to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for remedial action where needed. This is especially important in view of the fact that the number of schools where the Assessment will be piloted this year will increase much beyond the 33 schools in 2010. It will also be an opportunity to hold discussions so as to refine the modalities of the National Assessment as a viable instrument.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, last year it was announced that a few schools would be added to the pilot project this year before extending the whole project to all schools in 2012 and these days we hear something else. I would like to know from the hon. Minister which is which?

Dr. Bunwaree: There is nothing else. It is not some schools; I said it in my reply the number of schools will be subsequent this year.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would also like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the low pass rate in Mathematics is due - according to teachers and

rectors of colleges involved - to the fact that the Maths paper had been set on syllabus A whereas in most schools, Forms I, II and III take the syllabus B.

Dr. Bunwaree: This is not the only reason. It could be one of the reasons, but the other reason is that - what I have been made to understand – in Form III the teaching is done at the level of Form III only without any sort of revision for what has been done in previous years Forms I and II. This could also - on top of the reason mentioned - be a reason.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why have the markings of the scripts been done by the teachers of the schools concerned contrary to what has been announced before?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is not contrary. I had announced the same thing, but those teachers were not those who were teaching the students.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the hon. Minister and he referred to competencies being assessed through these exams. I am sure the hon. Minister is aware that in the technical jargon there is a clear difference between knowledge, skills and competencies and yet the exams which we had last year have simply replaced, for instance, English. It has replaced the English examination in the school; same traditional, academic assessment exercise 'pass' or 'fail'. Would the hon. Minister, for the sake of clarity, consider publishing a policy document which clearly explains to the nation what is the purpose of this examination and where it is leading to?

Dr. Bunwaree: We were expecting the pilot project to end up and then to come forward with this. This will be done. I fully agree with the hon. Member.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when the schools which are going to join the pilot project this year are going to be made aware of it?

Dr. Bunwaree: That will not take too much time. I can already inform the hon. Member that so far as Government schools are concerned, 100% will be in. Now, we are dealing with the private sector to know what will be the number of schools that will be involved.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we understand that the soon the hon. Minister mentions is sooner than it was last year, that is, at the end of the second term?

Dr. Bunwaree: Definitely yes and last year we had a problem of syllabus also which we no longer have this year because we have already informed. This year we will have science as a fifth subject.

DAY CARE CENTRES – REGISTRATION

(No. B/83) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the nurseries, she will state the -

- (a) number of registered and non-registered ones as at to date, and
- (b) criteria for the registration thereof, indicating the actions taken in case of non-compliance therewith.

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

In view of the precarious situation prevailing in the field of early childhood care especially with regard to the operation of Child Day Care Centres, I have, as a matter of urgency, instructed that a special squad be set up to carry out an islandwide survey of all Child Day Care Centres for me to have a correct picture of the situation.

In this context, I made an appeal to the various departments of my Ministry to collaborate in making this special assignment a reality and, in fact, given the shortage of officers for putting in place a proper inspectorate system, this *ad hoc* team comprising officers from all the departments and units from my Ministry assisted the Child Development Unit in carrying out the site visits from 07 to 18 March 2011.

The processing of the survey documents has been conducted over the last past week and the main findings thereof indicate that, as at date, there are 246 Child Day Care Centres operating over the island out of which there are 109 registered ones, 48 with provisionally registered and 89 unregistered.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with respect to part (b) of the question, the criteria in accordance with Regulations 2000 for the registration of Child Day Care Centres are being tabled.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, multiple actions have been taken in respect of non-compliance. Over the last two decades, successive Governments have promoted the creation of Child Day Care Centres with a view to give women the opportunity to seek employment, especially with the advent of industrialisation. With economic development, more and more parents have taken up employment and respond to this, there has been an upsurge in the number of centres providing day care and support to children in the age group of three months to three years. In fact,

according to information available at my Ministry, the number of Child Day Care Centres increased from 112 in the year 2000 to 143 in 2005 and to 246 in 2011.

In order to regulate the operation of these centres the Institutions for the Welfare and Protection of Children, Regulations 2000 was subsequently introduced to ensure that they comply with a set of prescribed norms and standards.

I am informed that although these regulations came into force in June 2001, non-compliant Day Care Centres since 2001 have not been sanctioned at all, as this would have had serious socio-economic implications, especially for working parents who would have had to seek alternative means to look after their children.

I have been informed also that instead of taking drastic measures, the managers of the non-compliant Day Care Centres have been given moratoriums to take remedial actions with a view to complying with the prescribed norms and standards. Provisional certificates of a duration of six months have been even issued to these centres complying with most of the prescribed norms and standards. Nevertheless, it has been noted that even after this six-month period, many Day Care Centres are still unable to take remedial steps to fully comply with the regulations and are thus even not registered. Moreover, with the increasing number of Day Care Centres, control has been very difficult especially in view of the skeletal staff servicing this section.

My Ministry is now concurrently working with the Attorney General's Office for amendments to be brought to the Institutions for the Welfare and Protection of Children Regulations 2000 so as to better, in a way, regulate the operation as well as even to sanction defaulting Day Care Centres, if need be.

Moreover, my Ministry holds regular meetings with Managers of these Day Care Centres and parents to stress on the need to comply with the prescribed norms and standards. Information, Education and Communication materials are distributed regularly to sensitise parents about the existence of a legal framework and that the norms and standards regulating Child Day Care Centres must be taken into consideration and in addition to this it is mandatory for Managers of Child Day Care Centres to recruit qualified care givers in early childhood development.

My Ministry steps in from time to time, with the assistance of the Mauritius Institute of Education, the MIE, to provide training courses for caregivers, the last one having been conducted from September to December 2009.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from expressing my surprise at learning that, out of 246 nurseries, there are only 109 that are registered, I would like to ask the hon. Minister how many inspectors there are to date to cover the 246 nurseries. She spoke of a squad of inspectors going round those nurseries.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member did follow clearly my answer, I said that I have a skeleton staff who cannot inspectorate 246 day care centres. I have taken staff from different units, be it gender unit, women unit, family welfare unit, to put up a special squad to support the CDU in order to produce the results of this survey, and now I can officially say that there are 246 day care centres. No one should be surprised that there are some unregistered. I have said in my answer that, even the 2001 Regulations were enforced as from 2001, at the same time that there were registered day care centres and provisional certificates given to a series of others, there have been day care centres with no registration. But due to social implications of

mothers - where to go with their babies - the monitoring is being done, requesting them to improve in respect to norms and standards.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think we should take the seriousness of the matter, since we are dealing with babies. I would like to get some details from the hon. Minister about the training and the qualifications of the baby minders?

Mrs Bappoo: I have said that, according to the set criteria, which I am tabling, the managers of child day care centres have to recruit trained caregivers. There are various institutions, which are responsible for training. For example, you have the Charles Telfair Institute that gives Certificate III in children services, the MIE, the *Centre Bethléem*, the ECD. I did mention also that, from time to time, my Ministry comes over, with the help of the MIE, to palliate, if I can say, those caregivers in certain child day care centres who don't even have any basic training.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in her answer to one of the supplementary questions, the hon. Minister has said that she does not have any inspectorate. My first question will be whether the Ministry is planning to set up any inspectorate. The second would be...

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer your first question.

Mrs Bappoo: For the first part of the question, indeed I am trying to see whether I can help, even if it is a skeleton one. The island is divided into four Zones. We have one supervising officer for each, and we are trying to get a few others to come along to form that team just to keep the supervision going on, by the time I can recruit and I have the budget to recruit more.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the meantime, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the nurseries have a system of licences whereby, for example, you have a yearly licence? Even if you don't have an inspectorate that go throughout the year, but, at least, once a year, there has to be a visit, so that the licence is renewed, as it is done in the tourism industry, where operators have to produce a certain viability of their operation to renew their licence. So, can the same system be put in place?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, because the registration of licence is being given on a two-year basis. Of course, I need to have even a skeleton monitoring staff to supervise and to see whether they do respect these norms, so that the licence can be renewed after its expiry.

Mr Bérenger: I have heard the hon. Minister refer several times to qualified personnel, qualified baby minders. Can I know the definition thereof? Are qualified personnel delivered with a certificate and, if yes, by whom, and how many such qualified personnel there is?

Mrs Bappoo: I don't have the exact number of such qualified personnel there is in the 246 day care centres. But, as far as I understand, qualified personnel means that when the manager of any day care centre is applying for a registration certificate or a provisional one, there is a set of criteria, which I have just tabled, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which the manager has to pay attention to. One among is that the caregivers must have a qualified certificate. These are issued by the different authorities, MQA certified, which give these training. On top of that, we do come along with the MIE to supply the training in case there are big problems and difficulties in any of these day care centres. I have given the names of these institutions.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a set-up for parents who want to complain about what is taking place in this or that children day care centre? Is

there such a set-up, complaint procedure, and, if yes, how does it look? In 2010, for example, how many complaints came in?

Mrs Bappoo: There has not been, in fact, a sort of formal procedure for parents to complain in cases where they are not satisfied about what is going on in the day care centres. But what the staff of my Ministry has been doing all the time is to keep regular visits and meetings with them. One, with the managers, to see how things are going on or even progressing or the respect of norms and standards and also keeping in touch with parents. But it is not all the time that the parents come along. I, myself, when the problem of '*Le Nid*' cropped up, asked for all the parents. The manager does not allow the parents to come and meet the staff. So, we have to devise the means and ways about what would be the procedure so that regular meetings can be put up with either managers or parents.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister referred to a manager of a given day care centre who did things that she should not have done. Can I know what qualification is required from managers of children day care centres?

Mrs Bappoo: They also need to have a diploma in early childhood education and care from either the MIE or another institution. They need to be a qualified manager. At times, the owner is also the manager. But our concern, according to the criteria, is that the manager also needs to be a trained one, having, at least, a diploma in early childhood education and care.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to hear the Minister repeat that what is expected of managers of day care centres is that they should be qualified. Up to date, are all the managers of all day care centres qualified?

Mrs Bappoo: I can't give the exact answer now, because I really don't know if the 246 managers are qualified. I have started an exercise, and believe me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do believe in the protection and security of our small children. It is another pertinent issue to see now whether each of these managers is really qualified. And if they are not qualified, they can't be given any registration.

Ms Deerpalsing: Following up on the question put by the hon. Leader of the Opposition regarding whistle-blowing from parents, could the hon. Minister look into the possibility of setting up a hotline, just like the CWA, the CEB and others have?

Mrs Bappoo: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: We have heard the Minister repeating that she has only a skeleton staff, but we don't know the number of persons who are attached to this department. This is my first question. My other question is: will the hon. Minister consider a proper study to know the real training needs for this sector because it seems that we don't know how many care givers we have. We don't know the level of training of the managers. Will the Minister consider a proper study so that we can know the training needs in this sector?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With regard to the first part of the question, I have only six officers responsible for 246 day care centres and in spite of the 246 child day care centres, these same officers have also other projects in hand that they are responsible, so you can understand the crisis at the level of the Child Development Unit. This is one.

The second issue is that Government has also decided that the Public Sector Governance will be taking along an in-depth study...

(Interruptions)

Not the MAB, but the Public Sector Governance replacing the MAB. They will be conducting an in-depth study and with their findings, maybe we will be guided in a better way how to proceed, but for the time being, it is like that.

Mr Obeegadoo: The picture the Minister has painted is purely scandalous. Half of the institutions are not registered.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: given that half of the nurseries do not have a full registration or are unregistered, given that we don't know how many of the staff are trained, given that we don't know how many of the managers comply with the existing regulations, can the Minister tell us why it is that she has not produced a blueprint, clearly chartering a way forward with a proper regulatory framework, with a proper mechanism to enforce this regulatory framework and thereupon sort resources?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, I won't allow that the hon. Member just comes and says 'scandals'. It is not a scandal! It is a proper heritage on my shoulders. I want to take my responsibility. There has been...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mrs Bappoo: There has been, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regulations worked out as from year 2000 with the early childhood development. The regulations were worked out and enforced in 2001 when my friend, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie was there as Minister. At the same time, there

has been registered ones, there has been provisional one, there has been unregistered. At that very time, there were no scandals, now there are scandals! I won't agree to that!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if there is a regulation concerning the ratio: babies and baby minders, please?

Mrs Bappoo: There is a ratio caregivers and children.

INFINITY BPO LTD – GRANT

(No. B/84) 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 Infinity BPO Ltd. and its related entities, he will state and, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to, the amount of money disbursed by Government, public bodies, state-owned enterprises and state-sponsored institutions thereto as at to date, indicating –

- (a) the purpose, source and terms and conditions of the disbursements;
- (b) if the funds disbursed have helped improve the financial situation of the beneficiaries, and
- (c) the steps taken to ensure that the beneficiaries are not in breach of contract for not paying their employees.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have informed the House last week, Government through MTSP disbursed an amount of Rs340 m. to Infinity BPO and River Heights against a

Sales and Lease Back of the Infinity Tower at Ebene in favour of the National Real Estates Ltd (NREL). In my reply to the question of last week, I also highlighted how the money had been used to pay the debts of Infinity BPO as per the Term Sheets. Any buy back of the Infinity Tower from the NREL would be at Rs340 m. plus 5% return per annum plus associated cost of the initial sale to SIC amounting to about Rs34.9 m.

As regards other public bodies, State-owned enterprises and State-sponsored institutions having disbursed money to Infinity BPO and its related entities, I am informed that the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) has disbursed a total of Rs2.8 m. in favour of Infinity BPO Ltd under the Placement and Training Programme. The refund included the costs for training and stipends paid to trainees. The last disbursement by NEF was in December 2009.

The placement and training of trainees was scheduled for four months and, at the end of the training period, the trainees were offered an employment contract either as Tele Agents or BPO agents at Infinity BPO Ltd. The training was approved and recognised by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority.

As regards part (b) of the question, all the funds and facilities offered to the company by NEF was not to improve the financial situation of the beneficiaries, but to assist the unemployed people to be trained and to acquire required skills with a view to enhance their employability.

However, the funds made available by NREL through the sales and lease back was meant to improve the financial position of the company but, unfortunately, the company has ceased operations.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the Ministry of Labour, having received complaints from 358 workers of Infinity BPO in relation to unpaid wages, has filed a case in the Industrial Court claiming a total of Rs54.1 m., representing outstanding wages as indemnity in lieu of notice and severance allowance at the rate of three months per year of service for breach of contract, from the company.

I am further informed that 184 workers have applied to join the Workfare Programme. Under this Programme, the workers will be entitled to a Transitional Unemployment Benefit (TUB) for a maximum of one year.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister agree with me that it is most unusual and maybe it is the first in the world that in a stimulus package, so much funds have been disbursed to a firm in what is called a sunrise industry which is a thriving sector in Mauritius?

Mr Jugnauth: Well the situation that prevailed at that time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was that there was a financial crisis; there were a number of firms that were in difficulties in different sectors and this one was also in difficulty and had made an application to the MTSP. There was a committee that looked into all the criteria and money was therefore advanced in order to try to save that company, but unfortunately, as we know, it failed.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the conditions of the use of funds disbursed to the Infinity group, is the hon. Minister aware that such funds have been used to repay the lease dues for the Aston Martin and the motorcycle of the owner of the company and there even have been claims made to ICAC and to the Police that money has been siphoned off from the ERCP funds to personal accounts of owners in Luxemburg? Would the hon. Minister confirm that?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I am not personally aware of the siphoning of funds or funds used to buy Aston Martin, what I know is that there is an inquiry; there is a Police investigation; there was a complaint that was made at ICAC. They are investigating and, ultimately, I am sure, we will know whether the information that has been given to the House by the hon. Member will be confirmed or not.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether his Ministry is envisaging some sort of a fact-finding committee, or whatever you call it, into the workings of that committee which was supposed to make sure that money that is being disbursed is used supposedly – the previous Minister of Finance made a big deal about saving jobs.

The committee which was supposed to monitor that the money that was being disbursed is going effectively to save jobs, that committee has obviously failed lamentably in its work. Is the hon. Minister of Finance envisaging putting some kind of enquiry into the works of that committee? Is that committee going to be legally held responsible for the failure? We have, if I am not mistaken, in that committee, a Financial Secretary who beats his stomach and says he knows everything more than everybody in this country. Will those persons who sit in that committee be held legally responsible for this situation?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an enquiry which is underway. For the Ministry to carry out an enquiry, we would, of course, need to have certain evidence, documents and so on from the company also, apart from what has happened at the level of the committee. So, it would not be appropriate and it would be improper to carry out an enquiry in parallel with

what are enquiries being conducted by Police or ICAC. Therefore, we will have to wait and see what unfolds from the enquiry by those institutions.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether there is any sum outstanding that is owed by any Government Link Agency to Infinity BPO Ltd?

Mr Jugnauth: There are sums that are outstanding. I am informed that they owe an amount of Rs52 m. to BPML Mauritius, Rs6.5 m. to the Municipality of Quatre Bornes, and Rs9.5 m. to Mauritius Telecom.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: My question was: is there any amount which is owed by Government Link Agency to Infinity BPO?

Mr Jugnauth: I don't think Government institutions owe any money. I'll have to check. Of course, I will look into it and then provide the information.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Sir, as the money that has been disbursed has been squandered and wasted and the owners have not paid the employees and are in breach of contract, is this not a violation of fundamental human rights and workers rights? It is worse that during the coolie era where they were paid a poor salary for their hard work.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, put your question!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: And, therefore, will the hon. vice-Prime Minister not agree with me that it is bad for the image of the country? Therefore, Government has the moral responsibility to use public funds to help and pay for the salaries that have been deprived from

the workers, because it is a bad example set by a Senior Adviser to a Prime Minister who has refused to pay workers for work done.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the hon. Member to make any reference to a case which is pending before court, but otherwise the Minister may make reference to it so as not to prejudice the case.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Will he now use the public funds to pay the salaries that have been deprived from the workers because it was meant to maintain jobs?

Mr Jugnauth: Again, I cannot pass any judgment on this case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Of course, we have heard a lot about this issue in the media and elsewhere. There is, as I have said, an enquiry which is under way. Let the enquiry proceed; let the enquiry come to a conclusion. There have been allegations by a number of people, including people who are working at BPO Infinity Ltd, but I cannot rely on the allegations that have been made against one and the other. I am sure the investigators will find out the veracity of these allegations and ultimately, probably, we will know what has happened.

Mr Bhagwan: It is clear because this question of giving money to these firms which are supposed to be in difficulties has been discussed here. Can the vice-Prime Minister, at least, recognise that the Financial Secretary has failed in his responsibility? The one, who is supposed to be accountable for public funds, must be accountable to the country and the nation. I also agree that he should be taken to task.

Mr Jugnauth: As I said, a number of allegations are being made. We will have to find out and see ultimately.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Ms Deerpalsing made reference to the committee. Can we know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister the names of the members sitting on that committee and also if he could table the findings of the committee?

Mr Jugnauth: I can circulate this information.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his answer the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance talks about the enquiry, but the enquiry is going on about Infinity. I am talking about enquiry on the committee that was supposed to monitor. As I said, there is a Financial Secretary who gives instructions to all Ministers here how they should manage money...

The Deputy Speaker: Limit yourself to the question!

Ms Deerpalsing: I would like to know from the hon. vice Prime-Minister whether the Financial Secretary or whoever in that committee, as hon. Bhagwan has said, be accountable to this Parliament how they have done their work?

Mr Jugnauth: I will find out.

Mr Baloomoody: Let us forget about the allegations of the enquiry which is being carried out. We know as a fact that public money has been given to that company to ensure that there is no loss of job. That was one of the fundamental clauses in that Agreement. We know today as a fact that this clause has been violated. So, are we to understand that the Ministry will do nothing? If for that breach of that specific agreement, the fundamental clause, why money was given, are we going to wait for ICAC for the enquiry, for the allegations?

Mr Jugnauth: I understand the objective of setting up the MTSP was to help enterprises that are facing difficulties at a very difficult time. I am saying it generally. I am not referring to this case. Generally, when you try to help a number of enterprises, probably, some do succeed, some do fail also. In this case, I am not saying that it is justified, but we will have to get all the details to know what has happened eventually to the funds that have been given in support for this enterprise.

The Deputy Speaker: I allow one last question.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister, at least, whether he will ask for a specific enquiry to find out who is to be blamed, whether it is the Financial Secretary or the owner of that premises?

Mr Jugnauth: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are a number of issues that pertains to what has happened with the BPO Infinity Ltd, how funds have been used. We do not have access to these information.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, order!

Mr Jugnauth: I am saying we do not have access to what has been done at the level of BPO Infinity Ltd. We know that money has been given. I have answered. At the level of the company, how funds have been utilised, that has to be sorted out.

The Deputy Speaker: I allow two last questions, one from hon. Bhagwan and the last one from hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether public funds have been paid as allowances to these members of this follow up committee chaired by the Financial Secretary? How much has been paid for that?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member is asking whether the funds that have been advanced to...

Mr Bhagwan: Whether any allowances or gratuity have been paid to these members, including the Financial Secretary for the follow up?

Mr Jugnauth: I can check and, of course, circulate the answer.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Li Kwong Wing!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The hon. Minister has mentioned that they were expecting a return of 5% on the acquisition of a building Infinity Tower. Is the hon. Minister aware that the building has still not yet been fully refurbished and that there is still a lot of vacancies there? How is he going to get the 5% return?

Mr Jugnauth: That's no expecting, that was the condition for the sale and lease back.

PET ANIMALS – IMPORTATION - QUARANTINE

(No. B/85) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to pet animals, more specifically cats and dogs, imported in Mauritius, he will state if he is aware of cases of such

animals not being subject to quarantine, temporarily or otherwise and, if so, state under what conditions.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, importation of all animals, including cats and dogs are authorised from countries that satisfy our animal health requirements. Importers are required to obtain an import permit from the competent authority that is the Division of Veterinary Services of my Ministry, prior to shipment. All imported pets are subject to strict veterinary control at the points of entry, namely at the airport and sea port. Veterinary officers verify that the pet is accompanied by all relevant documents, namely -

- (i) import permit issued by the DVS, and
- (ii) veterinary health certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country which ensures compliance with our requirements.

In addition, the veterinary officer carries a physical examination of the pets to ensure that it does not show any sign of infectious or contagious disease. The animal is then maintained under the control of the Division of Veterinary Services until its release.

I am informed by the DVS that there are no cases of cats and dogs which have not been subject to quarantine, temporarily or otherwise.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that around early December a dog was allowed to accompany his owner to a hotel and to socialise or otherwise?

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no dog was released, sort of categorically, even if they were allowed to go, they were under supervision and a strict monitoring of the DVS.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can this be considered as being a health hazard should the dog avoid the supervision of the veterinary officer who was appointed to mind the dog in the hotel and the owner who happens to be some vice-president of a big beauty company?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, in the first place, before the dog is allowed to go, there is a very strict and stringent control which is imposed when the person is given the import permit of the exporting country. For example, as I said, there are medical certificates which are issued by the competent authority. The pets, before coming to Mauritius, should reside in the exporting country from where it is coming for at least six months which already shows that it has a medical record. The pets must have been vaccinated against specific diseases, example rabies, feline enteritis, canine distemper. The animals should have been treated with approved anti-emetic drugs. There are lots of conditions. And, upon arrival in this country, they are examined by the veterinary officer.

I must also say that very often it has happened in the past and it may happen again - I was going to say on humanitarian grounds, but on compassionate grounds - because we are dealing with dogs and cats, on sentimental grounds. Last week, there was a dog which was not a risk to the public and to the other dogs of the country, but it was suffering from cardiac problem. I don't know if the hon. Member has ever visited the quarantine in question, we are talking of our quarantine at Réduit. This was built back in 1923, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Our law dates back to 1925. The conditions in which they are kept are appalling, in fact, it causes the dogs stress.

(Interruptions)

This has been so for the past so many years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, circumstances have changed. Today, we are in a position to ask those people who are importing and those countries which are exporting to put lots of stringent conditions. At the end of the day, the test is not that whether the dog is confined within the four walls at the quarantine, whether the dog is a probable cause, if it is released, to sort of contaminate the other dog population of this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As I said, we are reviewing the law; we are revisiting the functioning of the DVS. In fact, only recently, when Dr. Diouf was here in January of this year, we have asked for technical support. We had a team who came last month.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Faugoo: I am telling hon. Members about the reasons. It happens, as I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, be precise!

Mr Bérenger: I have had a look at the law. The law is the law. It says any animal that comes in goes to quarantine. Can I know from the hon. Minister under what section of the law officers apparently are allowing animals to go without quarantine under so and so conditions? And secondly, for other reasons, sentimental or otherwise, how many such exceptions have there been over the last two, three years?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il y a la loi et l'esprit de la loi*. As I said, when we look at the law as it is, the law which dates back to 1925...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: The law dates back to 1925, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I said we are reviewing the law and I also said if one has to choose between saving the life of a dog by allowing to go under strict conditions and keeping it according to the law as it is in a quarantine in the circumstances which are prevailing, I prefer personally to let it go, but under strict supervisory conditions by DVS.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Minister, that there is something called rabies which has been condemned by the European Union and by most health organisations. And sentiment and rabies do not go together.

Mr Faugoo: They make sure before releasing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that they are not infected with rabies. This is what I said when I started.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what we have heard from the hon. Minister, animals which are sent to quarantine are suffering a lot because there are bad conditions and so on. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will take immediate measures to alleviate the sufferings of animals which are being sent to quarantine? Let us be compassionate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Faugoo: This is exactly what we are doing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS – HEALTH SERVICE

(No. B/86) **Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to child abuse and neglect in the kindergartens and other pre-primary set-ups, she will state if Government will consider introducing -

- (a) pre-primary schools health service which would provide regular medical screening and physical abuse detection in the sector, and
- (b) basic compulsory nursing training programmes for child carers and baby minders.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Institutions for the Welfare and Protection of Children, Regulations 2000 of the Child Protection Act 1994, my Ministry is mandated to cater for the registration and monitoring of Child Day Care Centres providing services to children in the age group of three months to three years. On the other hand, policies pertaining to pre-primary schools fall under the purview of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA) which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

With your permission, Mr Speaker Sir, I shall therefore reply only to part (b) of the question.

I wish to inform the House that according to the provisions of the Regulations 2000, it is mandatory for all Day Care Centres offering day care services to children in the age group of three months to three years to recruit caregivers having qualifications or experience in the field of early childhood.

Such courses are provided by institutions registered with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority, such as the Mauritius Institute of Education, Bethlehem, Charles Telfair Institute, the True ECD Academy, among others.

It is to be noted that these courses include modules related to the detection and referral of child abuse and neglect as well as provision of first hand care and support to victims.

Members of the House may note that, unlike the pre-primary set up where most of the institutions which are operating are run by the Government, all child Day Care Centres are private owned, with the exception of the Centre at Baie du Tombeau where all the caregivers are qualified and trained in the field of early childhood care. This Centre is the only one which is being run and managed by the National Children's Council.

In the light of the above, my Ministry, being a regulating body, ensures that the day care centres comply with the provisions of the Regulations. However, as I just mentioned earlier in PQ No. B/83, my Ministry does step in from time to time to provide training courses for caregivers, with the assistance of the MIE, the last one having been conducted from September to December 2009.

It is to be noted that, in practice, child day care centres and pre-primary units are operating side by side at times on the same premises. In accordance with the current legislation, they should have separate managers. In line with the concept of working together, I am proposing to set up a Coordinating Committee with the Ministry of Education, through the ECCEA, to monitor the situation regarding early childhood.

Dr. S. Boolell: My question, I believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has not been answered. I wish to ask the hon. Minister whether Government intends introducing a pre-primary schools health service to be able to detect medically all these cases which, week after week, day after day, we are reading about in the press.

Mrs Bappoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot answer for the pre-primary sector. The question should be put to my colleague, the Minister of Education.

Mr Obeegadoo: The majority of pre-schools are not publicly owned but privately owned, and the Minister might enquire and confirm that. My question relates to part (b) of the question. The Minister has been talking about the courses. Can she tell us what are the qualifications prescribed for child carers under the Regulation, and whether these qualifications include basic nursing training?

Mrs Bappoo: I have just answered. In my answer, I have given the list of institutions responsible in putting up the training courses for day care centres. The carers can go for their training and they are being supervised by their own management of their centres and, from time to time, the Ministry also comes in. I said that there are two different modules in the training programme that take care about what is being questioned in paragraph (b). I have given the answer.

Mr Obeegadoo: With all due respect to the Minister, my question was not about what courses were being offered nor what institutions are offering these courses. The Regulations mention that no person shall be registered as a child caregiver, unless he/she produces evidence that he/she has basic qualifications or experience as appropriate. So, my question is: have these qualifications been prescribed? May we know what are the qualifications that have been

prescribed by way of regulation, and do they include, as my colleague just asked, basic nursing training?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just said, there is a list of responsible institutions giving these trainings. When the managers submit their request for registration of a child day care centre, they have to produce one by one the certificate of that particular caregiver, where he/she followed the course, and the certificate needs to be produced. The course...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the qualification required is a certificate course, a diploma course, a degree course, a master course? What is the qualification required? What are we expecting? Are we going to ask the institutions to tell us what we are going to prescribe or are we setting our requirements for this job? I do not know whether I am clear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Bappoo: In a child day care centre, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the staffing starts from the manager, who needs to have the higher qualification, be it the diploma or the degree. But it is not said degree, as far as I do understand, through the Regulation that has been prescribed. It must be a diploma.

The second category of staff is the caregivers. They need a certificate; they might have been studying up to Form V, and they are qualified to follow it. This is what is being done by the Ministry of Social Integration actually with the MIE...

(Interruptions)

This is the certificate, and I am in consultation with the Ministry of Social Integration to further carry training programme for caregivers. If you leave the second category, you come to the third one, which concern the helpers. The helpers do not need a diploma.

(Interruptions)

They need a lower grade certificate with basic training. It is so simple! Intelligent Members do not put this sort of question! It is so simple!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

(Interruptions)

We move to the next question! Hon. Quirin!

SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURES – MAINTENANCE

(No. B/87) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to sports infrastructures, he will give a list thereof falling under the control of his Ministry and state -

- (a) if there is any policy concerning the maintenance thereof, and
- (b) how same are managed.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a list of all sports infrastructures under the control of my Ministry.

My Ministry does have a policy for the maintenance of both sports and youth infrastructures. For example, football grounds and swimming pools are closed for specific

periods during the year for levelling/returfing and for *vidange* respectively. For the other infrastructures, maintenance works are carried out following regular audit exercises.

These maintenance works are prioritised and classified in two categories, namely minor and major. Minor works are either carried out by the Mauritius Sports Council or the Maintenance Unit of my Ministry, while major works are usually contracted out.

I have also initiated an audit exercise of all our infrastructures with a view to consolidating the existing maintenance policy, which would ensure both predictive and preventive maintenance of our infrastructures.

As regards part (b) of the question, the sports infrastructures are managed either directly by my Ministry or the Mauritius Sports Council, which operates under the aegis of my Ministry.

Each site is under the control of an officer of my Ministry, and allocation of slots is done by the Mauritius Sports Council in consultation with the officer in charge.

Slots are allocated for training, competition and leisure to either students or clubs affiliated to federations.

Our gymnasia, football grounds, swimming pools and other sports facilities are also open to the public for leisure sports.

It is to be noted that the Dojo Centre and Maryse Justin Stadium are managed by the Mauritius Judo Federation and the Mauritius Athletics Association respectively. However, all maintenance and upgrading works are carried out and financed by my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire si la gestion des infrastructures sportives est en conformité avec le *Sports Act*?

Mr Ritoo: Yes, it is.

Mr Quirin: Si je comprends bien la réponse du ministre, être en conformité veut dire qu'il y a un comité de gestion pour chaque infrastructure, comme il est stipulé dans le *Sports Act*.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Sports Council takes care of minor works. We have a committee there, and we have a unit with the project manager as the officer in charge at the Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Avec votre permission, M. le président, je vais faire référence au *Sports Act*. Il est clairement stipulé à la huitième Schedule -

'A committee shall manage the sports installation...'

C'est bien précisé comité de gestion -

'...facilities and equipment placed at its disposal by the Sports Council or the Ministry, as the case may be, in order to ensure its effective operation, use and maintenance.'

Ce qui veut dire, donc, M. le président, que le ministère n'est pas en conformité avec sa propre loi!

Mr Ritoo: I stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have a committee at the Mauritius Sports Council, and we also have a committee at the level of the Ministry under the supervision of a project manager.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je ne suis pas en train de parler du *Sports Council* qui est un organisme qui gère effectivement toutes les infrastructures. Je parle d'un comité de gestion pour chaque infrastructure.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just stated that we have recently recruited a project manager to take care of all the sports infrastructures of the Ministry insofar as the stadiums and youth centres are concerned.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since we are talking about the maintenance of sports infrastructures, is the Minister aware that the George V Stadium is still in a deplorable state?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We are not talking about a specific one.

Mr Gumbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had to go and put it at the ICAC!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question, M. le président. J'aimerais savoir du ministre s'il est au courant qu'il y a une absence de supervision au gymnase de Phoenix ?

Mr Ritoo: Each sport matter has an Officer-in-Charge. If there is any breakdown, I don't think it is being reported to the Ministry. We have taken care of that.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, permettez-moi de faire un petit commentaire par rapport au gymnase de Phoenix.

The Deputy Speaker: No! The hon. Member has to ask questions.

Mr Quirin: C'est un constat que j'ai fait récemment et c'est très important. J'aimerais, avec votre permission, le dire ici. J'ai assisté récemment à une rencontre de handball opposant

Maurice à Madagascar. La visibilité des spectateurs qui étaient dans les gradins était obstruée par un panneau de basket. S'il y a supervision, je me demande bien ce que faisait ce panneau de basket au beau milieu des gradins. Moi-même j'y étais et c'était pratiquement impossible de suivre cette rencontre.

Le deuxième point est encore plus important. En descendant les gradins pour se rendre aux toilettes des dames, c'était complètement dans l'obscurité. Je puis vous dire qu'il y a eu pas mal de plaintes à ce sujet. M. le président, je me fais un devoir de venir soulever ce point ici.

Mr Ritoo: Je suis très étonné, M. le président. Cela n'a jamais été rapporté au niveau du ministère. Il y a des journalistes qui suivent le sport de près, mais personne n'a attiré l'attention du ministère.

Mr Quirin: Le ministre veut-il dire que je suis en train de mentir ?

The Deputy Speaker: I understand that the hon. Member made his point and the hon. Minister is, of course, going to look into it. Next question!

8TH INDIAN OCEAN GAMES – MAURITIAN ATHLETES ABROAD - PARTICIPATION

(No. B/88) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritian athletes living abroad who have expressed their intention to participate in the 8th Indian Ocean Games, he will state the -

- (a) number thereof, indicating their respective discipline, and

(b) stand of each respective federation in regard to the participation of these athletes.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 35 Mauritian athletes presently either living or training abroad have been identified and pre-selected by their respective federation for the Indian Ocean Islands Games 2011.

In addition, there are also some non-resident Mauritian athletes who are not in the pre-selection, but have expressed their interest to participate in the 8th Indian Ocean Islands Games. However, as at date, we are in presence of official requests from three swimmers only to be pre-selected for the Games.

I am informed that any such athlete should, in the first instance, be a licensee of the Federation concerned and should participate in a qualifying competition and satisfy the established criteria in order to be pre-selected.

I am also informed that no other federation has received any similar request to date.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre si le problème des nageuses expatriées dont il vient de citer le cas est résolu et quel est le *stand* du DTN de natation par rapport à ce même problème ?

Mr Ritoo: M. le président, les jeux des îles dépassent de loin le simple clivage politique ou sportif. C'est la fierté du peuple mauricien qui est en jeu, et donc c'est tout à fait normal que nous devons présenter nos meilleurs sportifs. Il faut brasser très large pour qu'on puisse gagner le maximum de médailles aux Seychelles.

Dans le cas des nageuses, nous avons effectivement rencontré quelques obstacles avec la présidente de la fédération mauricienne de natation. Heureusement que tout a été réglé dans le

dialogue et dans le respect de toutes les institutions. La nageuse pourra incessamment - peut-être jusqu'à cet après-midi - bénéficier d'une licence pour pourvoir représenter le pays.

Mr Bhagwan: I am sure that the hon. Minister is as much concerned as we are. We are all fans of our Mauritius Club M. Football. We have been watching constantly, *de près*, the catastrophic results of the club M these days. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, while he is talking about Mauritian athletes...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the interest of the country, he will do all his best if we have Mauritian players playing outside, who are Mauritians and holders of a Mauritian passport, so that they can represent us in the National Team?

(Interruptions)

I have not yet finished.

(Interruptions)

At least, for us not to have the same fate as last time! Instead of gold medal, it was *médaille ferraille!*

Mr Ritoo: I thank the hon. Member for his concern, specifically about football. Well, like him, all the Mauritian people are very eager for the Mauritian football to have a better team. Unfortunately, I cannot force any player. In fact, we are waiting for the players - like the swimmers who have expressed their intention to represent the country - who are staying abroad

to express their intention, through the federation, to at least play for the team. We are very concerned regarding the football.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

The Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not wish to proceed with the Courts (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2010) at first reading today.

On motion made and seconded, the following Bills were read a first time -

(a) *The Assets Recovery Bill (No. II of 2011)*

(b) *The Revision of Laws (Amendment) Bill (No. III of 2011)*

The Deputy Speaker: We break for half an hour for tea.

At 4.18 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.55 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair

Second Reading

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY BILL

(No. XVI of 2010)

Order for second reading read.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that the Energy Efficiency Bill (No. XVI of 2010) be read a second time.

The object of this Bill is to provide for the setting up of the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) which shall, *inter alia*, make provisions for the efficient use of energy in Mauritius.

The introduction of this Bill is in line with the Government Programme for 2010-2015, which states that -

“One of the main objectives of Government is to reduce energy demand and improve the country's energy security (improve demand through energy security). An Energy Efficiency Bill will be enacted to provide the framework for product labelling and importation of energy efficient equipment. Government will promote projects to achieve energy saving in the private and public sectors and create national awareness on energy conservation”.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is equally within the National Energy Strategy, which has targeted that energy consumption should be reduced by 10% by 2025; the growth will gradually be curbed by 10% of the actual consumption over this time horizon.

Mr Speaker, Sir, energy efficiency through reduction on the demand side - *ce qu'on appelle 'maîtrise de la demande d'énergie'* - together with renewable energy go hand-in-hand to form part of a sustainable energy policy which aims at reducing CO₂ emissions as well as our dependence on fossil fuels and it is of direct concern to each and every citizen of this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, energy efficiency is defined as output over input; in brief is the use of less energy for the same output, achieving more with less. This is the essence of the whole philosophy of energy efficiency: to get more out of what you put in. Efficiency in the energy

sector applies to the whole chain or from generation to transmission and distribution, and its use by the customer. Energy production will, in time, comprise increasingly decentralised renewable energy system, whether solar PV, solar thermal or wind. Increased efficiency is expected in the transformation of solar energy into electricity from the current level of 13% to an envisaged 35% or above. However, new storage technologies, are at present still very costly, bulky and commercially not viable. Moreover, smart grids or smart metering at consumer level would eventually have to be introduced resulting in fundamental changes in the electricity sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I thought I would introduce this to say that we are not dealing with generation, transmission and distribution, but we are dealing with the energy use at the level of the consumer and this Bill is today in the context of energy efficiency addressing the issue of consumption of energy with emphasis on buildings in all sectors of the economy whether in homes, offices, industries and commercial buildings.

Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past decade, electricity demand in Mauritius has grown by an average annual cumulative rate of around 5%. The CEB forecasts that electricity generation requirements will increase by approximately 30% over the next 10 years, mainly due to the introduction of air conditioning and mechanical ventilation from commercial and residential buildings.

It may be noted that electricity consumption in the domestic sector is 33% of the total demand, while the commercial and industrial sectors respectively account for 34% and 31%. Furthermore, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) report of 2009, energy consumed by households increased by 2.7%, from 110 ktoe in 2008 to 113 ktoe in 2009. The main sources of energy for households are electricity and LPG, which in 2009, represented 52% and 41%

respectively of total energy consumed by households. Consumption of electricity increased by 4.3% and that of LPG by 2.0% in the same year. So much for the statistics and this gives the background against which we are working, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As domestic and commercial sectors account for two-thirds of electricity demand, they have to be targeted for improvement in energy efficiency, the more so as energy products and services in these two sectors do not generally incorporate energy efficiency features whilst industry, I may say, Mr Speaker, Sir, has already embarked on best practices for obvious economic reasons.

To address this issue, of a sort of lack of awareness in the two sectors I have mentioned, a major project entitled 'Removal of Barriers to Energy Efficiency' is being funded to the tune of Rs30 m. by UNDP and the Global Environment Facility with the aim of overcoming barriers to energy efficiency in residential/non-residential, existing and future buildings.

This project includes -

- (i) drafting of legislation;
- (ii) establishment of an energy management audit scheme;
- (iii) development of standards and labelling scheme for appliances, and
- (iv) establishment of a database on energy efficiency and consumption.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Energy Efficiency Bill which is being proposed to the House is one of the components of this project. It proposes the setting up of an Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) headed by a Director to implement the energy efficiency

programmes. The functions of the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) as defined under Section 6 of the Bill are comprehensive, wide-ranging and incorporate the following -

- (i) formulation and implementation of strategies and recommendation of innovative financing schemes, including assistance to project developers in applying for carbon credits. I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that financing schemes would be, probably, at the heart of the issues sooner or later;
- (ii) education and awareness building;
- (iii) regional and international co-operation, and
- (iv) this also forms very much part of the Bill: regulation of imports of equipment on the basis of their efficiency level.

The Office - the EEMO - will, as a priority, establish a baseline data on energy consumption in all sectors of the economy, trends in consumption, technology availability, and best practices in energy efficiency and provide information to the public along the same lines as the '*Observatoire de l'Energie*' of Réunion. This baseline is important, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we will have to refer to it as we go along, to see whether improvements or otherwise, are happening in the field.

The Bill also provides for standards and labelling of energy appliances. Various meetings have been held with the Mauritius Standards Bureau to develop standards which will be promulgated through Regulations. In the first instance, it is proposed to target products such as freezers, air conditioners, electric and microwave ovens, dish washers and electric water heaters. After promulgation of the standards, intensive awareness campaigns will be carried out to

sensitise the public on how to identify efficient products and on the benefits of such products both in terms of long-term savings and environmental impact.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill also proposes the setting up of an Energy Efficiency Management Committee, which would provide guidance to the Energy Efficiency Office. This Committee will include representatives of relevant Ministries and Departments as well as professionals from the private sector such as the Associations of Engineers, Architects and Mauritius Export Association and the University of Mauritius. Mr Speaker, Sir, I propose to bring an amendment at Committee Stage to include a representative of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development on the Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having said all that, the essence of it all is capacity-building. If we do not build capacity, we are wasting our time introducing the Bill in the House.

For this Bill to attain its objectives, we imperatively have to build capacity in the field. To this effect, we have already started -

- (i) a training programme for 50 energy auditors and 5 trainers of the MITD will be carried out in May 2011 by UNDP Consultants. This will encourage the development of Energy Service Companies and promote employment in this sector;
- (ii) My Ministry is currently holding discussions with the MITD for the organisation of energy auditing courses in the future;

- (iii) In addition, the University of Mauritius could contribute in the implementation of the Act through provisions of technical expertise, and elaboration of technical and postgraduate training programmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, following the visit of the hon. Prime Minister to Réunion and the agreement signed with the French Government, assistance will be obtained from '*l'Agence de l'Environnement et de Maîtrise de l'Energie*' (ADEME) and '*l'Agence Régionale de l'Energie Réunion*' (ARER) to build capacity of the staff of the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO), to operationalise the Office, to train auditors and assist in the setting up of the '*Observatoire de l'Energie*'. A meeting has been scheduled in Réunion Island on 13 and 14 April to finalise the details of the intervention of these institutions.

This Bill also makes it compulsory for designated consumers to be defined by the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) on the basis of their energy consumption, to carry out energy auditing. Many questions have been raised on this, Mr Speaker, Sir. I want to make it clear that the Energy Audit Management Scheme is being prepared by UNDP consultants and will be ready soon and the basis for, sort of, designated consumers will be of the energy consumption and whether, they are high consumers and we will start there.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the context of promoting energy efficiency, the Building Control Bill is being reviewed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure in collaboration with my Ministry to incorporate energy efficiency features in the construction of buildings. This will include an Energy Efficiency Code for Buildings and the relevant Regulations for enforcement of the Code. In this respect, the energy auditors will also be called upon to issue energy certificates for compliance with the Regulations but this is to come, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Guidelines are also being worked out for energy efficient houses for the low and middle income groups and will be disseminated at the level of Local Authorities so that the energy efficiency measures may be taken into consideration at the time the houses are being built. It means using better features in buildings such as passive sunlight, ventilation, minimal exposure to the sun and the use of natural skylights as far as possible and the use of appropriate insulating materials. In addition it implies using more efficient equipment, from lighting to air conditioning amongst others. So, in the construction of houses we will have a lot of issues and regulations as we go along.

Mr Speaker, Sir, initiatives have already been taken by Government, namely in the funding of more than Rs250 m. for low energy bulbs for households and street lighting, solar water heaters and LED traffic lights.

Furthermore, to promote energy efficiency and savings in the public sector, the Energy Services Division of my Ministry has in 2010 carried out audits of five public buildings ranging from hospitals to main Government offices with the assistance of ADEME Réunion. Seven others are being audited this year. In addition to the initiatives in the public sector, the private sector is also fully involved in the promotion of energy efficiency. In that context, an Energy Auditing Project in 10 enterprises, with highest energy consumption has been implemented by the Joint Economic Council with the support of '*Fonds de Coopération Régionale, Réunion*' and part funding from the *MID* Fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like at this stage draw a note of caution, whilst we have performed the audits, the difficulty has been to implement the recommendation because not all

the recommendations on existing old buildings are possible. But it is a start and we'll see how we proceed.

In the same context, I would like to mention other laudable initiatives from companies such as RT Knits, Star Knitwear, the International Financial Services building in Ebène, the new Mauritius Commercial Bank building at Trianon among others to introduce energy saving measures.

As regards sensitisation on energy efficiency, my Ministry and the Central Electricity Board with the collaboration of other Ministries - I take the opportunity to thank past and present Ministers who have accompanied me on this task – such as the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, the University of Mauritius, Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre have carried out numerous awareness campaigns since 2006. One of the key tasks of the Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) would be to enhance awareness and devise and assist in the preparation of educational courses in the school curricula on the efficient use of energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, *en passant*, I would like to mention the transport sector. The transportation sector accounts for about 50% of our national energy imports. Efficiency and savings in that sector are already being addressed through decongestion programme of Government, which includes the construction new roads and bypasses, the intended modernisation of the vehicle fitness centres and their future introduction of the mass transit system among others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, this Bill is based on our endeavour to promote a culture of energy efficiency and energy-saving. It may be noted that the businesses have now started to realise that there are economic benefits from investment in energy efficiency. Nevertheless, we have a long way to go and regrettably among the many energy products and services, energy efficiency does not yet have the priority it deserves. For sure, it makes more economic sense to invest in energy efficiency rather than making heavy investment in new generation capacities.

While regulations will allow enforcement of certain aspects of the Bill like doing away with the importation of inefficient electrical appliances, we should put significant efforts in awareness building and the sensitisation of stakeholders to encourage them into the new paradigm. A simple change in habits, Mr Speaker. Sir, like switching off lights, appliances like TV, decoder, microwave, computer among others, switch them off when they are not needed, instead of leaving them on standby mode and we have to explain that the standby mode does consume electricity and when properly used and switched off may reduce electricity bill by up to 15%. This is a significant message. Switch it off and switch off the standby as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the future, opportunities will be there. The construction of the future university campuses will be in line with the Maurice Ile Durable concept of green buildings incorporating renewable energy systems and energy saving features and I hope these will be showcases for future projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, efficient energy use is essential to slowing down energy demand growth and coupled with future increasing clean energy supplies will greatly help to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. Energy efficiency is one of the pillars of Government's energy policy to achieve sustainable development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before ending, I would like to thank the UNDP, GEF, AFD and the staff of my Ministry for their valuable support.

I, now, commend the Bill to the House.

Dr A. Boolell rose and seconded.

(5.15 p.m)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): Mr Speaker, Sir, we are in full agreement that the issue of energy efficiency is a very important one and I agree with the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that we have a long way to go to reach the stage where all those who should be aware of the importance of energy efficiency are aware. Many people are not aware. Therefore, many people are not aware especially in today's world - just think of Japan - of the importance of energy efficiency. We have a long way to go and I'm saying that not to be mean, but I think it illustrates what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said and what I am saying. We have a long way to go and, unfortunately, may be, the first proof of that is around the hon. Deputy Prime Minister; the number of Ministers who are not present, the front bench, the Minister of Environment; there is an amendment to bring environment on the board. This is the meeting where we are debating. They have sentimental problems, probably. The hon. Minister of Environment, the hon. Minister of Industry; one of the main sectors concerned *brille par leur absence*. I'm not saying that to be mean. I think this is an illustration that a lot of people inside Government itself are not aware or are not fully aware of the fundamental importance of energy efficiency, especially in today's world. I have tried to listen very carefully to what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister had to say and it has not been easy to hear all the statistics, especially the first two/three minutes where statistics were quoted. I did my best, but couldn't hear exactly

what figures were being put forward. Be that as it may, on 15 March the CEB officially - in an email response to a question set by the international press - estimated that demand would grow at about 2.8% a year to reach 533 Megawatt by 2020. The officer-in-charge provided those figures. I don't know how they tally with those which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister put forward. I would have expected more details on the target which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Government are aiming at in terms of energy efficiency. I would wish, therefore, to quote two examples, one the State of California in the United States. I quote -

“The State of California began implementing energy efficiency measures in the mid 1970s, including code and appliance standards with strict efficiency requirements. During the following years, California's energy consumption has remained approximately flat on a per capita basis while national US consumption doubled.”

The potential is there. We are not California, of course, but the potential is there. We can make a big difference and I quote the 2006 report published by McKinsey Global Institute. I quote -

"There are sufficiently economically viable opportunities for energy productivity improvements that could keep global energy demand growth at less than 1% per annum, less than half of the 2.2% average growth anticipated through 2020 in a business as usual scenario”.

That is why I referred to the figures put forward on 15 March by the CEB itself to see whether the Deputy Prime Minister has incorporated those projection figures of the CEB in those which he offered today.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would say that it is urgently required that we come forward with the most efficient and environmental friendly ways of producing more electricity, because we have to produce more, but also of producing energy more efficiently. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister knows that I am already very worried about the issue of electricity production in Mauritius. I won't go into the details, but *nous sommes déjà en zone rouge*. When the CEB has to cut on maintenance drastically and to ask the sugar industry to cut on maintenance, we are already in trouble. I think we are in a situation of urgency, and this Energy Efficiency Bill takes even more importance in that context.

Energy efficiency. I would wish to quarrel with the title. Energy efficiency is one thing; energy conservation is larger. Energy conservation includes energy efficiency. But energy conservation includes active efforts to decrease energy consumption, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is why, in a country like New Zealand - New Zealand is often *à l'avant-garde* of many developments, including energy issues - for example - I will take just one example - there is an energy conservation and efficiency authority. I will come to that issue of an office or an authority later on. But I think it is important that the title of the Bill itself and also of the body that we are going to set up is energy conservation and efficiency. Let it be clear to everybody that the aim is not to be more and more energy efficient, being efficient in the use of energy, but also that we are dealing in active efforts to decrease energy consumption, Mr Speaker, Sir. At clause 5 of the Bill - Objects of the Office, it is said that 'The objects of the Office shall be to promote the efficient use of energy;' I think that, if we are really serious about it, it should be as in New Zealand, for example. The object of the office shall be to promote energy conservation and efficient use of energy.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister will probably tell me that it includes conservation. It does not in the internationally recognised definitions. That is why, as I said, countries like New Zealand have made it a point to spell out that what we are dealing in is energy conservation and energy savings, Mr Speaker, Sir, to make that clear to everybody.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister rightly pointed out that there are four broad sectors. I was going to ask a breakdown, because in countries like the UK, the US, Japan or New Zealand and so on, they have the statistics; what percentage of energy is consumed by each of the four main sectors. But the four main sectors are, as we know, residential, transport, commercial and industrial.

When we talk of energy savings in the residential sector, we are talking of building design; we are talking about electrical appliances and so on, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said earlier on.

When we are talking about energy efficiency in the transport sector, we are talking about replacing spare parts as and when required. We are even talking about the correct pressure for tyres, and there is a long list of such measures that can be taken for better energy efficiency in the transport sector.

In the commercial sector, we are talking about the degree of illumination, the amount of advertising, the Piccadilly Circus for example, and so on.

In the industrial sector, we are talking of more cogeneration, of more efficient boilers and so on. That is why earlier on I said that it is disturbing when Ministers, who are responsible for one or more of those four major sectors, are not even present, Mr Speaker, Sir. I believe that our

efforts have to be intense in all the four different sectors. Again, I tried to get the statistics which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister put forward. I think I heard him say 50% transport sector; it is enormous. It disturbs me, because it doesn't tally with the figures in many other countries, where it is more evenly spread among the four different sectors. That being the case, the effort should be double in the transport sector, but we should not leave any sector behind, including the residential sector.

We are setting up an Office. I am not sure at all. I pick a quarrel with the title. You might say 'what's in a word?' A lot can be in a word. By spelling it out that we want to deal in energy conservation and energy savings, I think we're sending the right signal. But, I am not convinced that the right thing to do is to set up an Office. It is spelt out that 'There shall be for the purposes of this Act, an Office, within the Ministry.' I hope that this has been discussed both within Government, with the stakeholders and even with the private sector. I am not convinced that this is the best way forward, that is, to have an Office within the Ministry concerned. I am not convinced. Other solutions have been found in other countries. I think this is the worst thing. It is a government department; it is an Office within the Ministry. I believe it should be some sort of independent, semi-independent, autonomist body to translate into facts what is being provided for in this Energy Efficiency Bill.

As I said earlier on, in New Zealand, it is an independent authority; an energy conservation and efficiency authority. In Japan, it is a centre, separate from the Ministry, separate from the government. In India or elsewhere it can be a Board or a Bureau. But I have not come across any *avant-garde* country, where it is an Office - which is a department - within

the Ministry concerned. I think the hon. Deputy Prime Minister should give a second thought to that.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill provides for the composition of the Committee at Clause 8 - Energy Efficiency Committee; whether the Committee will be an office, an authority, a centre or a Board. There is an amendment to bring on board the Ministry of Environment. But I am sure that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister will agree with me that there is need to bring on board the Ministry of Industry also.

There are four main sectors: commercial, industrial, residential and transport. We had left out the Ministry of Environment. There is an amendment, welcome. I was going to suggest it, but industry also should be brought in. It's vital. It's one of the four main sectors and, on the other hand, why is there a representative of the Mauritius Export Association? From my point of view, it should be the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Again, we have said there are four main sectors: industry, commerce and two others. Why a representative of the Mauritius Export Association? I don't see the logic at all. Have a representative of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry! They cover also export industries, but they deal with both commerce and industry. I don't think it will become too cumbersome if, apart from the representative of the Ministry of Environment who is being taken on board, we add a representative of the Ministry of Industry, if we replace the Mauritius Export Association by the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and if we add a representative of the Consumers' Association. We are talking about household appliances amongst other things. There are lots of things which will be of special interest to consumers. Therefore, I think to be fair to consumers in general, we should have also a representative of the Consumers' Association. I know that the Bill is before us but,

in the spirit that the Deputy Prime Minister himself bringing an amendment to bring on board the representative of the Ministry of environment, I would suggest two further amendments.

One, as I said, in the appellation itself of the Office, that it be an energy conservation and efficiency. Therefore, we should amend the objects of the Office to make it the promotion; to promote energy conservation and the efficient use of energy.

The second amendment which I think would be in the interest of one and all - which is non-partisan at all - would be, apart from the representative of the Ministry of Environment, to bring on board a representative of the Ministry of Industry; a representative of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry in lieu of the representative of the Mauritius Exports Association and a representative of Consumers' Association.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.33 p.m.)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me right from the outset, congratulate the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. This is a defining moment and the Bill is being introduced at a time when there is a decline in the petroleum economy and I think we can say that there is a rise in the new energy order.

Before I come to the main thrust of the Bill, let me also say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that goodwill prevails. He has made some pertinent points which I think deserve to be studied not thoroughly but we need to give some thought to it, but I'm glad that there is an overall consensus. This is an issue that transcends political barrier and we need to send strong

political signals to the community at large. It is a question of survival, but sometimes we take for granted our *acquis*. We need to safeguard those *acquis* and we need to take stock of the fact that in the world today there are one billion people who do not have access to electricity. There are 1.8 billion people who are trying to fell wood, who do fell wood and burn it for energy. I think we need to realise how lucky we are, but our luck may run out if we don't tread cautiously and if we don't take appropriate corrective measures. It's a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Today, we have an income per capita of US\$7,000, but there was a time when the income per capita in this country was less than US\$300. Where did we obtain our energy from? Where did we source our energy? We used to fell wood and we know what it meant. It simply meant degradation of the environment. Today, we can all afford to purchase a gas cylinder and imagine the changes that this has brought to ensure that we live up to expectations to become a country which is pro-environment. It was no coincidence when we came out sixth in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI). But having said so, we need to take the bull by the horn. It is unfortunate that, when my colleague Minister, hon. Dr. Kasenally, did introduce the Bill to move to summertime, this was not appealing to the public. I do grant you that there were some shortcomings, but we need to shift the paradigm. If we want to survive if we want to enjoy the armchair comfortability that we have, we need to shift the paradigm. This is precisely what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is doing. I grant that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right to say that there are four categories that need to be taken on board, that need to be responsive to the needs of the country because whether we like it or not, with the climate of uncertainty in the world, with the constant rise in the price of petroleum products, we need to look at alternatives. We have no choice but to adopt a slow process. We can move the process as we go along. We

cannot violently disrupt the existing system. This is why we need to look at new construction. What is it that we need to do to sustain development, to be in line with the politics of saving energy?

In respect of import of materials, what are the facilities and incentives that we give? In a small way, let me take the case of workers who opted for VRS, who obtained the land for construction of a small housing unit. We need to have what we call a showcase, the type of building that needs to be erected, the type of material that is going to be used and the facilities that we need to extend. For example, when we are going to construct a new city, what is it that we need to do to ensure that we are environmentally friendly to save energy?

Let me take the case of three university campuses which are going to be constructed. We have to make sure that you're in line with the objectives that are clearly spelt out in the Energy Efficiency Bill. The purpose of having an office - I do grant you that New Zealand is ahead of us, but where there is the will the way is there. It is not a question of having an office or an authority, but it is a question of ensuring that we are going to recruit the best. This is why the Director is going to be recruited by the Public Service Commission. When he set up committees and subcommittees, we have to ensure that the best people on the Board, that they have a task to do. We need to clearly define the terms and conditions, what are the priorities and how to respond to the needs; what is our level of preparedness. Because what is the objective? We have stated that, by year 2025, we are going to decrease our energy consumption by 10%. It's a tall order because we need to change habits and old habits are hard to die but, at the same time, we have to live up to expectations. I am glad that we are reaching out to those whom we can convince: the young students. We need to impress upon them as to the importance of being

energy saving conscious, and that's very important. Simple things! Why is it that they don't switch off the light in the room? Why is the need, for example, to save water, the length of time that they need to spend in the shower? Simple things that we need to ram down the throat of our young people. This is very important, Mr Speaker, Sir. My appeal is that we have to convey those strong signals.

Having said so, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me also make it quite clear. From domestic, we are going to look at industrial - small and medium-size enterprises. As I stated, we cannot disrupt the system overnight. We need to introduce measures that are palatable, that they can take on board. There was a time when we tried to disrupt the system in such a manner that we were not able to respond to the set objectives, for example, when it comes to introducing solar panel and now we are talking of photovoltaic cells. In Germany, they have reached third generation photovoltaic cells; they have set up a solar city in Freiberg. We can do it at our own pace, except that we need sometimes to accelerate the pace. What is it that we need to do? With the help of the UNDP and UNIDO, we are going to prepare our people, skill our resources and to see to it that we build our capacity. We are doing it with UNDP, UNIDO and, at the same time, with the help of our friends from Reunion Island.

With UNIDO, we have established a national cleaner production centre in Mauritius - resource, efficient and cleaner production. At the same time, we need to mobilise resources, we need to make an appeal to our friends from the *Agence Française de Développement* and the World Bank. What is it that we want to do? There is no point in dispensing consultancy advice, in carrying the audit if the financial resources cannot be disbursed; the loan at a concessionary rate is not going to be made available. For example, UNIDO is willing to dispense financial

support up to 30%, but for small specific projects. One should not forget what is it that we are trying to do: appealing to our friends to become environmentally-friendly, energy efficient and, at the same time, with the objective of obtaining carbon credit.

Let me tell you, we are a very small country, many of our small industries cannot even produce more than, 10 MW and we know what it means. Less than 10 MW, there is no carbon credit! So, what is it that we need to do? Probably, we need to put our case across forcefully to the World Bank and come up with what we call the clean development mechanism. We pull our resources and say that we are making a submission as a country in respect of small and medium-size entrepreneurs. We have pooled the energy that they have saved, the footprint that now has been reduced and the increase in carbon credit. Otherwise, what is happening? It is an exercise in futility, it is not easy.

Let us talk about the big companies, the Omnicane, for example. The formula is yet to be worked out properly. It is not easy to obtain carbon credit, but we have to make our case felt and we need to develop the appropriate formula to ensure that we obtain carbon credit, and this is very important. At the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to make sure that we don't fell trees. Whether we like it or not, the Leader of the Opposition was right. We have to make sure that, in the years to come, there are no outages; there is no power shortage, because, at the end of the day, the same people whom we want to reach out, those who are weak, the vulnerable, are those who need power supply. There was a study conducted amongst people who had the choice of whether they want food or information and technology. They all opted for information and technology, because the electrification of a country, electrification of a household is power and this is the way to empower our people. So, we have no choice, but to look at renewable source of

the energy, we have to make it accessible and affordable. We can mobilise the financial resources. We can interact with international groups like the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). It is good also to know that countries which are oil rich, they are the ones - I am talking of United Arab Emirates - who are in the vanguard to make a move towards renewable energy. This is a fact. So, as a small, vulnerable island which cannot interlock on the African grid, we have no choice but to shift the paradigm, to be proactive, to react in a forceful, meaningful and effective manner and to go for renewable energy. True the upfront disbursement is high but, in the long run, we stand to gain. We might as well opt for a short campaign so that in the long term we gain.

I thank you very much and congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister.

(5.46 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, the piece of legislation in front of us today deals with energy efficiency. The object of the legislation, as explained in the Explanatory Memorandum, is to provide for the setting up of an office to be called the Energy Efficiency Management Office. This office will deal with the efficient use of energy in our country. Maybe, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the very outset of my speech, I should also make reference to figures from the Central Statistics Office with regard to, first of all, the import of petroleum bill for our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the import bill of petroleum products and coal for the year 2009 stood at Rs17.4 billion and was meant especially for the transport sector, for the production of electricity and running of factories in our country. With regard to electricity generation, some 2,577 GW

hour of electricity was generated in 2009 as compared to some 2,557 GW energy in 2008, representing an increase of 0.8%.

The IPPs, Mr Speaker, Sir, supplied 58.2% of that total energy generated and the Central Electricity Board supply 41.8% and the total thermal energy represented 95% of that energy produced, that is, total thermal energy - energy produced from diesel and coal and renewable energy, that is, hydro and wind now in our country represented only 5%. The big demand in 2009 reached some 388.6 MW which represented an increase of 2.8% as compared to a peak demand of 378.1 MW which was registered in 2008.

Various sectors which consumed that electricity, Mr Speaker, Sir, are categorised as follows: the transport sector, the manufacturing sector, the commercial and distributive trade, household and the agricultural sector. But I would like to stress on something which has been pointed out earlier by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that is, the transport sector accounted 48.4% of that energy as compared, Mr Speaker, Sir, to 27.7% for the manufacturing sector for 2009. That is why I would also wish the Minister responsible for Land Transport and Public Infrastructure to be present today because not only I have stressed on the transport sector but we are also dealing with the legislation that would come to this House at a later stage, amending building codes and building permits in the country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, having said that, in October 2009, the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities released a document concerning the long-term energy strategy together with an Action Plan for the coming years. The study was funded by the EC and the UNEP. The report made several recommendations with regard to energy demand, energy supply and energy utilisation for both the power sector and the transport sector. The recommendations also covered energy

imports, energy security, diversification of energy mix, energy efficiency and energy conservation. The document also took into consideration the vision of the actual Government with regard to sustainable development in the context of *Maurice Ile Durable*. Unfortunately, 18 months have passed by and I would say that not much has been achieved. We have not obtained the expected results with regard to projects that have been announced and implemented. For example, the Minister for Foreign Affairs earlier talked about summertime, we have to agree that we were not successful in implementing it. First of all, the population did not go along and secondly, we did not get that exact figures with regard to reduction of our maximum demand when we have introduced summertime in the country.

It's the same thing with regard to the distribution of CFL lamps. We agree that the first phase was done correctly but, unfortunately, for the second phase, we all know the problems that the Central Electricity Board had to face with regard to tendering procedures. Even in that case, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not been provided with the figures to show that there has been a reduction with regard to maximum demand.

With regard to institutional and regulatory framework, the same report made several recommendations and I will point out three very important recommendations. The first one was with regard to the setting up of the Board of the Utility Regulatory Authority which was supposed to have been done and be operational in 2009 but, unfortunately, this is not the case. The report also mentioned the proclamation of the Electricity Act which was voted in 2005. And lastly, the report recommends the introduction of a piece of legislation called the Sustainable Development Bill. Maybe, at a later stage, the hon. Minister will let us know where that piece of legislation is and whether Government is still working on it.

The Bill in front of us today also forms part of the recommendations that were in that report. But I would say that this legislation, that is, the Energy Efficiency Bill, has been traded off. Government has preferred to come forward with a narrowly focused legislation rather than a very comprehensive legislation as is the case in most countries. I would categorise this legislation as a soft energy efficiency law as it provides only principles and intentions rather than providing the statutory basis together with the necessary funding for the actual implementation. But, on the other hand, Government has preferred to opt for an institution that is going to play two roles, that is, the role of a policy maker and also the role of an implementer. In most countries, these two roles are completely separated, that is, we have a policy-making office and an office to see the implementation of those policies.

Enacting an Energy Efficiency Legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the first phase towards energy reduction. Many other details for the implementation of the legislation need to be looked into; for example, the technical capacity, developing standards, establishing reporting protocols and setting administration details of incentives mechanisms. I think that we have not been farsighted in this piece of legislation although the Minister earlier has stated that there has been some sort of training for energy auditors. But I would like to tell the House that, for example, in Singapore, capacity development of auditors and energy management is being undertaken well ahead of the legislation that is to be enacted in 2012 because it takes time to form energy auditors and energy managers. Energy efficiency is a critical response to the pressing need to climate change, economic development and energy security challenges. But meeting these challenges is a very difficult task because it concerns large consumers to the individual consumers and the hon. Minister has stated that it is for this reason that one of the basic fundamental issue is to

make energy saving discipline a national culture. That will be achieved through awareness campaigns, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we should encourage energy conservation. Earlier, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has pointed out that it should not only lead to energy efficiency, we should also talk about energy conservation, Mr Speaker, Sir. Government should come forward with incentives to attract energy users to opt for energy saving appliances. Otherwise, why would somebody go ahead if he does not understand the benefits that it can obtain in buying such equipment?

The energy context varies from country to country, but barriers to energy efficiency are the same in most countries, even drivers are the same. For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to look into the market situation and into the technical aspects of energy efficiency. Market price distortions prevent customers from appraising the true value of energy efficiency. Upfront cost discourages investors, perception that energy efficiency investments are risky and complicated, lack of awareness of financial benefits most of the time prevent people from embarking into energy efficiency projects. We have to inform people and I would like to draw the attention of Government, especially with regard to a project that was launched last year, that is, the Small Scale Generated Distribution (SSGD). I feel that Government has not communicated enough with regard to this project; that is one thing.

The second thing is that Government has limited the capacity with regard to what consumers can generate on the electricity rate. I understand that only 2 MW has been allocated and it concerns only some 200 consumers. Unfortunately, if we take this as a percentage of the total production of electricity, it is very negligible. I do understand that maybe Government has

reason not to go ahead full swing with the production of renewable energy, but we should understand that 200 consumers out of some 200,000 in the country are very negligible.

Mr Speaker, Sir, not only us, the world has wasted a lot of time. If you imagine from the time that we adopted the Kyoto protocol to the time the world started adopting climate change mitigation policies, years have gone by. When we talk of carbon credit or carbon development mechanism, we should all know that 2012 is the last year for the first phase of carbon development mechanism. We are at the end of the first phase. If we look at the projects that we have implemented in the country, which could have benefited from carbon credits...

Mr Speaker: Sorry, hon. Member! I have given you a lot of latitude. This is a Bill addressing energy conservation and energy efficiency and not about energy production neither of climate change. I would ask the hon. Member to link his speech with conservation of electricity or energy. If we start with the Kyoto protocol, we will never finish.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do understand, but the point that I am making is that when we talk of energy efficiency, we are reducing the production of electricity and when we are reducing the production of electricity, we are reducing greenhouse gas emission. Greenhouse gas emission is linked to the Kyoto protocol, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is why I am making my point.

Earlier I mentioned the transport sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, which consumes a lot of energy. Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not know why Government is not going ahead with the mass transport system in the country. What Government is doing today, Mr Speaker, Sir, is investing a lot of money in adding additional lanes to our highway. In doing so, we are discouraging what we advocated years ago, that is, to introduce carpooling in the country. What you see every day, Mr Speaker, Sir, is cars with only a driver, so many of them going towards the city. We know how

much energy is being wasted and how much of those greenhouse gas is being emitted daily on our roads, Mr Speaker, Sir. But we have to take lessons from other countries; there are measures which have been taken in other countries. For example, we have countries which have implemented a weekly no car driving day where everybody has to travel by bus.

Special buses for professionals driving to city centres, Mr Speaker, Sir, can you imagine how much savings this will represent per year on our petroleum importation! Such innovative and bold decisions will help us in the long term rather than taking decisions which have led us to hedging losses that we are still footing the bill for the years to come. Unfortunately, this piece of legislation does not spell out what are Government intentions with regard to energy conservation in the transport sector, no targets are mentioned and it is not very clear what Government intends to do to reduce the use of energy in the transport sector.

With regard to the industrial sector, one question that I would like to ask the Minister: are we going to classify industries because we know that we have energy intensive industries and non-energy intensive industries. We all know that lately there has been a shift with regard to energy consumption in our industries with the coming in of the services industry. What will happen to small and medium enterprises? Where will they be classified, Mr Speaker, Sir? If we do not bring some sort of classification with regard to the industrial sector, it will be very difficult for us to formulate policies...

Mr Speaker: Excuse me, do you want this Bill to classify, stipulate about large industries, small and medium industries? This is a Bill which is setting up an office for the management, conservation and to look after the efficiency. The office will set guidelines to industries, to the transport sector for efficiency and conservation. In the long term, if this office

starts working, then the hon. Member can come up with suggestions or criticisms on what the office is doing or not doing. But, we cannot enter into details about small and medium enterprises and larger enterprises at this stage.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will end up with the industrial sector. If I have made up this point, it is because all those factories or industries will be subjected to energy audits as it is mandatory in the legislation. If we cannot differentiate between those industries, it will be very difficult to come forward with policies, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Not in this Bill!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the electricity sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, we find out that, year in, year out, losses in our network is around 9.5%. I think that efforts should be made, if we are talking about energy efficiency, to bring down those losses to a reasonable value, Mr Speaker, Sir. Earlier, the hon. Minister has talked about commercial and residential sectors, and he has also talked about building codes. He has mentioned about green building, net zero energy building and he made reference to the MCB building under construction next to a highway.

When we talk of building codes, one should bear in mind that there are lots of issues concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir. It takes time to make people understand that, with such building codes, which will render their building energy efficient, they are going to save a lot of money. Here, I have two questions. Which is the authority which is going to look after the implementation of those building codes? Is it the office that is being set up...?

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. This is a Bill which is creating an institution to look after all this. The Minister of Public Infrastructure is in charge of buildings. Regulations have been

passed about building codes. When these regulations are going to be amended, then the hon. Member will have an opportunity to voice out his feelings as to whether the regulations are in line with green buildings. We cannot enter into details right now. The child is born now; don't ask him to run a marathon. Let the child grow up first.

Mr Lesjongard: I accept your ruling, Mr Speaker, Sir. Before I end, I will make my point.

Mr Speaker: I know your passion but, unfortunately, it is not in line with the Bill.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me end with regard to energy audits. Energy Audits have always been a prerequisite for energy efficiency projects. In many countries, persuading consumers to undertake audits seem to be a major concern. These countries have come forward with subsidised audits. Once, these audits are completed, the consumers have to implement the measures.

With this piece of legislation, we are making the implementation of these measures mandatory. Mr Speaker, Sir, mandatory meaning that, if you do not abide to this piece of legislation, there are penalties to be paid. It is there in the piece legislation. If people do not understand what has to be done, Mr Speaker, Sir, how will they know what to do? That was my point, I was making earlier.

This is a new thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the country, and it is a very complex piece of legislation. I think that, before we go forward to implement this piece of legislation, the population - because I said that it concerns all the consumers - should be made aware, and should clearly understand what we have in this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.14 p.m.)

Mr P. Assirvaden (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): M. le président, pour être franc, j'étais un peu perdu en écoutant l'honorable Lesjongard. Si je comprends bien, nous jetons aujourd'hui les bases qui nous permettront demain, à travers *the functions of the office, to develop, establish energy consumption, collect data, compile and maintain database*. Donc, pour proposer demain, au pays, des lois, des standards qui vont nous permettre d'arriver à l'efficience énergétique. C'est de cela qu'on est en train de débattre aujourd'hui.

M. le président, on est dans la bonne direction. The Energy Efficiency Bill is certainly a further step forward in our quest of better result. By now, providing a framework legislation, which should be construed as a new tool, *un outil* aiming at further abating carbon dioxide emission, *comme l'honorable membre vient de le dire*, whilst at the same time trimming down economic costs, associated with massive primary energy imports, to the tune of billions of rupees yearly.

M. le président, tout ce qui est fait aujourd'hui est dans cette mouvance de ce concept de Maurice Ile Durable. Beaucoup a été fait en ce qui concerne l'efficience énergétique et en ce qui concerne la maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie. Cela a été fait à la Réunion et en France. J'ai vu l'honorable *Leader* de L'opposition citer la Nouvelle Zélande, le Japon. Mais, tout près de chez nous, à l'île de la Réunion, la maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie va de pair avec l'énergie renouvelable. Et c'est ce qui se fait aujourd'hui ; c'est ce qui se fait chez nous.

L'honorable membre a cité les ampoules économiques. Les ampoules économiques, M. le président, nous ont ramené moins de dix mégawatts. Le fameux *summer time* a fait baisser la pointe autour de cinq à six mégawatts. C'est toujours ça de gagné ! Pour vous dire, M. le président, après la campagne du *solar energy*, après la campagne du *energy bulb*, après la campagne des *leaflets* - 400,000 *leaflets* distribués dans les ménages - économiser de l'énergie, je le peux dès aujourd'hui. Après tout cela, qui nous a ramené moins de mégawatts sur nos lignes, on se retrouve aujourd'hui avec *this Energy Efficiency Bill* pour structurer ce que nous voulons faire pour demain ; mettre en place les structures pour permettre à l'Etat, à la population de se responsabiliser, pour structurer notre marché de produits électriques, pour structurer notre marché du bâtiment. Tout cela se fait aujourd'hui.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, proposed by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, therefore, comes at the right moment, and takes on board ideas, views expressed by most socioeconomic sectors of the country. *On voit ce qui se passe au Japon ; on voit ce qui se passe au Libye, M. le président.*

Personnellement, j'accueille favorablement. C'était *long overdue*. Aujourd'hui, nous avons *this piece of framework* qui va nous permettre de voir un peu plus clair. Ceci dit, M. le président, j'accueille aussi favorablement la présence, *on this Energy Efficiency Committee*, d'un membre de l'Université de Maurice. C'est une bonne chose d'avoir cette vision de l'Université de Maurice, cette profondeur dans les analyses des gens de l'Université de Maurice.

Toutefois, c'est un fait, M. le président, que le CEB est un des plus grands pollueurs du pays à travers ses centrales, à travers les IPPs. C'est un fait que le CEB pollue ce pays pour éclairer l'île Maurice. N'oublions pas que le CEB, à travers les IPPs, M. le président, brûle

600,000 tonnes de charbon annuellement; 230,000 tonnes de *fuel oil*, kérosène, diesel. Et le plus important, le CEB gère un portefeuille de 400,000 consommateurs, y compris vous, M. le président.

Il faudra peut-être voir, et là je m'adresse personnellement au *Deputy Prime Minister*, si le deuxième expert ne devrait pas venir des rangs du *CEB* ? Ceci pour mettre à la disposition de ce comité les renseignements, les datas, les expertises qui ont été préparés, analysés pendant des années. Je crois sincèrement bénéfique la présence du CEB au sein de ce comité - comme j'accueille favorablement la présence du ministère de l'environnement sur ce comité et là je salue l'honorable *Deputy Prime Minister* à qui j'ai parlé brièvement hier de la présence d'un représentant de l'environnement. Je ne suis pas insensible à la proposition faite par l'honorable *Leader* de l'Opposition en ce qui concerne la présence d'un représentant du ministère des prix sur ce comité parce que dans quelques temps, M. le président, nous allons avoir affaire à des standards en ce qui concerne les équipements électroménagers et les équipements électriques : A+, standard B, A++ . Pour vous dire, M. le président, que nous allons toucher directement aux consommateurs. Je pense que le CEB et le ministère touchant directement aux consommateurs, à mon avis, feraient un bon travail sur ce *Board*. Mais j'en viens au paragraphe 21 (b) et (d) du *Bill*, M. le président, où je pense sincèrement que la vérification des *minimum energy performance of any equipment can be difficult*. On parle ici de quelque chose de très technique que nous maîtrisons très peu malheureusement.

A la Réunion, l'Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise d'Énergie (l'ADEM) qui fait presque plus ou moins le même travail que nous préconisons ici, a nommé *an Independent Third Party Services*, simplement pour que demain quand les *Enforcement Officers* seront

appelés à exercer, on ne se retrouve pas être *judge and party* à la fois. Cela s'est fait à la Réunion et en France. Cela se fait en Suisse actuellement à travers *the Energy Attitude*, à travers Invested Way Angleterre. Donc, ce que je souhaite, hon. Deputy Prime Minister, c'est qu'on puisse avoir *an Independent Third Party* pour pouvoir trancher en cas de litige entre ce comité et les importateurs.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, de m'égarer légèrement. Dans le passé, M. le président, en ce qui concerne les *under-billing* et les fraudes au niveau du *CEB* on s'est retrouvé à plusieurs reprises en cour, où, il y a eu, à un moment donné, un vide juridique en ce qui concerne le *under-billing* et en ce qui concerne les fraudes sur nos lignes, où le *neither Electricity Bill nor the Electricity Regulation* ne faisait provision pour permettre au *CEB* d'agir dans le passé.

M. le président, it is very easy for the *CEB* to cut off the supply of any consumer for late payment of his bill, whilst this is legally not provided for when averred cases of under-billing or fraud are discovered. Pour vous dire que je ne souhaite pas qu'on ait un vide juridique si on pouvait penser à ce que ce comité nomme une institution, a *third independant party*.

Une dernière petite chose, M. le président. Je viens ici au paragraphe 6 : *Functions of Office, section (m) : '... develop criteria to classify energy consumers'*. Je demande une clarification à l'honorable *Deputy Prime Minister* surtout en ce qui concerne le paragraphe 23, *Regulations, section (c), 'for the criteria to classify energy efficiency'*.

Je suis sûr et certain that the spirit of this Bill is not to allow change in the classification of consumers for billing purposes. Si on parle de cela, on parle de tarif : industriel, commercial et résidentiel. On parle que de ceux qui consomment l'énergie et là encore, consommant

l'énergie, est-ce qu'on va parler de tarif, il faudra faire extrêmement attention à ce qui est dit ici et moi j'aurai souhaité qu'on ajoute à la fin de cette phrase –

“...except for application of electricity tariff as already defined and gazetted in general notice”.

Je préfère pour qu'il n'y ait pas d'ambiguïté dans les points soulevés.

M. le président, nous réussissons quatre choses avec ce projet de loi. D'abord - comme je vous ai dit précédemment - la maîtrise de la demande de l'énergie. On parle de mégawatt. Ici pour ce *Bill* on parle de Negawatt, l'énergie qui n'a pas été utilisée, le charbon qui n'a pas été brûlé et l'huile lourde qui n'a pas été brûlée. On parle de Negawatt et c'est ce qu'on est en train de réussir ici ; structurer notre marché, M. le président, notre marché de produit électrique, responsabiliser surtout notre population.

J'ai écouté attentivement l'honorable *Leader* de l'Opposition disant que les gens ne sont pas conscients. Non, les gens sont conscients ! L'île Maurice est consciente qu'il nous faut économiser l'énergie, qu'il nous faut avoir une efficacité énergétique, mais ce qu'il nous fallait c'est une structure pour pouvoir jeter les bases en ce qui concerne la construction des bâtiments, comme par exemple cela se fait à St Jean avec le bâtiment de la *MCB*. Surtout économiser l'énergie dans notre maison, dans notre vie de tous les jours. Comme vous savez, M. le président, votre réfrigérateur à la maison prend 30% de votre électricité, donc 30% de votre facture d'électricité et je sais très bien que vous êtes extrêmement méticuleux en ce qui concerne votre facture d'électricité. M. le président, 30% de votre facture d'électricité à la maison pour le réfrigérateur. Ceci pour vous donner une idée.

Je voudrais avant de terminer, M. le président, dire deux petites choses. Le *CEB* n'est pas dans le rouge, ce n'est pas bien de le dire. Nous avons une réserve de 75 mégawatts. En ce qui concerne la maintenance, pendant les cinq/dix ans on a bougé la maintenance. Cela se fait chaque année ; on bouge la maintenance pour pouvoir satisfaire la demande. Donc, ce n'est pas vrai de le dire et je crois que l'honorable *Deputy Prime Minister* fait ce qu'il faut.

M. le président il est clair que l'intention de ce projet de loi résulte d'une motivation réelle d'améliorer l'efficacité énergétique de notre pays. Toutefois la mise sur pied d'un tel organisme demande une mobilisation non négligeable en termes de ressources humaines et logistiques, impliquant une charge financière conséquente. Nous allons, M. le président, être engagés dans un créneau nouveau, où il serait, à mon avis, souhaitable que dès sa mise en place et à l'instar de ce qui se fait dans d'autres pays, nous puissions bénéficier d'un appui d'expertise à partir d'une coopération technique avec une agence spécialisée dans ce domaine et reconnue pour avoir fait ses preuves dans un contexte similaire aux nôtres. Ici, je pense à l'Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie (l'ADEME) à l'île de la Réunion. Notre Premier ministre a visité l'île de la Réunion et il a eu des rencontres avec les gens de l'ADEME. Je pense que la direction de l'ADEME va pouvoir nous aider. Nous devons être conscients que le résultat que nous espérons ne sera obtenu qu'à la condition d'une formation adéquate des responsables pour des résultats bien clairs dès le départ.

Merci, M. le président.

(6.30 p.m.)

Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Speaker, Sir, how much energy we use depends on social and cultural norms. As rightly pointed

out by hon. Minister Boolell, the paradigm shift which this piece of legislation is proposing would not be an easy task. Energy use, Mr Speaker, Sir, is embedded in cultural practices, lifestyle choices and the social context. Our energy demand is based on our concepts of cleanliness and comfort. Every one of us, at least, takes a bath every day. I assume we all do and for obvious reasons, we do not wear the same garments - unless we have to - every day. We wash, we vacuum, we clean, we cook, we cool and we heat based on cultural norms, Mr Speaker, Sir. We drive our children to school in a car for their safety and comfort. As our children grow up, Mr Speaker, Sir, we drive them in a bigger car for the same reasons: to be able to give them better comfort. Much of our energy use is embedded this way, that is, it is locked up in our habits relating to childcare, cooking, cooling and lighting. We do things this way because we always have. We never think about it until we receive our CEB bill.

A simple solution at the household level, Mr Speaker, Sir, would be to have a meter which monitors in real time the energy consumption. I'm given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that an advanced version of that meter will be available very soon on the market, which will monitor the consumption of each electrical appliance in real time and also give an indication of the cost of that electrical consumption. Nobody cares and nobody dares when going to purchase an electrical appliance, when constructing the house or any other building. We want to have it light decorated. We want to see to it that it is located in such orientations; whether, it is energy efficient or not, this is not our main criteria. That's why I totally agree with hon. Minister Boolell that that paradigm shift is not going to be an easy task.

There are no one-shot solutions to problems of rapid climate change and energy use, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, based on what we know about how human beings behave and how we are

motivated, there are solutions. All the things we want people to do to reduce energy consumption or the consumption of any natural resource, relate to quality of life issues, Mr Speaker, Sir. How people define what a community is? What a civilisation is? What it means to be a responsible citizen? Answers to these questions have been driven in the last decades, unfortunately, by mass marketing campaigns that encourage us to consume more right now and without regard for others. Changing will take concerted and focussed effort, as Pogo said -

“We are the enemy. We are also the solution.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what this present legislation, the Energy Efficiency Bill under scrutiny, is all about. Countries, regions and communities of all kinds must eliminate their dependence on fossil fuels; stop their renewed focus on nuclear power and reverse the pace of environmental degradation. To do so, Mr Speaker, Sir, communities must embrace the reality of small grids, emerging storage technologies and renewable energy generation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the third industrial revolution is now strongly embedded in other nations so that these countries are no longer dependent on fossil fuels, on nuclear power, which define the second industrial revolution. The third industrial revolution, Mr Speaker, Sir, is focused on using renewable energy to power smart local communities where onsite building by building renewable power and small grids can monitor usage to conserve power and increase efficiency.

As rightly pointed out by hon. Minister Boolell, we are given a golden opportunity; a university in itself is a miniature model of the community and we are proceeding with the construction of three new universities. We are given that golden opportunity to put to task all the measures that will be envisaged towards energy efficiency and energy conservation in as far as these projects are concerned because within a university we have the campus, we have

recreational facilities, and we have all the utility services. So, it constitutes an ideal pilot project for all the new implementations as being proposed in this present legislation.

This Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a major step towards achieving the inherent benefits of a sustainable localised energy generated lifestyle which focuses on sustainable communities while creating new companies, carriers and areas of employment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill under consideration, as its title rightly suggests, thoroughly deals with the various mechanisms to be set up towards targeting energy efficiency together with the various energy efficiency strategies. Much effort needs to be directed towards conducting intensive energy conservation campaigns. I totally agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition on this issue. Increased energy conservation and energy efficiency are critical elements of any future sustainable society.

Conservation, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a strategy, means reducing energy use by voluntary human effort to save energy. By contrast, energy efficiency is a strategy of saving energy by means of installing devices that use less energy to do the same amount of useful work together with the labelling and introduction of energy efficient devices. The importance of an ethic of conservation of energy needs to be emphasised.

The following example, Mr Speaker, Sir, may highlight the subtle difference between pure energy efficiency and energy efficiency combined with conservation. Using an occupancy sensor in lighting has now become a common practice; some sort of standard practice in households, in other public areas, turning light on and off, conditional on the presence of people. A combination approach, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a lighting control that has a manual on switch coupled with an occupancy sensor that shuts off the light when the room is once again

unoccupied. The conservation portion involves a human being deciding whether he or she needs artificial light.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have absolutely no doubt that the Energy Efficiency Bill is in line with Government policy of reducing energy demand and improving the country's energy security.

I congratulate the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities for proposing legislation that will propel Mauritians to look in the direction of energy independence and sustainable activities and communities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I fully support the Bill and thank you for your attention.

(6.41 p.m)

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, after having heard the previous orators, I will try not to repeat what has already been said and try to be short due to the late hour. In this way, hopefully, I will be more efficient.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has already said in the House that the Opposition agrees with the contents of this Bill and we subscribe to the fact that Government has placed high on its agenda the question of energy efficiency. Today, we are setting up a framework for a new incentive to support the energy efficiency process.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the importance of energy efficiency lies in the fact that it ensures provision of same level of energy using fewer amounts of fossil fuels. Owing to the increasing demand and limited availability of fossil fuels today, the importance of efficient use of energy has been realised all over the world and the measures of energy efficiency are useful in multiple ways. We have heard some of them today referred to by the orators who have already spoken.

In fact, reduced use of fuels is essential in lowering the emission of greenhouse gases which is contributing to global warming and what the world is devising today, we are all trying to come up with policies to minimise the use of fossil fuels to prevent the occurrence of further adverse climatic change which results from it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the principal aim of energy efficiency is to reduce the emission of harmful carbon dioxide and the strategies for energy efficiency also support all these clean energy policies which have been initiated by different organisations committed toward protection of the environment and prescribed in several international conventions.

To come to this Bill itself, Mr Speaker, Sir, I also wish to make the point that has already been made by the Leader of the Opposition. I think that this Bill should have had a wider bearing because the essence of achieving optimum energy stands not only from the usage of energy, but also from its production, from its distribution and conservation. The Bill, in fact, purports to cater for only the usage side and neglects completely the conservation and even the production and distribution of power. We are all fully aware, Mr Speaker Sir, of all the inefficiencies of the production of power and its distribution. This applies not only to the CEB, to the IPP, but to the producers all over the world and, therefore, according to me, this Bill should have addressed also this issue. In the UK, Mr Speaker, Sir, in December last year, the UK Energy Bill was introduced. I have a copy of this UK Energy Bill. This is what we can read

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“The UK Energy Bill was introduced in the House and is designed to change the way energy efficiency measures are provided to homes and businesses and to improve the UK

Government Framework which enables and secures low carbon energy suppliers and fair competition in energy markets”.

What I am trying to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, in many countries of the world, the Bill that provides for the energy efficiency demands site management, also touches upon the issue of conservation and, at times, on production and distribution. I think we should have done the same here.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the UK Energy Efficiency Action Plan of 2007 also puts stress on the efficient and cost effective use of the sources of energy to meet the energy efficiency goals and this with the aim to lower the UK requirement of imported energy. Therefore, energy efficiency also contributes towards a nation energy security and improves energy efficiency, cuts down the energy bills for the nation and for the consumers.

As regards conservation, this has already been touched upon by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Hossen who just spoke before me. The terms energy efficiency and energy conservation, Mr Speaker, Sir, appear to be similar but, in actual term, they are different. Energy efficiency essentially implies making use of latest technology that assures production of the same level of output using significantly less amount of energy. An ideal example of energy efficiency is the CFL light bulbs. But, the concept of energy conservation, on the other hand, implies reducing the use of energy and these two concepts together add to the question of the sustainability of energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to engage into a debate over renewable energy, but similarly the concept of renewable energy and energy efficiency go hand in hand. I think the hon. Minister himself said that. These two concepts are considered to be the twin pillars of the policies regarding sustainable energy. To make the most of the sustainable in energy policy,

there needs to be simultaneous application of strategies regarding renewable energy and efficient use of energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was trying to prepare a few notes for this speech today, I went to look in my files and I read an article of Dr. Khalil Elahee whom this House knows very well. This article dates back to 2008 and the title of the article is: '*Gestion de l'énergie pour une Ile Maurice durable*'. I will come to the article in a few minutes. Dr. Elahee makes this point saying that : « *Les renouvelables et l'efficacité énergétique qu'on appelle aussi prétentieusement la maîtrise de l'énergie, sont invariablement les deux piliers sur lesquels reposent toutes les stratégies de la gestion de l'énergie.* »

Mr Speaker, Sir, I come to the main object of this Bill to set up this office. The issue has been raised whether the implementation of a National Long term Energy Policy does require a proper institutional framework; of course, it does. The Bill provides for this Energy Management Office to be established within the Ministry of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities to streamline the efforts towards the realisation of the vision of Government of making *Maurice une Ile Maurice Durable*.

As to the question of this office, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are now therefore being proposed an institution, a structure which is a structure within the Ministry itself. And we have queries about the wisdom of choosing that type of structure. Why do we ask this question, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I think the Ministry is a regulator itself? Now, within the regulator, the regulatory body - if I may use that word - we are now therefore relying on the office of energy management, Mr Speaker, Sir, this office which will be established within this Ministry and it will be this office which will be responsible for implementing the detailed action plan with respect to the

sustainable energy management practices. I don't know, I ask the question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Although, I have come to know, I think that the idea of setting up the office comes perhaps again from Dr. Khalil Elahee because I read from this article which was published in 2008, three years ago. This is what I can read from the last paragraph –

« Plus qu'un observatoire de l'énergie dont les attributs seront limités ne couvrant pas le transport par exemple. Il nous faut une instance facilitatrice qui dynamisera la pratique de la gestion de l'énergie dans l'objectif de faire de Maurice une île durable. La création d'un Energy Management Office sous l'égide d'un nouveau ministère de l'énergie doté de plein pouvoir est ici proposé ».

Perhaps Dr. Khalil Elahee was the one who proposed this Energy Management Office and I have read also that later the National Economic and Social Council published a paper on demand side management under the energy efficiency issue and the council also came with this idea of proposing the Energy Management Office, but still the question stands to be answered Mr Speaker, Sir, whether we should not have a more independent autonomous body structure to implement the detailed action plan with respect to sustainable energy management practices as I have just said.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, besides this function, the other functions are listed in the Bill. The second prong also of this office is, as we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, to build up awareness, and hon. Assirvaden is wrong when he says *les mauriciens sont déjà conscients* trying to answer to the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he says *les gens sont conscients*. If *les gens sont conscients*, I don't think in the object of this Bill 5B, 5A is to promote the use of energy; 5B is to promote national awareness for the efficient use of energy as a means to reduce carbon emission and so

on. So, the Bill itself proposes, as its second platform, to promote national awareness for the efficient use of energy management. So, be it, Mr Speaker, Sir. Therefore, I will come to this important section of the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, “the functions of office” where the functions are elaborated. The office shall have such functions that are necessary to attain its objectives and so on and so forth, Mr Speaker, Sir and we see what are the functions of this office.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make the point also myself and I do not, of course, want to underestimate - because I have been in this Ministry myself - the quality of the officers that we have there and, of course, recruitment will be made in the near future, the Director, the Chairman and so on. But the question of capacity building is very important, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister must have thought about that, how to go about with this process of capacity building in order to make this office an effective one.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I looked at the Bill and its functions as well as the composition of the Committee, I went back to the Budget of hon. Sithanen, a few years ago. In fact, it was his last Budget and in the Budget of 2009, it was the first time - as far as I know - that this Energy Efficiency Bill was announced and paragraphs 227 says –

“The Ministry of Renewable Energy is setting up an Energy Efficiency Management Office to -

- develop policies and a regulatory framework;
- undertake sensitisation and awareness campaigns;
- invest in Research & Development in the area of green building (...).”

I think a few of the proposals made in this Budget at that time have been left out in this Bill and I would have liked to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister why this has been done. For example,

undertake a study for changing our taxation system for cars from an engine capacity basis to a CO₂ emission standard. I think this also should have been proposed today by the hon. Minister, facilitate the implementation of use of ethanol.

Mr Speaker: Can I stop the hon. Member here? The argument that he is putting forward will be taken into account by implementing all the policies.

Mr Ganoo: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would also like to ask the hon. Minister to elaborate on the question of the green buildings, Green Mauritius. Government will work out a green performance framework for new and existing public buildings and its key component will be energy efficiency. So, all this has been left out from the Bill today and they were proposed in December 2009 in the last Budget of hon. Sithanen.

Before I come to the Committee, this is my last point on this clause, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, the Kyoto Protocol was referred to by my friend because in the Bill itself there is a sub-clause (j) which talks about -

“encourage and assist project developers in applying for carbon credits for energy efficiency projects using the Clean Development Mechanism;”

and unfortunately, as we know so far, we have not been able to benefit from the CDM. Although the two projects of the CTSAV Omnicane and the Bigara wind park were two projects which were being relied upon by Government in order to enable us to benefit from the carbon credits but, so far, unfortunately, nothing has happened and we would have hoped that with this new legislation, with the new setting up of this office, this would become a reality for us to benefit

from the carbon credits although as per the Kyoto Protocol, we have a date limit of 2012 for us to make the necessary application.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just end by saying that what we have to do, in fact, we need to change habits, we need to change structures and this has been proposed today. We are just hoping that the new structure that is being proposed will work and I would like also, Mr Speaker, Sir, to underline the fact that in all new legislation when new bodies, new structures are being proposed, there is always the credibility gap, that is, legislation is one thing, good ideas are one thing, but to make the structure work and function properly and efficiently is another matter. I will not come back on the debates on the MID, how, unfortunately, we are still lagging behind with all that were expected from the *Maurice Ile Durable* project. What we wish today, when we have subscribed to the proposal of the hon. Minister to this Bill, is that the Bill that we are voting today will help us in this realisation of a *Maurice Ile Durable*.

Before sitting, I will also, Mr Speaker, Sir, come to the example given by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. What other countries have done is to set up not only the framework, not only the structure, not only the new law, but also an integrated resource plan. In fact, this is what we are doing today - the framework and the integrated resource plan. California, which the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to, did come up with this integrated resource plan, Mr Speaker, Sir, and is the example. With the right political will, the right measures, the right structures, and the right change of habits, the cost of electricity services has lowered down; electricity bills of consumers have lowered down. This integrated planning, which is mandatory in several countries and in California, Mr Speaker, Sir, resulted in the per capita electricity consumption in the State of America remaining unchanged for almost 35 years, whilst it has jumped by 50% in

the rest of the United States. So, this is a good example to inspire us, and I am sure that, with the right awareness and with the right frame of mind, we can also achieve a lot as far as the ambition of this Bill, and we can make of *l'Ile Maurice*, in fact, an *Ile Maurice Durable*.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank all the *intervenants* for their contribution, which was very enriching. I learned a lot; there was an exchange of ideas, and this is what the debate is about.

The Bill is about energy efficiency. The Leader of the Opposition quite rightly said why haven't we added energy saving. It has been largely discussed. They are one and the same or maybe almost the same, but not quite. In the end, I was thinking about why didn't we use that term 'saving'? Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been talking about energy saving for a long time, for years. All our publicity campaigns, all our awareness campaigns have been on energy-saving, and hon. Patrick Assirvaden came up with all these campaigns that we have had about awareness - 'switch off that light'. The Prime Minister said it about six years ago; 'switch off that light if you don't need it, and your energy bill will come down'. Change your habits, change your mind set, and change your attitude'. We've been saying it all along, and now we have an additional component.

The additional component is energy efficiency. We can go on debating. For those who are interested, I'll recommend a book edited by Dr. Woodrow Clark. Dr. Woodrow Clark is one of the Nobel Prize winners on climate change, and he was in Mauritius in November/December last year, and he has promised to come back. He talked a lot about the experiment on energy that are heard in California. He talked a lot about what we could be doing with little to achieve some

of the objectives. We hope we'll get his advice. But, certainly, I follow the Leader of the Opposition that, implicitly, it is understood that when we talk about efficiency, we talk about savings at the same time, that we should always talk about savings and efficiency. This is a Bill about efficiency. If we look at the objectives, it talks about energy savings as well, though we don't mention it in many places or we don't put it as a title. I agree completely, but I repeat that we have been talking about savings for a long time, and now we are introducing an additional element of energy efficiency.

The second point that has been made by the Leader of the Opposition, which I am taking into account, is the composition of the Committee. I am bringing an amendment. The amendment is being circulated. We've already mentioned the Ministry responsible for environment; we'll introduce the Ministry responsible for the subject of industry, and there has been a question about why MEXA. We are including the Joint Economic Council. I thank him for that suggestion. We'll take it on board, and I think it's quite valid.

We've heard a lot about energy production and efficiency energy production. This Bill is not about energy production. We've heard about energy transmission efficiency, about losses in our energy transmission. I made it a specific point of saying it in my intervention that we are not talking about energy production and distribution; we are talking about the end-user. Of course, we say also that all economic sectors should be concerned, from transport to industry, to commerce, to every sector. We can talk and talk and, in the end, if we include everybody in that Committee, we'll have a long, long list. I think, as we are today, I am quite comfortable with these three amendments, and we hope to move forward.

It has been described as soft. Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir; it is a soft Bill. We are not sort of punishing people. We are not going into their houses. We are educating them. We are telling them that it is in their interest to do energy saving, to introduce energy efficiency into their home. That is all we are telling them; and we'll go softly. We'll only get the cooperation of the public if they understand that what we are doing is in their interest, as well in the interest of the country at large in the long term. This is the essence of the Bill: create awareness, get cooperation. There is no question of changing tariffs and so on. It is simply about big energy users; energy consumers who are consuming a lot. It is good that we have an audit and tell them the best way to proceed, how to go about it.

I have said in my speech that there are sometimes difficulties facing us. I'll repeat again that we have had energy audits in government buildings. They have recommended certain changes in the structure. It is not easy to change the structure of a building, but for the new ones like for the new campuses, for the new residential centres, for the high rise buildings that are coming up, this is an ideal time to start and to say to them: incorporate your energy philosophy into the construction of your building. The Building Act will come soon - it's ready. We've had a lot of consultations on this. It is simple measures - I have said it in my speech - like orientation of building away from the sun, the material to be used...

Mr Speaker: Now, we are entering into the merits of the Bill.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We said it before, and so there is no point. When it comes to a few points that have been raised, as I said, there is no question of affecting tariffs. With regard to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to get carbon credit, we hope that the Plaine des Roches project will be getting carbon credit. They have worked on it, and we'll see

about the Curepipe point as well as we go along. There is not much time, but we are addressing this. I heard about the small scale...

Mr Speaker: No. I have stopped the hon. Member from developing that argument. So, there is no need for the Deputy Prime Minister to reply on this.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Alright. It is only to say it is going very well. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the point has been made. It is a first step, it has never been done before, we are talking about efficiency, of the use of electricity. We mean to apply it, whether we call it an office, whether we call a committee a board, what matters is that in the end things work out and I have every intention to see that it does work.

Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY BILL

(NO. XVI OF 2010)

Clauses 1 to 7 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Mr Bérenger: I think we are going too fast. Regarding the Interpretation, section 2, can I make a point? It seems ‘the Minister’ is defined, ‘Ministry’ is not, whereas, for example -

“ ‘Supervising Officer’ means the supervising officer of the Ministry;”

But there is no definition of ‘Ministry’. I think it is an omission probably. But there is a definition of Minister : ‘Minister’ means the Minister to whom responsibility for the subject of energy is assigned. But I find nowhere the definition of Ministry.

Also, regarding Part III ‘Administration’, the appointment of the Energy Efficiency Committee, there is a Chairperson, a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of local government and so on. So, it is understood that ‘the Minister’ is defined, but strictly you must define ‘Ministry’ also.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The interpretation of general clauses applies to all grammatical variations of the works, no need to define Ministry.

Clause 8 – Energy Efficiency Committee

Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill.”

The Deputy Prime Minister: In clause 8, subclause (1) by inserting after paragraph (b), the following new paragraph, the existing paragraphs (c) to (i) being relettered as paragraphs (d) to (j) –

“(c) a representative of the Ministry responsible for the subject of environment.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 9 to 24 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Energy Efficiency Bill (No. XVI of 2010) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 05 April 2011, at 11.30 a.m.

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

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 7.16 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 05 April 2011, at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS**RODRIGUES – POINTE LA GUEULE PRISON - INMATES**

(No. B/59) Mr F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the *Pointe La Gueule* Prison in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the -

- (a) present number of female and male inmates thereat;
- (b) conditions prevailing thereat in relation to -
 - (i) custody;
 - (ii) rehabilitation of the detainees;
 - (iii) security, and
 - (iv) welfare of the personnel, and
- (c) if any reform and actions are being envisaged in relation thereto and, if so, when.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that, as at 24 March 2011, there were one female detainee and 39 male detainees at the Rodrigues Prison.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Rodrigues Prison comprises one female block and one male block. The female block has three dormitories and the male block has four dormitories as well as three cells. Medical services are provided to detainees twice a week and arrangement has been made for a Medical and Health Officer to visit the prison, as and when

required. A Nursing Officer is posted to the Prison on a daily basis as from 1500 hours to dispense medicine and drugs to detainees.

Insofar as rehabilitation programme for detainees is concerned, I am informed that they participate in different activities such as pig rearing, food and vegetable production and housekeeping.

As for the security of the Prison, I am informed that it is secured by a boundary wall at the front and is partly fenced. There are stone walls at the other sides. The Prisons service is manned by 34 Prisons staff.

Regarding the welfare of the personnel of the Prison, I understand that they participate in activities such as volleyball and football tournaments organised by the Rodrigues Coordinating Committee of the Public Officers' Welfare Council under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that it is proposed to upgrade and extend existing Prison infrastructure in Rodrigues with a view to ensuring that remand and convicted detainees are accommodated separately. It is also proposed to set up workshops and other facilities to provide a wider range of rehabilitation activities.

In the Government Programme 2010-2015, it is stated that Government will undertake wide consultations with the NGOs, the *forces vives* and researchers with a view to elaborating a long-term reform of the prisons service, including the rehabilitation of detainees to meet the requirements of a modern country. The reforms will also cover Rodrigues.

In this context, the Commissioner of Prisons has planned a series of visits to Rodrigues during the course of this year to assess the needs of the Rodrigues Prison in terms of security, infrastructure development, rehabilitation programme and staff training.

POLICE PROSECUTORS – MILEAGE ALLOWANCE

(No. B/60) 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 Police Prosecutors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if they are no longer eligible to draw mileage allowance and, if so, the reasons therefor, indicating if consideration will be given for the re-introduction thereof.

Reply: It is to be pointed out that Inspectors of Police performing prosecution duties benefit from a monthly Prosecutor's allowance of Rs975. Furthermore, in line with para 18.2.71 No. 4 of the PRB Report 2008, Police Inspectors drawing a salary between Rs27,200 and Rs28,000 may either claim a travelling allowance of Rs2,000 or refund of bus fares, whichever is higher.

Police Prosecutors' Offices are, in principle, located near all District Courts. If they are located further, the Police Prosecutors are provided with official transport from their respective office to and from the Court where they attend cases.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that it has been the practice from time to time to appoint a committee to review the payment of mileage allowance to Police Inspectors and Police Officers of lower ranks.

Accordingly, an exercise was conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration) in 2004 and the list of eligible officers drawn up included Police Inspectors performing prosecution duties.

In 2008, the Pay Research Bureau Report recommended that *“Officers who are required to perform official travelling but are not eligible for a travel grant should be refunded mileage allowance for days on which they are required to carry out field duties at the rates specified...”*.

In line with this recommendation in the PRB Report 2008 and the standing practice, a Committee chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Administration) was set up to examine all the aspects of the duties performed by Police Prosecutors as well as Inspectors of other Divisions and Branches of the Force. The Committee concluded that an Inspector of Police *per se* was not eligible to mileage allowance, but only those Inspectors of Police or ranks below who are required to perform field duties.

Accordingly, a circular was issued laying down the revised list of Police Officers eligible for mileage allowance. The category of Police Officers not eligible for mileage allowance are Police Inspectors performing prosecution duties, office duties or posted to Branches such as the Police Headquarters, the Special Supporting Unit, the Special Mobile Force and the Helicopter Squadron, as they do not carry out field duties by virtue of their posting and nature of work.

Police Prosecutors are required to perform duties from 08.30 hours to 16.30 hours during weekdays; and office duties on Saturdays up to noon. That is, they do not perform field duties.

In these circumstances and in line with the recommendations of the PRB Report 2008, the question of re-introducing mileage allowance for Police Inspectors performing prosecution

duties does not arise now, but the Commissioner of Police has informed me that he will nonetheless take up the matter with PRB in its next report.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/61) 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 amendments to be brought to the Protection of Human Rights Act, with a view to restructuring the National Human Rights Commission, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I made to Parliamentary Question Nos. IB/535 and IB/649 of 09 and 23 November 2010 respectively, wherein I informed the House that the structure and functioning of the National Human Rights Commission were being reviewed with a view to broadening its mandate and strengthening its efficiency.

My Office has been working closely with the Attorney General's Office on the amendments to be brought to the Protection of Human Rights Act.

The draft Bill has already been prepared and will be introduced into the National Assembly as soon as it has been finalised.

POLITICS – WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

(No. B/62) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the representation of women in politics, he will state the measures Government proposes to take for the uplifting thereof.

Reply: This Government has for long recognised the contribution of women in the economic development and democratic consolidation of the country, as well as the need to balance gender relationships and promoting gender parity in all spheres of life, including politics.

Mauritius has signed the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development; the 2004 African Union Declaration on Gender Equality and the 2005 Protocol on the Rights of Women of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights. As a Commonwealth Member State, Mauritius has also adopted the 2005-2015 Plan of Action on Gender Equality. All these international instruments, among others, aim at increasing women’s participation in the frontline of democracy, and decisions that affect their lives and their political, social and economic empowerment.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has intensified efforts in this connection. Several initiatives have been taken recently -

- The National Platform of Women in Politics for Mauritius was launched in the context of the centenary celebration of the International Women’s Day on 08 March 2011. The National Platform includes representatives of Government Bodies, political parties, Trade Unions, the Private Sector, the academia, the media as well as NGOs.
- The Regional Platform of “Women in Politics” was also launched, during the “*2ème Rencontre Régionale des Femmes en Politique*” held in Reunion Island on 10 and 11 March 2011. The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare was nominated Vice-President of the Regional Platform for a period of two years and will thereafter take over as President.
- A Forum on the theme “Women as Agents of Transformation” was organised with the objectives of, *inter alia*, examining present women’s roles as active agents of transformation in the social, economic and political spheres and identifying hurdles facing women in these three spheres. The Forum will work out policy orientations for concrete actions.

May I point out that it is the Labour Party Government which first created the Ministry for Women's Rights and entrusted this Ministerial responsibility to a woman as far back as 1975. And recently, a first woman has been appointed as vice-President. I must also add that I encouraged more female candidates to stand for the last general elections.

We have made some progress at the political level with women now representing 18.8% Members of the National Assembly. This figure compares favourably with many countries, for example, in UK the percentage is 22%, in France 18.9 % and in India 10.8%. However, although there has been progress, it is not felt that this is enough.

A quota system may indeed be necessary to correct the present gender imbalance and create a Parliament where there will be more seats for women, a Parliament that will be more representative, modern and progressive. In the Sachs Commission Report, this issue has been dealt with.

But I am also conscious of the fact that there is, at present, no consensus on this idea of quota. Various arguments have been put forward by some knowledgeable persons, including some prominent women, for and against the introduction of quotas as a means to increase the political presence of women.

This issue will be part of the review of the electoral reforms we intend to pursue, as mentioned in the Government Programme of 2010-2015.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/63) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)

asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications

whether, in regard to the introduction of proposed amendments to the Equal Opportunities Act, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I informed the House in the reply I made to PQ No. 1B/588 on 16 November 2010 that Government had decided to create a fully-fledged, independent and dedicated Equal Opportunities Commission separate from the National Human Rights Commission.

My Office has been working closely with the Attorney General's Office on the amendments to be brought to the Equal Opportunities Act to provide for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission.

The draft Bill has already been prepared and will be introduced into the National Assembly shortly.

POLICE OFFICERS - INTERDICTION

(No. B/64) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof who are presently interdicted, indicating in each case -

- (a) their grade;
- (b) the reasons therefor, and
- (c) since when.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are presently 161 Police Officers who are interdicted from duty. In regard to part (a) of the Question, I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, I do not believe it will be in the interest of the Police Force and in the interest of the interdicted officers to give the information asked for.

PORT AREA – TRADE UNIONIST - ASSAULT

(No. B/65) 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 the recent alleged case of assault against Trade Unionist R. V. and T. M., in the port area, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the case has been reported to the Police and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried thereinto, indicating -

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if any arrest has been effected in connection therewith.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Monday 21 March 2011, at 1030 hours, Mr. R.V., Terminal Superintendent at the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd., also the Secretary of the Port Louis Harbour and Docks Workers' Union made a statement to the Police that on Saturday 19 March 2011 at around 1210 hours while he was in his office, one Mr. L.M., accompanied by three other persons unknown to him called on him.

There was a dispute and Mr L.M. gave him several fisticuff blows to his head whilst one of the three unknown persons assaulted him with an instrument commonly known as "*la queue la raie*" on his right forearm and his back and another one of the three persons dealt him blows to his face.

During the struggle, the third unknown person took his wrist watch.

The same day, at 12.30 hours, Mr T.M., Senior Terminal Assistant, made a statement that at around 12.10 hours on Saturday 19 March 2011, whilst he was on his site of work, he heard someone uttering his name in the office of Mr R.V. As he stepped into the latter's office, a person unknown to him slapped him twice.

In regard to parts (a) & (b) of the question, I am informed that Police has started an inquiry into the matter.

On Wednesday 23 March 2011, Mr. L.M. called at the Port CID office of his own accord and confessed having on 19 March 2011 called alone at the office of Mr. R.V. and dealt the latter two blows to his head.

Mr L.M. was allowed to go after being warned by the Police to keep the peace and not to seek further trouble with Mr R.V. However, the Police inquiry is still ongoing and the three other alleged aggressors are still being looked for.

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. A/30) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Surveillance System in the region of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the location thereof, indicating if they are operational and, if not, why not.

Reply: The Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Surveillance System in the region of Port Louis covers the whole city of Port Louis and its surroundings which include -

- Bell Village
- Caudan Round about along New Trunk Road

- Victoria Square Bus stand
- Main City Centre
- Labourdonnais Street region
- Immigration Square Bus stand
- Round about near Abercrombie Police Station region
- Cocoterie Round about region
- Father Laval Church region
- Roche Bois
- Khadafi Square region
- Le Goulet region
- Cité La Cure region
- Military and Nicolay Streets region
- Champ de Mars
- Vallée Pitot
- Plaine Verte
- Vallée de Pretres

Installation works for the CCTV cameras have started in March 2010. As at to date, out of a total of 272 cameras, 265 have already been installed.

All the 272 cameras are expected to be operational by the end of April this year.

BEL OMBRE – FLOODING – 12 FEBRUARY 2011

(No. B/89) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the regions of Bel Ombre, St Martin and Baie du Cap, he will, following the heavy rainfall on the 12 February 2011 -

- (a) state if he has received representations from the inhabitants thereof who have suffered inconveniences and losses of property, and
- (b) obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to if -
 - (i) a study has been carried out to ascertain the causes thereof and, if not, why not and, if so, give details thereof, and
 - (ii) the works that are being carried out thereat to avoid any recurrence.

Reply: As soon as I was informed of the problem of flooding in the regions of Bel Ombre, St Martin and Baie du Cap resulting from the heavy rainfalls of Saturday 12 February 2011, I immediately organised a site visit in the company of my colleague, the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, and a team of officers. It was observed in the course of the site visit that the bed of the Bel Ombre river which flows quite close to the residential areas of Bel Ombre Housing Estate and Cité EDC at Bel Ombre was totally obstructed by mangrove trees.

It is to be noted that unless the mangrove plantation is removed and the river is fully dredged, the flooding problem in these regions will always persist. Given that the dredging of rivers does not fall within the purview of the Black River District Council, a request has been made to the National Development Unit in this respect.

With regard to the problem of flooding along the main road at Baie du Cap, I am informed that the Black River District Council had, in 2008, upgraded the drain running adjacent to the St. François D'Assise RCA School, but the culvert across the main road could not be enlarged as it is under the responsibility of the Road Development Authority. I am now informed

that the drain culvert will be reconstructed by the Road Development Authority in the very near future.

**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT – TOURISM AUTHORITY –
TRANSFERRED WORKERS**

(No. B/90) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the workers who have been transferred from the Tourism Authority to his Ministry, he will state the number thereof, indicating -

(a) their respective -

(i) scheme of duties;

(ii) salaries and other emoluments drawn, and

(iii) duration of contract, and

(b) the relevant fund from which their emoluments and salaries are derived.

Reply: Following Government's decision, the services of 25 workers who were on a contractual basis at the Tourism Authority were transferred to my Ministry as from November 2010. Their contract which expired on 28 February 2010 was extended for one year with effect from 01 March 2011.

These workers undertake generally the cleaning and maintenance of rivers and drains throughout the country and also assist in the undertaking of minor projects. The salaries and other emoluments drawn by these workers are as follows -

Supervisor	-	Rs18,000 + Travelling Allowance
Driver	-	Rs10,000 + Travelling Allowance
Driver/Cleaner	-	Rs10,000 + Travelling Allowance
Labourer	-	Rs8,000 + Travelling Allowance

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, the salaries and emoluments of these workers are being paid from the item wages under the PBB Programme “Solid Waste Management, Landscaping and Provision of Amenities” of my Ministry.

ANTENNE RELAIS - INSTALLATION

(No. B/91) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the “*Antenne Relais*”, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of applications by the telecommunications operators for the installation thereof being processed, indicating the respective sites;
- (b) state if his Ministry has carried out any study to assess the -
 - (i) health implications, and
 - (ii) electrical and electronic interference caused to the surrounding, following the installation thereof, especially in residential and commercial areas and
- (c) has received any complaint in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority that it is currently processing applications for authorisation to put up 10 base stations for the Mahanagar Telephone (Mauritius) Ltd at the following sites:

- (a) Lot No. 6, Poste de Flacq;
- (b) Royal Road, Mahebourg;
- (c) Bois Marchand Road, Terre Rouge;
- (d) Riche Terre Branch Road, Tombeau Bay;
- (e) Royal Road, Mon Desir Vacoas;
- (f) Avenue Louis Pasteur, Quatre Bornes;
- (g) Mahant Kabir Temple Avenue, Vacoas;
- (h) Morc. Rojoa, 15 cantons, Vacoas;
- (i) La Croisée, Glen Park, Henrietta, Vacoas, and
- (j) Avenue Emile, Bassin Road, Quatre Bornes.

Please note that any application for a permit to put up such installations is made to the local authorities concerned; whereas the ICT Authority is responsible for ascertaining that the technology which is being proposed complies with pre-determined norms and standards.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, my Ministry has not so far been required to carry out any study to assess the health implications and electrical and electronic interference caused to the surrounding, following the installation of the base stations. However, should circumstances so dictate, I shall cause such a study to be undertaken. Notwithstanding what I have just stated, I wish to inform the House that the ICT Authority has, as from 2009, put in place a process, whereby the operators have to satisfy the ICT Authority that the technology being proposed fully

complies with the required standards. Upon being satisfied that these requirements are met, then the ICT Authority grants authorisation for the use of the proposed technology. In the process and on the basis of the technical information provided by the operators, the ICT Authority undertakes an evaluation of the proposed installations, in accordance with the recommendations of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), based on international standards and best practices. Further, the Authority has adopted, in the evaluation process, the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) limits, which are recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as the reference levels. The radio base stations are authorised only if the evaluation shows that their operations will be below the ICNIRP limits and are, therefore, safe for the general public. I must point out here that the ICT Authority strictly adheres to the ITU Recommendation K.52, which provides for authorisation to be given for the installation of a base station when the limits are ten times below the ICNIRP limit. The hon. Member will understand that when the health and safety of people are concerned, there is no compromise.

Furthermore, the ICT Authority also evaluates the installations that are already operational through in-situ measurements, in accordance with an in-situ measurement protocol adopted by the Authority on 30 April 2009. Moreover, the Authority has, in its endeavour to improve its procedures for the safety of the general public and as a pro-active measure, come up with a “deployment of radio communication infrastructure technical and administrative standard”, which was released on 23 March 2011 and will be effective as from 23 September 2011, so as to give sufficient time to operators to elaborate and or amend their procedures and be fully compliant with the standard.

The House may wish to note that, according to the World Health Organisation, “extensive research has been conducted into possible health effects of exposure to many parts of the frequency spectrum. All reviews conducted so far have indicated that exposures below the limits recommended in the ICNIRP (1998) Electro Magnetic Field guidelines, covering the full frequency range from 0-300 Giga Hertz, do not produce any known adverse health effect. However, there are gaps in knowledge still needing to be filled before better health risk assessments can be made.”

As far as part (b) (ii) of the question is concerned, I am advised by the ICT Authority that the operation of base stations does not in general cause electrical and electronic interference. The assignment of frequencies for the operation of radio base stations is carried out by the Authority, in accordance with the International Telecommunication Union Radio Regulations.

Cases of alleged interference caused by radio base stations on television reception have been reported to the ICT Authority over the years. The Authority has investigated these cases and has come to the conclusion that the cause of the television reception problems was the antennae used by the complainants. In all the cases, the antennae have been found to be wideband active antennae, which are susceptible to interference when located close to base stations.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed by the ICT Authority that it has, from 2007 to 2010, received and attended to 30 complaints from members of the public against the installation and operation of base stations in their locality. Where so required, the ICT Authority has gone to the extent of effecting measurements at the premises of the complainants and has found that the measured electromagnetic field levels were well below the ICNIRP reference

levels (about 1% of the ICNIRP reference levels). This year, the ICT Authority has, so far, received six complaints, out of which 3 have already been processed.

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY & COMMERCE – MR Y. S. - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/92) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether in regard to Mr Y. S., he will state if he has been appointed as Adviser or Senior Adviser at his Ministry and, if so, indicate -

- (a) when, and
- (b) his terms and conditions of appointment;
- (c) the boards/committees on which he represents him or his Ministry, indicating the fees paid out to him in each case, and
- (d) if he has effected any overseas mission and, if so, the country/countries visited and the cost thereof.

Reply: Mr Y. Salemohamed has been appointed as Adviser on Industry and Commerce matters at my Ministry on a contract basis for a period of one year with effect from 04 October 2010. I am tabling the terms and conditions of his appointment.

Regarding parts (c) and (d) of the question, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

PLACE MARGÉOT, ROSE HILL – HAWKERS - RELOCATION

(No. B/93) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the hawkers who have

been moved from the Place Margéot, Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if they will be relocated and, if so, where and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that an injunction has been obtained on 16 December 2010 by the “*Association des Commerçants de Beau Bassin – Rose Hill*” from the Supreme Court for the eviction of some 50 illegal hawkers operating within the township, including twenty-four at place Margeot, Rose Hill.

I am also informed that the Council is not in a position to relocate these hawkers who are in an illegal situation as it does not have any appropriate place in the town centre of Rose Hill to relocate them and allow them to operate. However, I am informed that some of these hawkers had already identified a commercial space on their own and the relevant authorisation had been granted by the Council to allow them to ply their trade over there.

LAND DRAINAGE PROGRAMME - PROJECTS

(No. B/94) 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 the Land Drainage Programme, he will give a list of the projects undertaken constituency wise, since 2010 to date, indicating, in each case the -

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost thereof, and
- (c) starting and completion dates.

Reply: The information is being compiled (district-wise) and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as possible.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT - ACQUISITION

(No. B/95) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical equipment, she will state if it is the practice for Government to acquire used and second hand ones and, if so, will she give a list thereof acquired by Government, since 2005 to date, indicating in each case the -

(a) date of acquisition, and

(b) warranties secured thereon for proper running and maintenance.

Reply: It is not the practice of Government to acquire used and second-hand medical equipment.

In fact, most of our medical equipment is procured through competitive tender procedures. In these circumstances, the bidding documents spell out the requirements in terms of warranties and after sales service, that is, maintenance and repairs for the proper running of the equipment.

However, at times my Ministry does receive medical equipment in donation from international as well as local organisations such as the WHO, the *Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG)*, the Bradford Teaching Hospital (UK), and the Lions and Rotary Clubs. In some cases the equipment received is used equipment but my Ministry accepts same if it is in good working condition. In such cases, there is no warranty on the equipment but its maintenance and

repairs are carried out by the Biomedical Unit of my Ministry. I am tabling a list of such equipment received as donation.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/96) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Attorney General whether he will state if Government proposes to introduce a Freedom of Information Bill and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

LAVIMS PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/97) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the implementation of the Land Administration and Valuation Information Management System (LAVIMS) project, he will state where matters stand, indicating the cost incurred as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

10TH EDITION OF THE JOURNÉE DE LA CHIRURGIE DENTAIRE - CONFERENCE

(No. B/98) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she will state if her Ministry is organising a conference in collaboration with the *Société Odontologique de Paris*, the 10th Edition of the *Journée de La Chirurgie Dentaire* from 30 April to 04 May 2011 in Mauritius.

Reply: My Ministry is not organising the 10th Edition of the *Journée de La Chirurgie Dentaire* from 30 April to 04 May 2011 in Mauritius in collaboration with *the Société Odontologique de Paris*.

In fact, the *Société Odontologique de Paris* has been organising the “*Journée de Chirurgie Dentaire*” every two years in Mauritius since 1993 with the collaboration of the Mauritius Dental Association and under the “*patronage*” of my Ministry. This event is attended by both foreign and local dentists and enables the transfer of knowledge and skills on latest developments in the dental field, which ultimately benefits the population.

As in the past years, the Mauritius Dental Association has again solicited the “*patronage*” of my Ministry for the organisation of the 10th Edition of the “*Journée de Chirurgie Dentaire*” which will be held in Mauritius from 30 April to 04 May 2011 at “Le Paradis Hotel”, Le Morne.

The involvement of my Ministry will be through the participation of Government Dental Surgeons in the conference.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS –

MUNICIPAL HALLS AND CENTRES - FEES

(No. B/99) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the municipal halls and centres put at the disposal of the associations and individuals for the holding of private functions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the new procedures laid down for the granting thereof, indicating –

- (a) when they have come into force, and
- (b) the respective fees payable.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that its Public Welfare Committee decided on 28 January 2011 to review the procedures for the granting of municipal halls and centres to associations/individuals which were as follows –

- any individual requesting the use of centres and halls for wedding/engagement ceremonies, birth anniversaries/receptions had to call personally at the Welfare Department, book their dates and pay the deposit fees on the same day;
- for any other use such as seminar, conferences religious activities, political talks and meeting, etc, applicants were requested to submit a letter specifying the date, time and function. Upon approval by the Welfare Committee, applicant was called to office for payment of the appropriate fees.

I am also informed that on 22 March 2011, the Public Welfare Committee of the Council approved the new procedures which came into effect on 24 March 2011 and which are as follows

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- any individual requesting the use of centres and halls for wedding/engagement ceremonies, birth anniversaries/receptions should call at the Welfare Department with his/her identity card, fill in an application form and pay a refundable deposit fee of Rs500. A variable rental fee of Rs135 per hour of occupancy of the hall/centre is also payable at latest two weeks prior to any event;
- for any other use such as seminars, conferences, religious activities, political talks and meetings, trade union meetings, etc, a letter of request specifying the date, time and purpose of rental should be submitted to the Welfare Department. Thereafter, a reply will be made and any fee, if applicable, will be claimed.

INFINITY BPO LTD – EMPLOYEES/MINISTER OF LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL

RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT - MEETING

(No. B/100) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the employees of

Infinity BPO Ltd. who were protesting and undergoing hunger strikes, he will state if he has recently had meetings with the representatives thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Reply: I have had numerous meetings with the representatives of the employees of Infinity BPO who were undergoing hunger strikes. As the House is aware, there was a hunger strike from 02 to 11 February 2011 and a recent one which started on 09 March 2011.

I started to hold meetings with the representatives of the employees as from 04 February 2011 to appeal to them to register complaints at the level of my Ministry to claim outstanding wages due and severance allowance. At the same time, I invited them to join the Workfare Programme. The representatives were also informed that my Ministry might institute criminal proceedings against the company for failing to pay the remuneration due within the prescribed delay. However, they were reluctant not only to register complaints at the level of my Ministry but also apply to join the Workfare Programme. In view of advice tendered to them by some of my colleagues on the other side of the House, the employees were given to understand that they were not eligible to join the Workfare Programme. On 07 February 2011, I had another meeting with the representatives in the presence of the hon. Member and Hon. Baloomoody to reiterate my appeal to register complaints and also to explain to them that they are entitled to join the Workfare Programme by virtue of section 42(1)(a) of the Employment Rights Act 2008.

PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS – OPENING HOURS

(No. B/101) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the pre-primary schools, he will state if Government proposes to extend the opening hours thereof up to 6.00 p.m. and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: A proposal has been made to my Ministry by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment for pre-primary schools to offer child minding services before and

after normal school hours. The rationale behind this measure is to offer facilities to women in employment and those wishing to obtain a full time job in order to improve their economic status and social well-being.

Following a survey carried out by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA) which involved discussions with Managers of Pre-Primary Schools, it was found that out of 829 private pre-primary schools surveyed, 123 of them were already offering such services and were operating till 6.00 p.m.

The normal school hours of pre-primary schools registered with the ECCEA under The Education (Pre-Primary Schools) Regulations 1997 is from 8.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. These regulations which govern the operations, registration and supervision of pre-primary schools do not cover child minding services.

It has, therefore, been proposed that the necessary legal framework be provided so that all pre primary schools willing to offer child minding services, can do so after registering with the ECCEA. Such facilities would be offered by pre–primary on an optional basis against payment of appropriate fees by parents.

Pre-primary schools registered with the ECCEA and opting for child minding services will be allowed to operate as from 7.00 a.m. till 6 p.m., even during holidays for children aged 3 to 5 years. In such cases, it would be ensured that children have adequate rest time and appropriate creative activities, under appropriate supervision.

A Certificate of Registration will be issued by the ECCEA provided that the Pre-Primary meets the requirements in terms of -

- physical conditions;
- sanitary conditions;

- health and safety conditions imposed by relevant authorities;
- availability of equipment, and
- qualified staff.

The provision of child minding services requires qualified staff in child care. In this regard, MIE is offering a basic course in child care.

The ECCEA will ensure regular supervision in all pre primary schools that would offer child minding services.

As regards the necessary legal framework, the ECCEA in consultation with my Ministry has already worked out new draft regulations, namely, the Early Childhood Care and Education (Registration of Pre-Primary Schools) Regulations 2011 which will -

- (i) cover existing provisions pertaining to registration of pre primary schools falling under the Education (Pre-Primary Schools) Regulations 1997 made under Education Act 1957;
- (ii) incorporate the relevant provisions for child minding services. Such provision will cover, *inter alia*, prescribed qualifications, supervision and control and operating hours;

The new regulation will be made under section 20 of ECCEA Act.

The draft regulations are being cleared with the State Law Office.

JIN FEI RICHE TERRE - DISBURSEMENT BY GOVERNMENT

(No. B/102) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Jin Fei Riche Terre Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone Company Ltd. Project, he will –

- (a) give details of the amount disbursed by Government as at to date, indicating the purpose therefor in each case, and
- (b) state the initial date of completion thereof, indicating the reasons for delays, if any.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that, as per the terms of the Framework Agreement, Government has committed to invest in off-site infrastructure for provision of utilities and road network to the site.

To date, Government has disbursed around Rs80 m. for the construction of a new access road to the zone and Rs54.8m. for the construction of a pumping station and pipe laying for the waste water system. It has also provided loans amounting to Rs405.1 m. to CEB and CWA for provision of electricity and water. CEB has, at to date, invested Rs220.1 m. in the purchase of substation equipment and in the 66kV network from Beau Plan to Riche Terre. The CWA has invested Rs23.5 m. in the laying of a pipeline from Calebasses Reservoir to Riche Terre.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Jin Fei project was launched on 16 September 2009 and the project is to be developed in two phases, namely Phase 1 ending in September 2012 and Phase II ending in December 2016.

I am informed that the promoter is developing on-site infrastructure for the whole zone namely the road network, power network, water pipelines and waste water network. These works have reached an advanced stage of completion.

As regards erection of buildings, I am informed that construction of a business centre of 24,000 m² is expected to start in a few months time. In addition, the promoters are actively marketing the project in China and internationally.

However, as with all major projects, it is possible that in the course of construction delays may arise. Furthermore, due to the current uncertain international economic environment the demand for facilities by investors may be at a slower pace than initially planned.

CIVIL SERVANTS – POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

(No. B/103) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether he is aware of cases of civil servants who are involved in active politics or are active members of any political party or openly write press articles on political issues and, if so, the actions he proposes to take.

Reply: I am informed that there is no record of any such cases reported to my Ministry.

PHOENIX/PAILLOTTE - CLINIC - APPLICATION BY DR. F. K.

(No. B/104) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she is aware that in the early 1990s, an application was made by Dr. F. K., for the construction of a clinic in the region of Phoenix/Paillotte, in the vicinity of the Med Point Clinic, and that same was rejected and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed that on 30 June 1993, an application was made by one Dr. F. K, Chairman of Hillside Company Ltd for a Health Development Certificate for the building and management of a private hospital at Paillotte, Phoenix.

I am sorry that the hon. Member has the wrong information. In fact, a Health Development Certificate was granted to the promoters on 29 October 1993 and not rejected by the Ministry.

BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS LTD - OPERATIONS - INQUIRY

(No. A/31) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., he will state if there has been an inquiry into the operations of the company, and if so –

(a) if same has revealed any malpractice, indicating the remedial actions that have been taken, and

(b) will he table a copy of the report.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, there has been no inquiry, as such, into the operations of the company.

As a matter of fact, in the wake of the recent financial crisis with its adverse repercussions worldwide and the credit crunch which had devastating effects in many economies, Government has deemed it prudent to ensure that development projects in Mauritius are planned and implemented in a prudent and properly structured manner. With this in mind, Government set up on 23 July 2010, a Ministerial Committee to ensure that development projects at Ebène are planned and implemented in the best possible manner.

On 30 July, the Government further decided that the Ministerial Committee should also look into the projects at the Rose Belle Business Park and other sites that the BPML has allocated or proposes to allocate to private enterprises for development projects.

MORCELLEMENT MONTRÉAL PHASE II - DRAINS

(No. A/32) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the absence of drains at the Morcellement Montréal Phase II, Coromandel, thereby causing water accumulation on the roads during heavy rainfall and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if consideration will be given for the construction of drains thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that problem of water accumulation occurs at the following locations within Morcellement Montréal Phase II -

- (i) Avenue Dahlia;
- (ii) Avenue Marguerite;
- (iii) Emmaus Street (near temple);
- (iv) Pavé d'Amour;
- (v) Ramdenee Lane, and
- (vi) Goomany Lane.

I am informed that a list of drains to be constructed at these places has already been forwarded to the National Development Unit for implementation.

BAMBOUS - MAIN ROAD - TREES

(No. A/33) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that trees have grown up to the level of the street lanterns and thereby depriving visibility at night on the main road from Bambous leading to Flic en Flac, in the vicinity of the road leading to the Medine Sugar Estate, and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to if consideration will be given for the cutting and trimming thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Black River District Council that the trees standing on the main road from Bambous to Flic en Flac in the vicinity of the road leading to the Medine Sugar Estate are trimmed by the Road Development Authority as the road is a classified one.

I am further informed that the last trimming exercise was carried out in 2010 and my Ministry has requested the Road Development Authority to carry out the trimming exercise.

CHAMAREL - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL

(No. A/34) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether he is aware that there is no pre-primary school in Chamarel and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the construction thereof.

Reply: There is, in fact, one private pre-primary school namely the Ste Anne Pre-Primary School, registered with the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (ECCEA), operating in the region of Chamarel. This pre-primary school is located in the Chamarel Village Hall, which premises had been leased free of charge to the Manager of the school by the Black River District Council.

However, the village council needed the building for its activities and requested the school to vacate the premises. After negotiations, the school was allowed to continue its operations up to June 2010. Since the school had still been occupying the building, a notice to vacate the Village Hall was issued to the Manager of the school on 31 January 2011. With a view to ensuring that the inhabitants of the area are not penalised, Government has decided that the St Anne Pre-Primary School be allowed to stay in its present location until my Ministry has put up a building to house a pre-primary school, to be run by the ECCEA.

Since 2009, my Ministry has initiated action for the acquisition of land for the construction of a pre-primary school in the locality. The plot of land has been acquired in November 2010 following normal land acquisition procedures by the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Thereafter, survey and design works were undertaken and tenders were floated for the construction of the pre-primary school comprising of two pre-primary classrooms, a toilet block, a kitchenette, a playground and other related works with closing date 22 February 2011. Eleven bids which were received are presently being evaluated. It is expected that the contract will be awarded by the beginning of next month. Should everything proceed smoothly, works are expected to start in May this year and the pre-primary school will be ready for the resumption of studies in January 2012.

COUVENT DE LORETTE ROAD/M1 MOTORWAY ROUNDABOUT - WIDENING

(No. A/35) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the road linking the end of the Couvent de Lorette Road, near the Millennium monument, Curepipe, to the M1 Motorway roundabout, at Wooton, he will state if Government will consider the widening thereof, in view of the heavy traffic, including buses and heavy goods vehicles, leaving and entering the Curepipe area through that stretch.

Reply: The Road Development Authority will carry out a survey to investigate into the possibility of widening that stretch of road. The implementation of the project will also depend on the availability of land.

CUREPIPE BOTANICAL GARDEN - MAINTENANCE

(No. A/36) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Curepipe Botanical

Garden, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to the steps that are being taken by the Council for the maintenance thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that cleaning of the garden is done on a daily basis by a team of seven gardeners, one refuse collector and one gangman under the supervision of a Municipal Inspector.

I am further informed that refuse collection is performed twice weekly and the public toilet is cleaned on a daily basis whereas the natural ponds and water courses are cleaned regularly.

PORT LOUIS FIRE STATION - RELOCATION

(No. A/37) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the derelict state of the Port Louis Fire Station and that the fire lorries encounter difficulties when moving therefrom when there are emergencies, during working days, due to traffic congestion on the surrounding roads and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to if it is proposing to have it relocated and if so, if land has been earmarked, indicating the location thereof and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am aware that the building housing the Fire Station of Port Louis is in a derelict state due to its old age. Furthermore as the Fire Station is situated in the City Centre, there are also traffic problems encountered by the Government Fire Services vehicles when moving therefrom during emergencies occurring on working days.

Government has the intention to construct a new Fire Station in or around Port Louis to relocate the present one. A plot of land was identified at Colline Monneron, Port Louis and another one near Roche Bois Roundabout.

However, the Project Plan Committee did not find the site at Colline Monneron suitable and has recommended that an alternative site be identified, whilst the one at Roche Bois was rejected because it was not recommended by the Road Development Authority due to traffic hazards and the fact that access would have been on the Roundabout.

My Ministry is giving its full consideration for the identification of an alternative site and the implementation of the project.

PAILLES/RÉDUIT ROUNDABOUT – STREET LIGHTING

(No. A/38) **Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the street lighting system found on the M1 Motorway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the extension thereof from -

- (a) Pailles to Mount Ory, and
- (b) Mount Ory to the Réduit roundabout.

Reply: Provision has been made for street lighting between Grewals and the Reduit roundabout, including Mount Ory in the context of the implementation of the Ring Road Project and the widening of motorway M1 project from St Jean to Grewals.

RESERVOIRS - LITTER

(No. A/39) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked Dr the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the presence of large amounts of waste and dead animals in the reservoirs and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to –

- (a) the remedial measures that will be taken, and
- (b) if security will be tightened thereat.

Reply: The rivers and feeder canals feeding impounding reservoirs travel through forest and agricultural land and residential areas, thus collecting storm water, litter and all sorts of waste which are dumped therein.

Regular cleaning and maintenance is carried out under a maintenance contract throughout the year and during dry season, the litter and waste in the exposed surface of the reservoir are also removed.

Sign posts have been placed at strategic locations to request the public to keep the reservoir and dam sites clean.

Security services are available at the major dams on a 24 hour basis and will be reinforced.

SAINT MARTIN/ADELAIDE STREETS – PLOT OF LAND – DUMPING SITE

(No. A/40) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that one abandoned plot of land situated at Corner Saint Martin and Adelaide Streets, in Port Louis, is being used as dumping site and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken to have it –

(a) cleaned, and

(b) fenced.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that although the abandoned plot of land situated at corner Saint Martin and Adelaide Streets in Port Louis is recorded in the Municipal data, its owner is still unknown as per record of Cadastre Section of the Council.

I am also informed that –

- the land is overgrown with vegetation, but it is cleared of refuse, odds and ends and dumping;
- the region is provided with a regular Scavenging Service thrice weekly;
- at regular intervals the Sanitation Section of the Council intervenes to clear the vegetation and same has been done during the recent Maha Shivaratree festival, and
- as soon as the owner will be traced, he will be requested to fence his premise.

NOOR-E-ISLAM STREET, PORT LOUIS - DRAIN AND CANAL WORKS

(No. A/41) 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 is aware that the drain and canal works at the Noor-E-Islam Street, Port Louis, in front of the Margarete Hall, started two years ago have not yet been completed and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: The contract for the construction of footpath and drains along Nicolay Road in Port Louis was awarded to Trio Development Co. Ltd on 19 August 2009.

The contractor abandoned the site and part of the outstanding works i.e. near Noor-E-Islam Mosque, were entrusted to Colas (Maurice Ltd) on an emergency basis in the context of the Ramadhan festival.

The remaining works have now been awarded to General Construction Limited for an amount of Rs2.5 m. Works are scheduled to start soon and are expected to be completed by 15 August 2011.

BINANI CEMENT PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. A/42) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the Binani Cement Project in the Port area, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, following approval by Government.

Reply: The cement project of Binani Group of India has not yet been implemented because Lafarge Cement has lodged an appeal before the Environment Appeal Tribunal on 27 May 2010 against the EIA Licence granted to the group and the matter is still pending before the Tribunal. Lafarge (Mauritius) Cement Ltd has also applied for an interim Order to the Supreme Court on 08 February 2011 against the setting up of the Binani Cement Plant. The matter is still pending before the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, my Ministry's attention has been drawn to the fact that Lafarge's international credit rating has been downgraded to 'junk' grade.

LES SALINES – NEOTOWN PROJECT

(No. A/43) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to land lease at Les Salines for the Neotown Project, he will state if works have started on site and, if so –

- (a) since when, and
- (b) submit a progress report on implementation, as per the original project approved by Government.

Reply: The land in question forms part of reclaimed land in the Port area and is the private property of the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA), and is therefore not State Land, as one would tend to believe. In February 2008, the MPA obtained Government's approval, in principle, to the granting of a lease to Messrs. Patel Engineering Ltd. According to a report from the MPA, requests for land at Les Salines, had been received from at least nine promoters, including Patel Engineering Ltd.

Whilst all other promoters had requested land for specific projects such as the construction of hotels and commercial units on small plot sizes, Messrs. Patel Engineering Ltd. had however, proposed to develop the whole site as an integrated project which is in line with the guidelines of Les Salines Master Plan prepared by Messrs. Stauch Vorster Architects (South Africa).

As from February 2008 onwards, my Ministry started consultations with Patel Engineering Ltd. until December 2009 when -

- (i) A lease agreement was entered into between the MPA and my Ministry;
- (ii) A sub-lease agreement was entered into between my Ministry and Les Salines Development Limited (LSDL).

The main conditions of the lease and the sub-lease are as follows -

Extent - 58A33P

Period of lease – 99 years, similar to that of Jin Fei Project
at Riche Terre

Rental

In respect of all industrial leases, the policy is to charge rentals, at 25% for the first year, 50% for the second year, 75% for the third year and 100% as from the fourth year, on the rentals as recommended by the Valuation Office or as provided for in the Finance Act. The rationale is to allow the Promoter to develop the land and render the project operational before full rental is charged. The same basic principle is applied in this case where as from the 11th year full rental will be as assessed by the Valuation Office and will be adjusted every three years by reference to the Cumulative Price Index (CPI). In this case, all on-site infrastructure works would first be completed prior to any building being put up and occupied.

This project aims at obtaining some Rs16 billion as FDI and is specific in nature and magnitude and not comparable with standard industrial projects.

Furthermore all rentals obtained will be remitted to the MPA after deduction of 5% as management fee to the Government.

Planning issues

- (i) LSDL proposes the Neotown development as a new modern self contained project for financial, social and cultural functions with iconic buildings rising up to 40 storeys and overlooking the harbour.
- (ii) The major components of the project comprise hotels, a marina, luxury condominium complexes, apartment complexes, office buildings and campus, shopping malls and tourist attractions.

- (iii) In addition, LSDL will have to submit architectural plans to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for approval prior to construction for each component of the project.
- (iv) In view of the size and prime location, development of such a project warrants a different approach in the determination of architectural form and standards which in the present case would be at par or even of a higher standard than the high quality existing Caudan Waterfront development.
- (v) Port Louis as a capital city has not witnessed any major rejuvenation of its urban fabric since its creation except for the Caudan Waterfront Development. This provides a golden opportunity to set new trends and directions of growth for the city to reflect its importance as a new modern financial, economical and tourism hub in the Indian Ocean.
- (vi) The city cannot expand as a low rise development which is voracious on land resources and high in costs of infrastructure services totally out of keeping with the principles of sustainable development. High intensity development within an integrated approach optimises use of land and infrastructure in terms of transport, mix of activities to create a vibrant living area.

The Neotown Project was officially and publicly launched on 29 March 2010.

As at today the status of the project is as follows.

A Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), under the Chair of my Ministry, and comprising relevant stakeholders like the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Mauritius Ports Authority, meets

regularly, as and when required, to closely monitor the progress in the implementation of the Waterfront Development Project (Neotown Project) of LSDL.

Thus, at the last JMC Meeting held on Thursday 24 February 2011, following a request by my Ministry, LSDL made a Power-Point Presentation of progress achieved in the implementation of its project.

The Progress Report arising from the said Power-Point Presentation, indicates that LSDL has, since June 2010, started preliminary works on the site leased for its Waterfront Development Project, which works were accelerated after Les Salines Car Park, a private company, vacated, only in August 2010, the land it occupied, and which forms part of the land leased to LSDL.

This same Progress Report indicates that all necessary infrastructural works on the whole site is being carried out in the context of Phase 1 of the Project. The land leased has been fenced, cleared and levelled and LSDL has set up its offices and a storage shed on the site. The alignment and excavation works for the road network have started. LSDL has completed the necessary geotechnical investigations and topological surveys. LSDL has applied to the relevant authorities, for example, utility providers and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, for the appropriate permits and licences. Consultations are ongoing with the service providers for the provision of utilities to the site.

LSDL has also indicated that various materials, imported by it from abroad, are expected to be delivered on site within the coming weeks.

LSDL's Waterfront Development Project (Neotown Project), which is being implemented in various phases, comprises, *inter alia*, the construction of a hotel, boardwalks and marine garden, a tourist heritage centre, a luxury condominium complex with a boutique hotel, a

marina club, apartment complex, office buildings, shopping malls, office campus, tourist attractions, and entertainment facilities.

The Waterfront Development Project (Neotown Project) is on course.

The following three documents are placed in the Library -

- (i) a brief in chronological order on Les Salines Waterfront Development Project (Annex I);
- (ii) a copy of the lease agreement between my Ministry and the MPA (Annex II); and
- (iii) a copy of the lease agreement between my Ministry and Les Salines Development Ltd (Annex III).

While we have no control of, and over any statements made or alleged to have been made by the Promoters of the Project outside Mauritius, and while we are certainly not responsible or accountable for same, we have, and we shall maintain full control of, and over the implementation of the Project by ensuring that the letter and spirit of the Lease Agreement are scrupulously adhered to at all times.

The Promoters imperatively need to apply for all relevant permits required for the implementation of any component of their Project, also at all times.

All Lease Agreements are duly registered at the Registrar General's Department.

SENATOR CLUB - GAMBLING LICENCE

(No. A/44) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the renewal of the gambling licence of the Senator Club in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if it

has received complaints from the inhabitants residing in the vicinity thereof against the Senator Club and, if so –

- (a) the remedial actions that have been initiated, if any, and
- (b) if the licence of the Senator Club has been renewed in spite of such complaints.

Reply: Prior to the issue in 2007 of a Gambling House “A” Licence and of a Gaming Machine Licence to Caesar Palace Ltd. (operating under the trade name of Senator Club) in Port Louis, complaints were received from inhabitants residing in the vicinity and addressed to the then Gaming Control Board and even referred to court.

In addition, in August 2009, a case was lodged before the Supreme Court by a group of inhabitants against the Gambling Regulatory Authority to take action to stop operation of the licensee. On 10 March 2010, the case was set aside by the Supreme Court.

I am informed by the Authority that on 30 September 2010, the Municipal Council of Port Louis forwarded a copy of a letter under the signature of Father Mongelard on behalf of a group of inhabitants of the vicinity, requesting the revocation of the licence of Caesar Palace Ltd. That letter was also addressed to the Commissioner of Police.

I am informed that in light of the court decision and in the absence of any adverse report from the Commissioner of Police, the licences of Caesar Palace Ltd for Gaming House “A” and for Gaming Machines were renewed on 12 November 2010 and 02 December 2010 respectively for a period of one year.

RAYMOND RIVET STREET, MONT ROCHES - RESURFACING

(No. A/45) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping

whether he is aware of the bad state of the Raymond Rivet Street, Mont Roches and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the resurfacing thereof, indicating when.

Reply: Raymond Rivet Street, Mont Roches is classified as Saint Martin Road (B101). The Road Development Authority is aware of the bad state of the road but upgrading works cannot be undertaken for the time being due to ongoing sewerage works which are expected to be completed by the end of August 2011. The road will be resurfaced by the Road Development Authority thereafter.

DUMAT STREET, BEAU BASSIN – WATER PIPE

(No. A/46) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the main water pipe along the Dumat Street, Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof with a view to alleviating the hardships of the inhabitants of the said region with regard to water supply.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that replacement of the pipe has started. An extent of 100 metres of defective pipe along Dumas Street has already been replaced. The remaining part around 300 metres will be replaced during this financial year.

CUREPIPE - WATER SUPPLY

(No. A/47) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the inhabitants of Curepipe, he will –

- (a) state if he has received representations in regard to the water supply in the evening and, if so,
- (b) will he for the benefit of the House, obtain from Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that are being taken.

Reply: I am informed that the Central Water Authority has received representations from the inhabitants of Upper Plaines Wilhems receiving water from Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir.

Following these representations, the CWA is now providing water twice daily from 3.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. and from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. instead of once daily from 3.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.

FOREST SIDE - STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL (BOYS) - FOOTBALL PITCH

(No. A/48) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Forest Side State Secondary School (Boys), he will state if measures are being taken during the present financial year for the provision of a football pitch thereat and, if not, why not.

Reply: The construction of a football pitch at the Forest Side State Secondary School (Boys) has already started since June 2009 by the District Contractor of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and is now nearing completion.

A high level fencing around the football pitch as well as levelling and turfing works have been completed. However, some relatively minor snags have been identified and the contractor has been requested to complete the outstanding works during the coming Easter holidays.

Should no unexpected problem arise during the execution of the remaining works, the football pitch should be ready for next term's resumption of studies in mid-April 2011.