



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 08 NOVEMBER 2011**

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker
Deputy Speaker

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 Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing

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Clerk of the National Assembly
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 Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 21 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 08 November 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 –

The Second Annual Report of the Data Protection Office for the period January to December 2010.

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Stock Exchange (Brokerage Fee for Government of Mauritius Securities and Bank of Mauritius Bills) (Revocation) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 180 of 2011).
- (b) The National Accounts of Mauritius 2010 (Vol. 28).
- (c) The Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Bank of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2011.

C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

- (a) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Food Court) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 181 of 2011).
- (b) The Municipal Council of Port Louis (Streets and Squares) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 184 of 2011).

D. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life –

- (a) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 178 of 2011).
- (b) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 179 of 2011).

E. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 11) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 182 of 2011).
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 18) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 183 of 2011).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, who had put his PNQ this morning, is stuck in a traffic jam.

(Interruptions)

What is there for laughing in that?

(Interruptions)

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is stuck in a traffic jam and he has requested that the PNQ scheduled for today be withdrawn and put for tomorrow.

(Interruptions)

Order now!

MED POINT CLINIC - PURCHASE

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 the purchase by Government of the Med Point Clinic, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the name of the -

- (a) bank in Mauritius in which the cheque of Rs145 m. was deposited and the bank in Mauritius into which money was transferred, and
- (b) bank in London in which money has been transferred, indicating, in each case, the sums transferred and the date of the transfers.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question B/807 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, will now be replied by hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection. Parliamentary Question B/828 addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and Parliamentary Question B/829 addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister.

Hon. Jhugroo!

MR A. H. S. – “ROGUE & VAGABOND” OFFENCE - INQUIRY

(No. B/803) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the case of Mr H. S., who was prosecuted for the offence of rogue and vagabond before the District Court of Mapou, in July 2011, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the prescribed procedures were followed for the preferment of the charges against the accused and, if not, why not, indicating, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 July 2011, minor M. J., aged 13, in the presence of her mother, reported a case at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station where she alleged having been sexually molested by one A. H. S. on the same day.

The Police started an investigation into the case and Mr A.H.S. was arrested on the same day. He was detained at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station.

On 11 July 2011, the Assistant Superintendent of Police decided to prosecute the accused on a charge of “Rogue and Vagabond” and gave instructions to have the main case lodged before the District Court of Rivière du Rempart on the same day. The accused pleaded guilty and the Court sentenced him to pay a fine of Rs500 and Rs100 as costs.

On 12 July 2011, minor M. J. made another declaration in relation to the same incident at Piton Police Station.

On 21 July 2011, the Police referred the case file to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice as to the course of action to be taken in view of the fact that Mr A. H. S’s conviction had already taken place for “Rogue and Vagabond”.

On 28 July 2011, the Director of Public Prosecutions drew the attention of the Commissioner of Police that the facts of the case revealed a more serious offence of “Attempt Upon Chastity” rather than the offence of “Rogue and Vagabond” for which Mr A. H. S had been wrongly prosecuted and convicted. For the offence of “Attempt Upon Chastity”, the advice of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions should have been sought in accordance with the established procedures before prosecution.

The Director of Public Prosecutions also requested the Commissioner of Police to carry out an immediate inquiry into the circumstances in which the case was referred to the Court and Mr A. H. S. was prosecuted; the more so since the charge laid against him did not match the evidence, which disclosed a possible case of "Attempt Upon Chastity".

The Commissioner of Police instituted a full-scale enquiry chaired by DCP Seerungen.

On 03 August 2011, the Commissioner of Police forwarded his report to the Director of Public Prosecutions. The departmental enquiry revealed that there had been neglect of duty on the part of eight Police officers in handling the case with the result that they had failed to assess the seriousness of the offence and to initiate actions, as appropriate, at their respective level.

The Commissioner of Police has assured me that he has initiated disciplinary proceedings against the eight Police officers concerned in accordance with the Police Standing Orders and that there would be no undue delay in the completion of the departmental disciplinary proceedings. If found guilty, the defaulting officers are liable to be punished as follows -

- (a) reduction in rank or seniority;
- (b) stoppage or withholding or deferment of increment;
- (c) suspension from work without pay for a period of not less than one day and not more than 14 days, and
- (d) reprimand or severe reprimand.

Following this case, on 29 July 2011, as an additional measure, the Commissioner of Police issued a Circular Note to Divisional Commanders and Branch Officers instructing them that henceforth, all cases involving children, either as victims or as accused parties, should, after completion of the enquiry, be forwarded to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice. Furthermore, the Commissioner of Police has requested that a monthly return of all cases of crime and misdemeanour decided at Divisional and Branch level be submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions through the Chief Police Prosecutor's Office.

On 20 October 2011, the Director of Public Prosecutions has advised that an enquiry in relation to abducting child be completed and forwarded to his Office by 09 December 2011. Police enquiry is ongoing.

POLICE FORCE – PROMOTIONAL EXAMINATIONS

(No. B/804) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Force, he will state if he will consider recommending to the Commissioner of Police to have recourse to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate for the carrying out of the promotional examinations thereat.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, section 91 of the Constitution empowers the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to make appointments and promotions in the Police Force. The Disciplined Forces Service Commission is solely responsible for the conduct of competitive examinations for promotion in the Force.

Competitive Examinations are conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission for promotion to the posts of Police Sergeant and Inspector of Police. The competitive examinations are conducted, in accordance with Standing Order No. 16 of the Police Standing Orders and consist of written tests in -

- (i) Laws, Court Procedures and Evidence;
- (ii) Police Administration and Orders, and
- (iii) Police Duties and Procedures.

The hon. Member may wish to know that, in 1996, the then Police Service Commission approached the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate for the latter to carry out promotional examinations on behalf of the Commission. However, in view of the complexity and technicalities of the subjects on which the Officers have to be tested, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate declined the proposal to set the question papers and mark the scripts.

I am given to understand that the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate has expressed its preparedness, if approached again by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission to discuss the possibility of conducting examinations for promotion in the Mauritius Police Force.

The hon. Member will appreciate that neither the Commissioner of Police nor myself can intervene with the Disciplined Forces Service Commission in this matter, but they will be advised that this is the situation.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request the hon. Prime Minister whether he would consider asking the Disciplinary Forces Commission to seek advice from the Mauritius Examination Syndicate on how to get results a bit faster than on the last exercise?

The Prime Minister: Maybe I will pass it on to the Commissioner of Police and he can tell them. I don't have a right to go and tell them when to do what, as the hon. Member probably knows.

POLICE QUARTERS – PULLING DOWN

(No. B/805) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Quarters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof which need to be pulled down, indicating in each case -

- (a) the location thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police Quarters are considered for demolition mainly when it is not economically viable to repair and maintain them; and when the structure is unsafe for occupation.

The Police have earmarked 46 Quarters that need to be pulled down as follows -

- 34 Quarters at SMF Vacoas, and
- 12 Quarters at Roche Bois.

At the SMF Vacoas, all Police Officers occupying these Police Quarters have been provided with other Quarters, except for one Police Officer who will be moving soon. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport & Shipping has already been requested to take the appropriate action for the demolition of these Quarters. The tender documents are being finalised together with the Police Department.

In regard to the Quarters at Roche Bois, all the 20 Quarters located in three blocks were also earmarked for pulling down. The three blocks have already been vacated. However, following a request, Block B, comprising of eight Quarters, has been allocated to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for renovation and use as a Drop-In Centre for Harm Reduction Programme. The Police Department has also been informed that the Ring Road will pass through part of the premises where Block A, is located, which consists of four Quarters. The remaining Block C housing eight Quarters, will be pulled down in due course and the Police will use the site for a development project for Metropolitan North Division.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that some of these Police Quarters are unoccupied and are in a state of neglect and, therefore, have become high-risk areas for the neighbourhood. I have in mind one in Rose Hill where the trees have grown across the street and, when the trucks pass there, the electric wires are also being ripped off. Will the hon. Prime Minister take necessary measures to freshen up or secure these places?

The Prime Minister: If the trees have gone across the street, they should have asked for the branches to be cut, but I do not know why they have not.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that when we talk about Police Quarters, there are those quarters which are together, but there are Government buildings which are served as Police Quarters which, I think, my colleague is mentioning. We have one in Rose Hill where one Superintendent of Police had been residing and which is on the main road of Rose Hill; it is an old building which has a big commercial value for Government itself. Since the Superintendent has vacated the place for months, this has become not only a neglected place, but also an eyesore and a problem of environment and insecurity for the surrounding buildings.

The Prime Minister: I will pass on the information to the Commissioner of Police.

Li Kwong Wing: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would be willing to consider calling for open tenders among all the professional Architects for some of the prime sites on which these unoccupied Police Quarters are found?

Mr Speaker: No, that does not arise from this question.

BAIL – CIRCULAR NOTE

(No. B/806) **Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the circular note with regard to objection to release on bail issued by the Commissioner of Police, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner

- (a) information as to the date thereof, and
- (b) and lay copy thereof on the Table of the Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bail Act was enacted in the year 1999 and took effect on 14 February 2000, and repealed the former Bail Act 1989.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 09 of August 2001, a Circular 30/2001 was issued to the Force regulating the Bail procedures according to the Bail Act of 1999 following observations made by the then DPP. In fact, prior to the issue of this circular, Police Prosecutors were taking verbal instructions from superior Officers to resist or not to resist bail and therefore no specific Police Officer was really held responsible for the instruction given. The Circular therefore aimed at adding more accountability to the process, that is senior Police Officers instead of giving verbal instruction should do so in writing.

On 11 September 2001, CP Circular 36/2001 was issued to supplement Circular 30/2001. Senior Officers were instructed to give full brief of the case to State Law Officers who assist Prosecutors in resisting bail.

On 06 February 2004, Circular 3/2004 on the objectives of the Police Prosecution Unit was issued and an amendment thereto was issued on 21 of July 2008 to attach some new objectives which reads as follows: *“when a person who is already on bail has been arrested upon reasonable suspicion of having committed an offence, the Police must invariably object to the release on bail of that detainee as per section 4 of the Bail Act 1999”*.

However, as the Police have made clear, the final decision whether to release or not rests upon the Court.

I am tabling a copy of the Circular 12/08 as requested by the hon. Member.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there was another circular which was issued in July 2011 and whether in that circular note any conditions for release of bail was mentioned therein?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member cannot ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm. She has to rephrase her question.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether another circular was issued in July 2011 and whether in that circular note any mention was made as to the conditions for the release of bail for a second time for any offence caused?

The Prime Minister: In fact, Circular 142011 was circulated on 04July 2011 which provides as follows -

‘Divisional Commanders and Chief Police Prosecutor will ensure that Police Prosecutors do not produce the above annexes in Court as they will only inform the Court Magistrate of the stand of the Police and take steps as enumerated at Paragraph C of the Commissioner of Police Circular 36/2001’.

This had taken place, I think, in a case where the Police gave the Circular to the Court and the Magistrate rightly said that she does not need to have the circular, the Police have to make the case.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, in fact, it is since 04 July 2011 that Police are systematically objecting to a second bail when somebody is already on bail, but has not been prosecuted yet?

The Prime Minister: As I have explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been confusion. Even here, hon. Members have asked questions. I remember Caterino case, I think, where people say why is it that there was no objection to bail, why in certain cases there is objection to bail. I think that is why these circulars have been given to the Prosecutors and, as I have said, in the last circular, it is clear that in July 2008 they have issued the circular to say that they have to invariably object to the release on bail of any detainee as per Section 4 of the Bail Act and that it is then for the Court to decide whether to release or not; that is what they have followed.

Mr Baloomoody: I said that since that circular has been in operation on 04 July, there have been 288 objections from the Police and out of that, as the hon. Prime Minister said, 240 were refused bail. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that those who were released were those who could afford to retain the services of counsel to object to the non-renewal of their bail? is it a fact, that those...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Put your question then I am going to intervene.

Mr Baloomoody: Following that circular, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly said, there is, in fact, *justice à deux vitesses*. If there is an objection from the Police, if you have to make a motion to be released on bail, you have to retain the service of a Counsel. Is he aware that of the 288 where there were objections and the 240 who could not object to them being released on bail, they could not retain the services of Counsel? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is prepared to extend legal aid to those where the Police are objecting to their bail on their second bail where, in fact, they have not been tried yet?

Mr Speaker: This is why I was going to intervene. The system of legal aid is there. It is administered by the Supreme Court; the Master and Registrar and the Chief Justice. If an accused party thinks that it has to apply, it is for the accused party to decide. How can the hon. Prime Minister give directives?

Mr Baloomoody: These people are not the accused party and the *In Forma Pauperis* principle applies only when you are accused. We are talking about suspected persons. They are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. The Bail Act says this clearly. It is unfair to blatantly object to a second bail and there are cases where previous declarants are making abuse of that situation.

Mr Speaker: Then, the hon. Member is saying that they are excluded from awaiting the *In Forma Pauperis* facilities. Therefore, this has to be amended and who has made the regulations? It is the Chief Justice. Therefore, a question could be asked whether the Chief Justice could be asked to amend this.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it with the Commissioner of Police to have a look on a case to case basis because it is discriminatory, like I said, against certain suspects who cannot afford Counsel for bail and the prosecutor comes in court and say they are objecting and if the suspect is not represented, he cannot make any motion to be released on bail.

The Prime Minister: The problem is the Police have been criticised in the past for not objecting to bail for X and Y. I think that is why this circular was made but, in any case, the new Bail Act is practically ready from what I understand from the Attorney General. This will be taken care of.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he considers it a sound principle for Police to invariably object to bail in case the suspected offences are not connected at all and very different from each other?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is asking for the hon. Prime Minister to give an opinion. That is not allowed by our Standing Orders. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will not agree with me and that is unfair. Some Policemen clearly did not do their job. They did not object where they should have objected. Instead of them being taken to task, there is a blanket decision to refuse bail in any circumstances. This is shifting the blame from the officers that went wrong and putting the accused in a terrible situation. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to reconsider because even with the Bail Act, the legal aid, and so on, they will be back in jail? They will not get bail. They will have to do all sorts of *démarche*. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will agree that there is need to look at that urgently.

The Prime Minister: That is why the Bail Act is being amended but I think, the problem is that even though we have a limited number of Police prosecutors and some of them do not seem to understand this. They do not want to take the responsibility. I think that is why this has happened but, anyway, the Bail Act, I believe, is taking this in consideration.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth, do you have a question?

Mr Jugnauth: Would the hon. Prime Minister consider requesting the Commissioner of Police to amend this very amendment that was made in 2008, especially in the light of cases where the suspected offences are not connected at all?

The Prime Minister: There is also the Bail Act which is there, as I mentioned, in section 4. As I said, this is being looked at in the new Bail Act that we are preparing.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the practical implications of this circular in that our District Courts are now burdened on a daily basis with bail applications? It has increased tremendously the workload so that it is very unpopular both with the Police and with the courts. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware and will he consider urgently - pending the eventual Bail Act amendment - approaching the Commissioner of Police so that a distinction be made as between cases according to whether offences are cognate, the seriousness of the offence, the antecedence of the suspects and an immediate solution found?

The Prime Minister: In theory, that is what should have happened, there are conditions for bail but I think, the Bail Act is practically ready. It should be coming soon.

PLAINE VERTE – ADSU - OPERATION

(No. B/808) 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 office in Plaine Verte of the Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

- (a) date on which it became operational;
- (b) category, quantity and value of the dangerous drugs seized, since it's becoming operational to-date, and
- (c) number of Police Officers posted thereat, indicating if the closure thereof is being envisaged and, if so, the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit office in Plaine Verte became operational on 25 July 2006.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that since 25 July 2006 up to 30 October 2011, a total of 688 drug cases have been established by the Plaine Verte Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit office. I am tabling the details regarding the category, quantity and value of the drugs seized.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the deployment of Police Officers to a particular Police Station, Unit or Branch being a matter which directly concerns national security, it would not be in order to give such information.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not envisaged to close the Plaine Verte Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit Office. However, the building housing the Office, which belongs to the Municipality of Port Louis, will have to undergo major repair works soon.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, it is good news that the office is not being closed because there were rumours that the office would be closed and as the hon. Prime Minister stated, there have been so many cases that ADSU Plaine Verte has dealt

with. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in that case, if he would consider upgrading the basic facilities that are at the ADSU Plaine Verte?

The Prime Minister: I am assuming that when they will do the renovation works, they will also upgrade the facilities.

Mr Speaker: I must inform the hon. Members, for the guidance of the House, that they should not repeat the answers which the hon. Prime Minister or the hon. Ministers have given; they have to just ask the question. Hon. François!

RODRIGUES - MBC - SECURITY

(No. B/809) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Pointe Venus, the Citronelle and the Malartic stations of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to -

- (a) if they are secured and, if not, why not;
- (b) who is entrusted with the responsibility for the security thereof, and
- (c) if an act of vandalism on/or theft of equipment found thereat has been reported and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the -
 - (i) outcome thereof, and
 - (ii) estimated cost of the damages/losses.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that the Pointe Venus Control Room is fenced and guarded on a 24-hour basis by the Special Mobile Force Task Force in Rodrigues. Fencing works are currently under way to secure the Antenna Dish Park at Pointe Venus which is located some 30 metres away from the Control Room. Surveillance cameras and lighting posts will also be installed to consolidate security at the Antenna Dish Park.

I am further informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that the Citronelle station is also secured and guarded on a 24-hour basis by the regular Police and the Special Mobile Force Task Force in Rodrigues. The Radiating Mast which is adjacent to the main

building at Citronelle is currently unfenced and arrangements are under way to install security fencing around its perimeter.

I am also informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that the Malartic Station is secured by fencing. However a survey carried out by the Corporation has revealed that the existing fencing structure has been the subject of wear and tear. Consolidation works to reinforce the security fencing at that Station have already been planned and I understand the works will start shortly.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that, on 06 October 2011, the Feed Horn and Low Noise Amplifier from the 2.4 metre satellite receiving dish at Pointe Venus were found missing resulting in disruption of television transmission in Rodrigues. The case was reported to the Police Post of Port Mathurin by the Officer-in-Charge, MBC Rodrigues, on the same day.

In regard to part (c) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 10 October 2011, during a search carried out at the place of an inhabitant of Grand La Fouche Corail, a Low Noise Block was found and secured. A technician from the MBC identified the Low Noise Block as being the one which was stolen at Pointe Venus. The person arrested by the Police has confessed to have stolen the Low Noise Block of the antenna dish at Pointe Venus. He was brought before the Rodrigues Court on 11 October 2011 on a provisional charge of "Larceny" and was remanded to Police cell up to 17 October 2011 and subsequently remanded to jail. Police enquiry into the matter is still under way.

In regard to part (c) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Corporation that the estimated cost of the missing pieces of equipment which had been stolen is around Rs150,000.

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I just make a request to the hon. Prime Minister with regard to the Citronelle Antenna Park which is emitting 1Kwt of power. The park has become sort of grazing ground for stray animals and people are dangerously cutting across this site. Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it with the Director General to fence this site as soon as possible because there is quite a dangerous situation at this Antenna Park?

The Prime Minister: I did not quite check whether the hon. Member was talking about the fences that have gone wear and tear or the other fences.

Mr François: I mean, all the site of the Citronelle Antenna Park and the MBC itself is not properly fenced and that also goes to Pointe Venus and Malartic which is in a lamentable state. May I request the hon. Prime Minister to see to it with the Director General, especially for Citronelle as there are people of the locality who get across this site and this is quite dangerous?

The Prime Minister: As I said in my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, the arrangements are underway to install security fencing around this perimeter.

RODRIGUES - GRAND PÂTÉ – SCIENTIFIC STUDY

(No. B/810) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the marine patrimoine, Grand Pâté, located in the port area of the Port Mathurin Bay, in Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) state if his office has received a request from any local Non-Governmental Organisation and experts to carry out a study around the site thereof and, if so, indicate
 - (i) the names thereof and
 - (ii) if same has been acceded to, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, information as to if any scientific study has recently been carried out and, if so, table copy of the findings thereof, including the hydrographic survey plan.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Grand Pâté is a coral reef located in the North of Port Mathurin which acts as a protection to the Harbour. The navigational access to Port Mathurin is through the western pass which is on the western side of the Grand Pâté.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am advised that on 08 June 2011, a request was made to my Office by Shoals Rodrigues, a Non-Governmental Organisation and two British Scientists, namely Dr. Rebecca Klaus and Ms. Emily Hardman, to map the structural Complexity and Biodiversity at the Northern Bank Reef at the Port

Mathurin Bay. The object of the project was to study the marine biodiversity and the health of the marine ecosystem in that region.

The request was given due consideration and the following organisations and institutions were consulted -

- the Ministry of Fisheries & Rodrigues;
- the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development;
- the Mauritius Ports Authority;
- the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- the Mauritius Research Council, and
- the Mauritius Oceanography Institute.

My Office, however, did not accede to the request mainly in the light of objection raised by the Mauritius Ports Authority on the following grounds -

- (i) the earmarked zone for the study is within the port area of Port Mathurin;
- (ii) the Northern Bank Reef, which is part of a coral outcrop, is situated in the middle of the Navigational Approach Channel to Port Mathurin and the minimum depth on top of the coral outcrop located there is 6.9 metres, thus limiting access of vessels of deeper draft to the Port;
- (iii) the MPA is proceeding with the removal of the coral outcrops in that area to enable bigger vessels, especially cruise liners to call at Port Mathurin, and
- (iv) the MPA is proposing to appoint a consultant to advise on the most appropriate method to remove the coral outcrop with a minimum impact on the marine ecosystem.

This decision was communicated to Shoals Rodrigues on 13 September 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding part (b) of the Question, I am advised that no scientific study has been carried out by the Mauritius Oceanography Institute in Rodrigues recently. In fact, it was in 2001 that the Mauritius Oceanography Institute last participated in the conduct of a biodiversity survey in Rodrigues within the framework of the Shoals of Capricorne Programme. The findings of that survey were published in a book entitled "The Marine Biodiversity of Rodrigues".

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is relevant to mention that hydrographic surveys were undertaken in Rodrigues in 2007 by the Indian Scientific Research Vessel “Sarvekshak” to update the nautical charts around Port Mathurin. Subsequent to that hydrographic survey, the Mauritius Ports Authority had through bidding process, awarded a contract to Shoals Rodrigues in September 2010 to –

- (i) determine the exact location of the three (3) shallow outcrops in the navigation path at the entrance of Port Mathurin, as identified in the survey, and
- (ii) carry out a detailed marine biodiversity assessment of the outcrops.

Shoals Rodrigues submitted its Report in April 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hydrographic Chart is available on payment at the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir and hon. Prime Minister. With regard to the report submitted by Shoals Rodrigues, will the hon. Prime Minister agree to table a copy of same?

The Prime Minister: A copy from the Mauritius Ports Authority! I will have no objection to table it.

Mr François: Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister confirm that this is the outcrop of Grand Pâté or is it the Grand Pâté itself which they will blast.

The Prime Minister: No, it is not the Grand Pâté itself. It is an outcrop of that area.

Mr François: In that case, will the hon. Prime Minister be able to table any recent hydrographic survey showing us the exact location and size of this outcrop and the Grand Pâté itself? Because from the information I have, Grand Pâté is about 1 km wide and 4 km long.

The Prime Minister: It is available. As I said the whole hydrographic chart is available on payment at the Ministry of Housing and Lands. The hon. Member can have it. It is available.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/816 and B/817 have been withdrawn.

LE MORNE – HOTEL PROJECT - APAVOU GROUP

(No. B/826) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the lease granted by Government to the Apavou Group for the implementation of a hotel project at Le Morne, he will state the conditions thereof, indicating if the promoters have fulfilled them all, especially those relating to the facilities and amenities to be provided on the neighbouring public beach.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, Apavou Le Morne Ltée holds an industrial site lease for hotel development at *Pas Géométriques* Morne Brabant at Pointe Sud-Ouest, Le Morne.

The conditions of the lease in respect of its social obligations are as follows -

- (i) that the lessee contributes in the creation/improvement of the 10 m wide public road, and
- (ii) participates in the improvement of the two public beaches adjoining the site leased.

I am informed that apart from constructing a road which services the hotel and the land leased, the promoter has not yet fulfilled any of its obligations in regard to the improvement of the public beaches, in spite of consultations and meetings held between the promoter and the Beach Authority and the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure has, on 01 August 2011, requested the promoter to submit a programme of work and implement the project for the upgrading of the two public beaches without any further delay.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister what are the remedial measures that are being taken to ensure that this hotel group fulfils all the conditions of its lease?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, the promoter has been written on so many occasions, at least, on five or six occasions. There are a lot of meetings which have been held between the promoter and the Ministry of Tourism as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a last resort measure we are requesting him to conduct all the upgrading work as soon as possible otherwise maybe we will have to take sanctions according to the lease agreement.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to inform the House when was the hotel scheduled to be completed in accordance with the conditions of the lease?

Mr Faugoo: I am told that the promoter has complied with all the conditions of the lease except for the social obligations, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the promoter is in the process of selling all the hotels and his assets, and whether Government will make sure that, before the sale is effected, at least, necessary works are carried out on the public beach.

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of this fact, Mr Speaker, Sir.

APAVOU GROUP - HOTEL EXTENSION PROJECTS

(No. B/827) Mrs J. Radeconde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the hotel extension projects carried out by the Apavou Group over the past two years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to if same comply with the norms, standards and requirements of the existing hotel development policy of Government.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that, according to records available at my Ministry, over the past two years Apavou Immobilier Ltd has submitted one extension project in respect of the Indian Resorts Hotel, now known as Indian Resorts and Spa.

I am informed that, in July 2009, the promoter submitted an EIA application for an extension of the hotel by 52 bedrooms. My Ministry did not support the proposed development on the ground that it would not portray the image of Mauritius as an up-market destination, the more so as approval for an extension of the same hotel by 60 rooms had been issued in the previous year. In its decision, the Ministry was guided by principles of quality service as against quantity and volume, seemingly favoured by the promoter.

Thereupon, the promoter revised its plans from 52 bedrooms to 42 hotel suites, and undertook to invest in the overall upgrading of the product. In the light of this development, my Ministry raised no objection to the proposal, and an EIA licence was granted to Apavou Immobilier Ltd on 28 July 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development that post-EIA monitoring exercises conducted by its officers have shown that the conditions of the EIA licence are being complied with.

I am further informed that, in July 2010, my Ministry informed the promoter that one of the conditions for the issue and renewal of the Tourist Enterprise Licence in respect of that hotel would be subject to strict compliance with commitments taken for the overall upgrading of the project. I understand that part of the upgrading works, which were initially scheduled for completion in October 2011, have now been postponed to December 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House that, if this ongoing extension project is in line with our hotel development policy, on the operational front, however, a number of shortcomings has been detected. In fact, the Tourism Authority as the licensing authority has, during the course of its monitoring of tourist establishments and in response to complaints received from several quarters, confirmed a series of shortcomings at the hotel. These include *inter alia* -

- i. the absence of CCTV surveillance cameras;
- ii. trading without licence in respect of the additional 60 rooms as part of a first extension project as well as for a restaurant, and
- iii. the poor level of general cleanliness at the hotel.

In the face of this situation, the Tourism Authority has, on the 24 October 2011, intimated to the promoter to refrain from operating the 60 additional rooms, commonly known as the Mornea Extension Project and commercialised as Marmara and the restaurant, to which the promoter has agreed.

Further, joint inspections carried out on 25 and 26 October 2011 by officers of the Tourism Authority with the Fire and Police Departments, as well as health inspectors, with a view to having a thorough assessment of the hotel operations, have resulted in a series of contraventions being established against the hotel. The next course of action will be determined in the light of the detailed reports awaited from the authorities concerned.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what are the sanctions which have been imposed on the hotel for operating without licence?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We have asked the promoter to stop operating.

Mrs Radegonde: Has the promoter stopped operating?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Yes, he has stopped.

(PQs No. B/828 & No. B/829 – See Written Answers to Questions)

MR P. S. - TABLE TENNIS COACH

(No. B/830) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr P. S., table tennis coach, he will state if he has been transferred from the Beau Bassin Gymnasium to the Anjalay Stadium and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the reasons for his transfer, and
- (b) his new scheme of duties.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must, at the very outset, mention that the hon. Member has been misled, as Mr. P.S. has not been transferred. He is still working at the same place, i.e., at the National Table Tennis Centre, which is situated at Beau Bassin.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr. P. S. has been employed on contract as Adviser/Coach in Table Tennis in my Ministry since 02 June 1997 with the following duties and responsibilities -

- (i) to advise and assist my Ministry in the development and promotion of table tennis;
- (ii) to be called upon to conduct training sessions as and when required, and
- (iii) to be assigned any other duties which my Ministry may deem suitable.

The contract of employment has been renewed every year since his appointment, on the same terms and conditions, except the upward revision of his salary. His duties have remained the same.

As far as posting is concerned, the provisions of his contract give the flexibility to my Ministry to post him at such stations where his competence may be required, as is the case for other coaches.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, c'est une bonne chose en effet que le ministère des sports ait fait marche arrière en ce qui concerne...

Mr Speaker: On ne peut pas commenter la réponse !

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que je peux demander au ministre si effectivement M. Patrick Sahajasen, le coach de tennis de table, a été appelé à travailler pour le *Trust Fund for Excellence*?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the reorganisation of my Ministry's activities, Mr P. S. was called upon to help the Trust Fund for Excellence in sports, and it is a normal procedure in the Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant que la fédération de tennis de table a coupé tout contact, toute relation avec le *Trust Fund for Excellence*?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Mr P. S. is employed by my Ministry. The transfer of an officer is a normal procedure in my Ministry, according to the vision and objectives of our sports programme. Mr P. S. may be called upon to work in any place in Mauritius.

Mr Jhugroo: I come back to my question, Mr Speaker, Sir. My original question was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister...

Mr Speaker: I did inform the House. The question of transfer of questions rests with the Executive, not with the Chair.

Mr Jhugroo: My original question was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister and not to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker: If you have any problem on questions, you have to see me in my office. You cannot raise it here.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je pense que le ministre est au courant que l'école de tennis de table de Beau Bassin a fermé ses portes; elle ne fonctionne plus. D'après le *Sports Act*, il est stipulé que toute ouverture d'une école, tout fonctionnement doit se faire en collaboration, en consultation avec la fédération en question. Comment se fait-il que la fédération de tennis de table a coupé toute relation avec le *Trust Fund*, et que malgré tout M. Sahajasen a été appelé à travailler avec le *Trust Fund* ?

Mr Ritoo: I think again that the hon. Member is misled. Mr Patrick Sahajasen is not working with the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports. He is, in fact, still working at the National Table Tennis Centre.

Mr Quirin: Pourtant, M. le président, il y a une lettre demandant à M. Sahajasen de travailler avec le *Trust Fund*.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports is under the aegis of my Ministry. He is employed by my Ministry. If he is requested to go and work with the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports, he should go and work for that purpose.

CLUB M - WORLD CUP 2014

(No. B/831) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Club M, he would state if -

- (a) measures have been taken to maintain the professional status of the players thereof and, if not, why not, and
- (b) his Ministry is proposing to finance the participation thereof against Liberia, for the preliminaries of the World Cup 2014.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would first of all wish to inform the House that professional football does not exist in Mauritius. Professional football implies that players are employed on contract on a full time basis by clubs. They are paid exclusively to train and play football during their period of contract with the concerned clubs. When the country participates in any international competition, the best players are granted temporary release by the concerned clubs to defend the national flag.

With regard to part (a), I wish to inform the hon. Member that the Club M Committee, chaired by Mr George Chung, was set up by the MFA in January 2011 to assist in the preparation of our National Team for the Indian Ocean Island Games in Seychelles. The objective was to gather financial resources to enable the team to train in optimal conditions so as to obtain best possible results. As such, the question of maintaining the professional status of players does not arise.

With regard to part (b) of the question, though the Federation has already exhausted the funds allocated to it for the current financial year, my Ministry was agreeable to partly finance participation in the preliminaries of the World Cup 2014. Unfortunately the MFA has decided not to participate in these preliminaries.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si les joueurs du Club M - malgré le fait qu'ils ne bénéficient plus du statut professionnel - bénéficient toujours de l'allocation de R10, 000 comme c'était le cas pendant les jeux des îles?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this was set up by the Club M Committee. They decided to pay allowance to the players and I believe that they are still doing it; because we are not received any request from players that they are not being paid.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, après l'élimination du Club M lors des éliminatoires de la CAN 2012, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si des mesures ont été prises pour étoffer l'encadrement technique du Club M ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Club M is the doing of the Mauritius Football Association. They decide whether they want to *encadrer* the national team, otherwise, we, at the ministry, only act as facilitator. We help them to participate in any competition that the Federation decides fit for them.

Mr Bhagwan: Would the Minister, at least, agree with us, with the country also and himself, that the situation cannot continue as far as our football is concerned especially with problem of the Football Federation? Our football is completely out of order. Our Mauritian team is KO. There is no national team as such.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I am sorry! I am on my feet. This question is a specific one. If you want to come on the policy of football generally, you can come with a substantive question.

Mr Bhagwan: We are talking about professional football. We are talking of our national Club M.

Mr Speaker: The Minister has answered – there is no professional football in Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: I am talking of the Club M, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. I have given my ruling hon. Bhagwan that your question is a general question on the status of football in Mauritius. You must come with a question and the Minister will give you the answer. Next question! Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE – METAL BARRIERS

(No. B/832) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the metal barriers

erected in the area adjacent to the town hall of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to –

- (a) the cost thereof;
- (b) the reasons therefor;
- (c) if the prior views of the Traffic Management Unit were sought and obtained in relation thereto, and
- (d) the alternative steps taken to ease the traffic as a result of the consequent traffic congestion created thereat.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the cost of fixing the metal barriers in the area adjacent to its town hall is around Rs20,000.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the decision was taken by the Council to fix metal barriers at the two entrances of the municipal compound in order to better control the access of vehicles for the security of visitors calling at the Municipal Library, Town Hall Reception Hall and the Administrative Block.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the clearance of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit was obtained on 30 November 2010 in this respect.

As regards part (d) of the question, I am informed that no representation has been received whatsoever from any authority regarding any traffic congestion caused due to the closure of the Municipal yard.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is actual concrete evidence of security risk to vehicles attending the Library or the vicinities and whether these security risks have been reported to the Police and what are these security risks?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the information I have the Council has decided by Regulation to close the Council yard. They have taken the Regulation 206; that is all I know.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that this area has been used as an access road from the church on one side going straight to the market for donkeys' years, and that out of custom there is no right for the Council to actually bar this access and

whether he will agree that the Council has actually put barriers for parking space to be provided to the councillors or to the members of the staff of that Council?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Council is *autonome* and if they decide to have a regulation prohibiting people to drive and use it as a public road they have got the right to do it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the Minister aware that although he says the main reason is security, there is not and has never been any security check at those gates?

Mr Aimée: Yes, but the fact that the gates are there, it is a deterrent. People can't get in as if they are on a public road.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the Minister aware that the practical consequence is that only half the access road is now being used for two-way traffic?

Mr Aimée: Yes. As we say it in Mauritius, *après la mort la tisane*. Had there been no precaution taken to prevent people driving in the premises of the Municipal Council yard then if there is an accident, you would say, okay, there is an accident there because you have not taken any precaution. That's why they have decided to put two gates.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the Minister aware that this is not only the case of the yard of the town hall of Curepipe, but that of the town hall of Beau-Bassin/Rose Hill which for years - everybody would remember - has also been closed.

Mr Speaker: No, no! I am sorry, hon. Bhagwan. This question relates to the Municipal Council of Curepipe, not of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill.

Mr Bhagwan: It's a policy.

Mr Speaker: Come with a question! Hon. Guimbeau!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now! Order!

Mr Guimbeau: I just want to tell my colleagues: 'Don't worry, we are going to open it soon'. I would just like to ask the hon. Minister when will the Municipal elections going to be held, so that we can open ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: That is totally out of order and I have to warn the hon. Member that he cannot abuse the time of the House at Question Time. Next question, hon. Li Kwong Wing!

SME – JOB CREATION

(No. B/833) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Small and Medium Enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, for the years 2010 and 2011, information as to the –

- (a) amount and percentage of Gross Domestic Product of their total output and exports;
- (b) number of –
 - (i) enterprises per broad category of activity;
 - (ii) employees and percentage of total employment;
 - (iii) new jobs created and percentage of total jobs created
- (c) total wage bill and percentage of total compensation of employees, and
- (d) amount of State funding and grants provided under each scheme, indicating the causes for the changes therein, if any.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am advised as follows, on the basis of estimates compiled from the latest official statistics made available by Statistics Mauritius, which is the national authoritative body in the country for the collection, analysis and interpretation of official data.

(a) Share of SME in GDP

The share of SMEs in the GDP is Rs97,000 m. for 2010 and Rs105,500 m. for 2011 respectively. This represents 37% of the GDP for both years. Concerning exports of SMEs, separate data are not available. The statistics are compiled only for total domestic exports.

(b) Total Number of Employees in SMEs

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the information in respect of the broad categories of enterprises. The total number of SMEs is 94,000 with a total of 299,000 employees for 2010, representing 54% of total

employment. For 2011, there are 303,000 employees and this also represents 54% of total employment, and concerning the number of jobs created in the SME sector, the net increase was 9,000 in 2010 and is 4,000 for 2011. These figures represent 75% and 80% of net increase in total employment for the years 2010 and 2011, respectively.

(c) Total Wage Bill

The total wage bill of SMEs in 2010 was Rs24,000 million representing 24% of total compensation, while in 2011 it is Rs26,000 million representing once again 24% of the total compensation of employees.

(d) Amount Disbursed Under Different Schemes

With regard to this part of the question, the total amount disbursed is Rs42,835.764.70. It has been disbursed in 2010 under seven schemes and Rs15,752.889.88 in 2011 under only one scheme.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the required information in respect of the schemes and the causes for changes therein.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to 2011, since only Rs15 m. have been disbursed, can we know how many SMEs have benefitted from that one scheme for which Rs15 m. have been disbursed?

Mr Seetaram: There is a disbursement. It concerns in 2011, the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS). The amount approved in 2011 is Rs75,000,631.02, whereas the amount disbursed out of it, is only Rs15,752.889.88 and the reason why this amount has been disbursed is for the projects which are in process. The difference why it is disbursed is explained by the fact that the MBGS project operates on a reimbursement mode...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer.

Mr Seetaram: ... and payments are made...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: If I can take a point of order.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let me listen to the point of order.

Mr Bérenger: The question was: in 2011, how many SMEs have benefited from the one scheme in operation? You want him to answer, this is not the question.

Mr Speaker: Yes, I do not know how many times I have said that I have no control on what the Minister is going to say. One guiding principle is that the Minister must answer the question which has been put and if he needs to explain, he has to explain. Yes, carry on!

Mr Seetaram: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the exact number of SMEs. I will circulate the answer.

Mr Speaker: That is the point. Next!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House the reasons for which there has been such low level of disbursements and inform the House also what is the rate of interest on the funds granted.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member keep quiet?

Mr Seetaram: That is why I explained just now that there has been an amount which was approved and an amount which was disbursed. The fact is why this amount has been disbursed; it is because the projects are in process. The amount is disbursed as per the conditions laid down in the projects.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister just indicated that SMEs now account for 54% of employment. In these circumstances, would the hon. Minister agree to review the criteria for granting aid to SMEs, because it is not possible that only Rs15 m. have been given to SMEs when they represent such a big player in the economy?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer; I must hear the answer.

Mr Seetaram: I will explain. There has been a scheme in August 2011. Before that, there was 50% matching grant scheme and this has been discontinued and there is a new scheme for the MBGS, which is 90:10, where the entrepreneurs being given he has to inject only 10% of the project cost up front and he also has to benefit from the continuous follow-up of the MBGS staff duration. That is why there has been a change in the scheme, that is why it explains this fact.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to the number of SMEs which closed down in 2010 and 2011 and the number of jobs lost in those two years?

Mr Seetaram: I do not have the information. I will circulate it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm with regard to the amount he has just stated, that is the Rs15 m. concerning the Business Growth Scheme, whether the Rs15 m. have been used only for consultancy services?

Mr Seetaram: The hon. Member can come with a specific question and I will answer it.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, I have been tolerating you for some time now. Could you please keep quiet?

(Interruptions)

No, he can give the advice outside the House.

FOREIGNERS – PROPERTY - PURCHASE

(No. B/834) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the foreigners holding a permanent residence permit who have been allowed to purchase a property in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the categories thereof who will be eligible thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, in accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Act, an investor, a self-employed person or a professional, who is the holder of an occupation permit, may, at the expiry of a period of 3 years of his or her occupation permit, be granted, on application, the status of Permanent Residence provided that during the 3-year period –

- (i) the investor's business activity has generated an annual turnover exceeding Rs15 m.;
- (ii) the self-employed person's annual income has exceeded Rs3 m., and

- (iii) the basic monthly salary drawn by the professional has been at least Rs150,000.

As far as a retired non-citizen is concerned, he or she may, at the end of the expiry period of 3 years of his or her residence permit, apply for a permanent residence permit, if he or she has maintained an annual transfer of US \$ 40,000 or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency into Mauritius during that 3-year period.

I am informed that applicable guidelines and regulations for the issue of Permanent Residence Permits are in the process of being finalised by end December 2011. As such, no Permanent Residence Permit has yet been issued to the above categories of non-citizens.

Furthermore, as I had mentioned in my Budget Speech last Friday, the law would be amended shortly to enable a non-citizen holding a Permanent Residence Permit to purchase an apartment as his or her personal residence, irrespective of the date of construction of the building in which the apartment would be located.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, since land is scarce in Mauritius and even for medium income earners, it has become extremely difficult, because they are facing financial problems, is the hon. Minister aware that this measure will cause utmost hardship to even medium income earners?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member may note that the previous provision in the law which is being amended was very much more comprehensive in that the permanent resident would upon receiving permanent residence be allowed to buy any apartment, any villa, any tenement, etc. Now, the law is being restrictive and I think it is a good compromise whereby we are enticing people to come and contribute to the development of Mauritius, but they are only entitled to purchase an apartment and that apartment needs to be in a block of at least three storeys. I think it is a good compromise.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, even then is the hon. Minister aware that at the cost of attracting FDIs, *le mauricien moyen restera toujours locataire* and those foreigners will have property in Mauritius?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, in respect to *les mauriciens moyens*, the hon. Member must have noticed in the Budget Speech the efforts that are being made to provide virtually tax-free as far as land registration and Land Transfer Tax are concerned to persons buying a house up to Rs2.5 m. As far as her attitude towards FDI is concerned, I note that this is obviously their attitude that has meant that FDI has fallen to a drastic level this year.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister also inform the House whether the exemption to first-time buyers, which is announced in his Speech last Friday, or the exemption from the Land Transfer Tax, which will apply to the promoters, will apply in these cases?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, are we talking about foreign residence or ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Foreign residence.

Mr Duval: It has nothing to do with foreign residence, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the foreigners acquire an apartment, will the promoters of these apartments benefit from the Land Transfer Tax as announced in the Budget?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Land Transfer Tax relates firstly to estates which are being built purposely to be sold to up to Rs2.5 m. This one relates to apartments in blocks or flats. It is not the same thing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm to the House whether there are now more than 1,500 applications lying at the BOI for Permanent Residents to purchase apartments in Mauritius which will cause a flare-up of prices of apartments?

Mr Speaker: I have just said that Members cannot ask the Minister to confirm. The hon. Member can put his question by removing the word 'confirm'.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very surprised at this attitude because firstly, construction has slumped and that is affecting employment and the economy, and nothing was being done about it. One reason, in fact, is to encourage construction. The other reason, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that if we want tomorrow to be like Singapore, we want to be developed, we cannot stay in our little oyster like that, close from everybody and just not doing anything. We do need to make an effort. I hope that is not the position of his party, because we do need to make an effort towards foreign investors, Mr Speaker, Sir. They do need to be made at home in Mauritius and this is a proper compromise, allowing anybody to buy land and also protecting, obviously, the amount of residential land that is in Mauritius. It is a good compromise; it will give a spur to construction and, at the same time, protect Mauritian investors.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether those who have availed themselves of this scheme, either through investment or a job, in which sectors of the economy they have been involved and probably the hon. Minister can circulate this information and their respective nationality also?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will reply, but there are about 500 so far, obviously, this will increase as far as the amount of occupation permits are concerned. They do their three years, and they make the application.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister when are these guidelines expected to come into effect and whether they would apply to only new properties or even existing holders of properties would be able to sell to holders of Permanent Resident Permit.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have replied to both questions but I will give the information again. The guidelines coming from the PMO are expected in December 2011 and then the law has to be changed also concerning the Non-Citizens Property Restriction Act. As far as the apartments are concerned, it is any apartment.

Mr Ganoo: Is this a contradiction to the Cabinet decision which announced the measure indicating that the construction works for the three-storey building in which the apartment is located need to have started after 01 January 2010?

Mr Duval: It is a good point, Mr Speaker, Sir. That decision was amended in a subsequent Cabinet meeting.

CWA – WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

(No. B/835) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the coming dry season, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the steps that will be taken for a good water distribution system.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for giving me the opportunity to inform the House of the present water situation island wide and steps taken accordingly.

Potable water is supplied from three main sources, namely -

Boreholes	:	55%
Impounding reservoirs	:	30%
River abstraction	:	15%

According to the Meteorological Services, the annual mean rainfall over the island has decreased steadily over the years with a change in rainfall pattern. For example, from November 2010 to October 2011 the Mare aux Vacoas catchment has recorded only 66% of the normal rainfall. I am tabling the rainfall data for that period.

As a result, the present storage level of Mare aux Vacoas reservoir is only 29% and the most affected regions are in the Plaines Wilhems, part of Moka and Black River which are being supplied only once daily.

I am tabling information on water supply and the list of measures taken to maintain an adequate supply in the regions of Port Louis, North, East and South of the island.

To address the shortage of water resources in the Mare aux Vacoas system, the Water Resources Unit of my Ministry, the CWA and other stakeholders have taken necessary steps to mobilise additional resources from boreholes, river off takes and small dams.

The following measures have been implemented -

- (i) In January 2011, Mare Longue Reservoir was kept as a strategic storage to the Mare aux Vacoas system. Following an emergency, laying of a new pipeline from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas off take at a total cost of Rs82 m., 25000 m³ of water are being supplied daily as from 12 October 2011 when the stored volume in Mare Longue was 6.16 million m³.
- (ii) Temporary structures built on Rivière du Poste to divert, subject to river flows, some 1500 to 5000 m³ into Mare aux Vacoas reservoir.
- (iii) Water is being pumped from
 - (a) Rivière Sèche and Rivière du Rempart to La Marie Treatment Plant.
 - (b) Rivière Profonde at Verdun, Rivière Terre Rouge and Valetta dam, through mobile pressure filters to partly supplement Mare aux Vacoas system by some 7000 m³/day in the regions of St. Pierre, Alma and Moka.

- (iv) The public is being kept informed of the water situation through the media and the Central Water Authority is intensifying a national campaign on the judicious use of water.
- (v) CWA has also upgraded its hotline service to address complaints and is providing water tanker services in most affected areas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, several projects are being implemented and Rs640 m. have been earmarked for the replacement of old asbestos pipes and these are being implemented this year or next year.

The CWA is anticipating a difficult water supply situation for the next two months when hopefully the dry season will be over. I am therefore making an appeal to the population at large to make judicious use of potable water.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House what is going to happen *si la sècheresse persiste pour encore plusieurs mois?*

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are several approaches to it. The first is economy of water, that we use potable water just for potable uses only, not to wash cars, not to water the garden or the hedges or to clean pavements or anything else. That is the first step. The second step will be to look for additional sources, but several have been mentioned, for example, desalination which is on the coast. The problem today is on the centre of the island. Thirdly, we are looking for other sources of water and redistribution of water from the East or the South into the Mare aux Vacoas system.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know if the Deputy Prime Minister will encourage the selling of toilet water saver kits and shower timer to reduce water usage?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is a very useful measure that we are intending to take, to encourage half flushes or even to go further; the Singaporean team is working on it and we expect a complete change in our approach to water problem.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, being given that in the past - the heart of the problem is Mare aux Vacoas clearly - we believed that there were leaks, supposedly the experts from Singapore said 'no' there are no leaks; then, the theory was deforestation, supposedly, this also has been put aside, has a study been carried out to find out 10 years ago, five years ago, two years ago, how much water was

coming into Mare aux Vacoas and how this has decreased - because of buildings and other developments?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, that point is being addressed as well. As we know, the rainwater goes either underground or flows over ground into rivers. With the constructions around in catchment areas, the pattern of filling of the reservoirs has changed. We are looking into this one as well. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would say that this is a lesson for us to look into our building permits and the land use as we go along.

Mr Bérenger: The public is going through hell in water for years, and now we are told it is being looked into, whether the amount of the water coming through rivers, rivulets and all sorts of ways is now being studied, whether I am right in saying that over 10 years, five years, two years a drastic change has taken place?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am surprised at this comment and this question. The water problem has been with us in different ways, this year has been drastic but, we have had water problem in 2000-2005, we have had water problem in the past. Today, the issue has come up because of this dry season. If we remember in 1999 we also went through it but, this time it's a more prolonged. I would say again, in 1999 we started a programme of private sector operator which was discontinued in 2000 to 2005. The former Minister will confirm this.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the state of feeder canals to Mare aux Vacoas has been looked into? What is presently the state of these feeder canals that have existed for years? Do we still have feeder canals going to Mare aux Vacoas?

Dr. Beebeejaun: The feeder canals are there in good state. Of course, we have the figures of inflow into Mare aux Vacoas and if you look at the figures two years ago, they were quite adequate. It is only this year that the volume has gone down. I will publish the figures of comparative inflow into Mare aux Vacoas for the past five years and you will see that it is related to the pattern of rainfall.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House, whether inhabitants in the north, especially in Grand Bay, are being restricted from drinking water and whether it is not high time to stop the irrigation activity in the north so that the inhabitants can, at least, get the drinking water from La Nicolière reservoir?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I thank the hon. Member for this question. We have looked at it in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, and on and off we have had to release water for irrigation, but we are keeping it to a minimum.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the difficulties encountered by the villagers on the west coast of the island, especially in view of the new migrations of new population in this area, can the hon. Minister give a thought to the possibility of converting La Ferme reservoir to be used for domestic purposes after the water would have been treated so that the sufferings of these villagers would be alleviated by this measure?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are two parts to it, the first is the rehabilitation of the reservoir which is in process and second, more urgently, the question is to get it to a potable level so that people can use it. We are looking into it and it is going to be done. We are concerned about the quality of the water at the moment.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the project of injecting water from Mare Longue to the system of Mare aux Vacoas, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House when the project was commissioned and what is the capacity of water that is being injected daily into the Mare Aux Vacoas system?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I will provide the information when it would be started but for sure, we are getting 25,000 meter cube, I said it in my reply.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, since water is very essential for life, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if he would consider the advisability to request industrial and agricultural users to take the lead in implementing water conservation as a pilot project that can be used by other industrial and agricultural sectors so that he can prioritise the domestic use?

Mr Bhagwan: In view of the alarming situation, is the Deputy Prime Minister at least directing the CWA to reorganise the water tanker service? You have some dedicated officers but, at times, there are problems of communication. We, Members of Parliament, be it on both sides of the House, have to attend to the *doléances du public*, especially when there are cases of pre-arranged wedding and we all know the Mauritian tradition. Is it not high time to reorganise the water tanker service so that these people who urgently need – for various reasons – can have easy and immediate access to the water tanker service?

Dr. Beebeejaun: I have increased the water tanker fleet considerably and we have redirected it in the regions where it is most needed which is in the Mare aux Vacoas region.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a project to build a dam at Rivière du Poste sometimes ago to divert water to Mare aux Vacoas. May we know from the Deputy Prime Minister where matters stand?

Dr. Beebeejaun: It is ongoing, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the moment we are diverting it in a temporary way but it is going to be permanent soon.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister in the actual circumstances what is the state of the situation of boreholes?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad that this question has been raised because we must realise having said to what percentage we depend on boreholes, and boreholes accompany the reservoirs and the river flows, the levels go down as well. A month ago the boreholes were about 90%, today they have considerably reduced to about 60% or less.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the supply of water to the inhabitants of Valetta, from the Valetta dam, I have had representations that the quality of water *laisse beaucoup à désirer* because it is muddy. Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister be so kind enough to look into the matter and probably to see what kind of equipment has been installed for filtration so that we get a better quality of water for these inhabitants?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member, having visited the site last week, that the quality of water is good. It is potable water. The question arises and quite legitimately, from Valetta dam water goes down the stream which is in public view and they look at the water there and they say: is that what we are going to drink? That is not the water that they are going to drink; this water is going to be treated, chlorinated, filtered, quality tested and then supplied. I talked to the inhabitants there and they were happy to be informed that this was the case.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned that a number of pipes have been replaced. May I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as at today what is the percentage of non-revenue water, and non-accountable water that is being wasted?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, figures vary from region to region and it is around 50%, some more, some less but, having said that, we go back to saying that non-revenue water is also commercial losses as well as leakages.

Mr Ganoo: In the past there was talk of imposing on the hotels and the IRS projects the obligation to have their own desalination plants. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us what is the position with regard to that idea?

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have given incentives for desalination, we have changed the tariff for electricity to make it more affordable to have desalination and there are clusters being formed in different parts of the coast to supply water to the different hotels. There are many who are interested in these projects and this is ongoing.

At 12.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

FILM INDUSTRY - PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

(No. B/836) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the film industry, he will state if his Ministry proposes to establish a professional school therefor in Mauritius for the promotion thereof.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the establishment of a professional school for the film industry is being envisaged within the wider Film framework that is being finalised in collaboration with the Board of Investment. This Film Framework provides for a series of incentives, including training, aimed at putting the nascent film industry on a firm footing.

We propose to hold consultations with all stakeholders before implementing the framework.

Ms Anquetil: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister inform the House when his Ministry intends to implement this project?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said we are having the film framework first, and within the film framework, there are many institutions that will come up.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order! Hon. Jhugroo please!

Mr Choonee: *Ena acteur, actrice! chanter tout, zot pu danser tout ladans!* We will start with the film framework. We will have a film commission that will overlook all the

other institutions that will be falling within its purview. The Mauritius Film Development Company, for example, will not have the impact that it is having now. The film commission will be the apex organisation to look after everything. I am sure that the promoters, film producers who are coming to Mauritius will endeavour into the venture of having a school, but that is open for private and everybody is free to run or come up with a school.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware whether in a recent past there was a budget given to the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the promotion of cinema industry and where matters stand? In addition, whether in the same line there would be promotion for playback singers?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know whether it is a joke or a serious question. Anyway, as from 2009, the MFDC has undergone some training. They have trained professionals in the industry. For example, they have had training in acting, script writing and film direction to date. If there is training for playback, I am sure that many members will have their chance.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether a site has been identified for the proposed professional school?

Mr Choonee: Not yet, I just said. The site cannot be identified now.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I know from the hon. Minister what budget has been earmarked for this project?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have the figures earmarked for this particular project, but the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, in his Budget Speech, informed the House and the country at large that this project is on. The Minister of Finance has a team in his ministry looking after each and every project and definitely as and when the time comes, the film project will be taken into consideration.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a follow-up question, if the hon. Minister is saying that the project is on, can we know if there has been an estimate with regard to it, at least, so that the hon. Minister of Finance would know what kind of money has to be catered for this project?

Mr Choonee: Actually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Board of Investment has already worked out everything. We are finalising and soon Cabinet will be informed and we will inform Parliament.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister say – because he just said that he proposes to consult all the stakeholders – who specifically does he have in mind? Whether he has in mind those who are drawing money actually from the Mauritius Film Development Corporation, I mean those who are based in Bombay, and whether they will also form part of this?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have many competent people in this country, many people with talents. Everybody will get his or her chance, but to start with, if we are serious about the school, as this Government is, we will take into consideration the immediate stakeholders working directly with us; the MFDC, the MGI, the RTI, University of Mauritius, UTM and all other stakeholders.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the industry will allow making all types of films?

(Interruptions)

AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN & PEOPLES' RIGHTS – NGOs – COURT ACCESS

(No. B/837) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, following the ratification by Mauritius of the Protocol regarding the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, he will state if Government proposes to introduce legislation in the domestic law with a view to giving effect to the Declaration allowing individuals and Non Governmental Organisations to access the Court.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Establishment of the African Court on Human Rights was adopted by the 34th Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU (then OAU) held in Burkina Faso in June 1998.

Mauritius signed the Protocol on 09 June 1998 and ratified same on 03 March 2003. The Protocol entered into force on 25 January 2004.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights reaffirms adherence to the principles of Human and People's Rights, freedoms and duties contained in the declarations,

conventions and other instruments adopted by the Organisation of African Unity, and other international organisations.

For the attainment of the objectives of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Protocol allows for the establishment of an African Court on Human and People's Rights to complement and reinforce the functions of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

Under Article 5 of the Protocol, the entities that can make submissions of cases before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (hereafter referred to as "the Court") are -

- the African Commission;
- any State Party (either as Applicant or Respondent);
- any State Party whose citizen is a victim of a human rights violation, and
- African Intergovernmental Organisations.

The Court does not provide for the direct right of individual petition. Individual and organisations that have observer status before the African Human Rights Commission acquire standing before the Court only after a State Party delivers a specific declaration at the time of ratification or any time thereafter, recognising their capacity to do so, as provided for under Article 34 (6) of the Protocol.

The Protocol specifically prohibits the Court from receiving petitions in the absence of such a declaration. So far, only five countries out of 54, namely Ghana, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali and Tanzania have made such declarations.

Therefore, in the absence of any declaration made by Mauritius at the time of ratification of the Protocol, there is no need to introduce legislation in our domestic law for such purposes. As matters stand, in relation to Mauritius, the Court cannot entertain any application from Non-Governmental Organisations and individuals to access the Court.

The matter of whether or not Mauritius should make a declaration permitting individuals and Non-Governmental Organisations access before the Court is a policy decision. The policy implications of the making of the Declaration would have to be carefully examined and Cabinet approval be sought before taking a decision in this matter.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just said that human rights NGOs can appeal to the Court directly.

Dr. A. Boolell: No, that is not what I said. It's unless and until the country concerned has made a declaration to that effect at the time of ratification or thereafter.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we know whether Mauritius does intend to make a declaration to that effect, so that NGOs can apply directly to the Court?

Dr. A. Boolell: No.

Mr Baloomoody: As we are talking of human rights, can I ask the hon. Minister whether, within the spirit of the African Court Human Rights Charter, he will see to it that national human rights NGOs or international human rights NGOs do get access to prison to interview prisoners who feel that their basic human rights are being infringed?

The Deputy Speaker: You have a question on that specifically.

Dr. A. Boolell: Yes, whether the aggrieved can seek redress.

Mr Obeegadoo: I, therefore, understand that, unless and until there is such a declaration, as mentioned by the hon. Minister, this protocol to all intents and purposes is ineffective for Mauritius. May we know, since this protocol was ratified by Mauritius in 2003 - eight long years ago - what is the reason why Government is not envisaging such a declaration?

Dr. A. Boolell: This is a matter of interpretation of the hon. Member. In fact, in Mauritius, we need to exhaust all the legal avenues and extra judicial avenues. We can have recourse to the Court, to the Ombudsperson Office, to the National Human Rights Commission. Now that Government has introduced the Equal Opportunities Commission, once the law is enacted, whoever feels aggrieved - if there is a complaint that he is aggrieved - he or she can seek recourse to the appropriate body. Having said so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a State party, we can submit, in the name of the aggrieved person, the case concerned before the Court. Besides, let me also remind the House that one of the elected members to the Court is no other than Chief Justice Sik Yuen.

SAUDI ARABIA - EMBASSY – SETTING UP

(No. B/838) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, there is a recurrent pattern in the timing of this Parliamentary Question. Let me thank, therefore, hon. Ameer Meea for reverting to this issue of Mauritian diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia, which, no doubt, reflects his strong interest in the furtherance of our bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia - an interest which we all equally share and support.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, the Assembly is fully aware of the unprecedented revolutionary wave of demonstrations and social protests occurring in the Arab world since the beginning of the year. The so-called “Arab Spring” is transforming an already complex political landscape in the Middle East and Northern Africa. These tumultuous events have a bearing on the pursuit of our foreign policy objectives. My Ministry is, therefore, fully engaged in assessing the implications of this ongoing transformation in the light of our key national interests.

An important national interest, in this regard, is our special and close ties with Saudi Arabia, a country with which we want to deepen and expand our relationships. We want to do so not only because Saudi Arabia is a recognised leader and a powerful stabilising factor in the Arab world, but also, and more importantly, because our cultural and religious affinities constitute a vast untapped potential for meaningful engagement in mutually beneficial cooperation and partnership activities in many areas, including trade, investment and cultural exchanges.

In this respect, a joint working session at senior officials’ level was held in April this year in Riyadh on concluding a General Framework Agreement on Cooperation between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia. The draft Agreement has been finalised, and we hope to have it signed in a very near future in the context of a high-level visit to either Saudi Arabia or to Mauritius. The signature of this Agreement will certainly be a historically important milestone in the relations between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia.

As regards diplomatic presence, Saudi Arabia is represented in Mauritius by the Saudi Embassy based in Pretoria, and so is Mauritius in Saudi Arabia by our Embassy in Cairo. Our new Ambassador in Cairo, H. E. Mr I. Fakim, will present his credentials to His Majesty Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia and the Guardian of the Two Holy Mosques, as soon as all necessary diplomatic formalities are completed. Moreover, as we indicated last year, Government appointed in July 2008 an Honorary Consul, Professor Hashim Mohammed Ali Hussain Mahdi, based in Jeddah.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a fast changing international environment, with new emerging economic poles, Riyadh remains one of the many capital cities where we would like to open a Resident Embassy to elevate our diplomatic presence and put our bilateral interactions on firmer ground.

However, in a challenging context of budgetary constraints, arising mainly from the prevailing economic situation internationally and the looming recession in the Euro zone, we are duty bound to prioritize our actions and put on hold part of our planned activities aimed at extending our diplomatic outreach. Nevertheless, we will continue to remain seized of the matter and as and when the circumstances so permit, we will, in consultation with the hon. Prime Minister, favourably consider the establishment of a diplomatic mission in these capital cities, including Riyadh, in the light of our priorities.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the idea of opening a Mauritian Embassy in Saudi Arabia has long been on the cards. It has been discussed in this House since 2007, 2008 by hon. Reza Issack and, last year, at the same period of the year, that is, in November, by me. In reply to my past PQ No. B/604, the hon. Minister stated, and I quote -

‘In fact, the Deputy Prime Minister will travel to Saudi Arabia, and afterwards the Prime Minister will do so’.

Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand in relation to the proposed travel?

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, matters stand where they are.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I can report progress.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr. A. Boolell: We have given a firm undertaking that when the environment is conducive there is undertaking, there is a standing invitation, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs will make the visit.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister does not seem to take this matter seriously. May I remind him that this has been...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: This has been a political incentive during the last general election in the Constituency No. 3....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No! The hon. Member should put his question, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: This has been a political incentive. *Il y a eu une promesse électorale qui a été faite à la Plaine Verte l'année dernière durant les élections.* Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of this promise that has been made last year during the last election?

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when it comes to establishing diplomatic ties and enhancing our ties with friendly Arab countries, Mauritius has made its mark on the international scene in respect of our intervention to defend countries like Palestine.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when it comes to the specific question, I have stated in no uncertain terms that the visit will be made when the time is most opportune.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, replying to a PQ, the hon. Minister at a time when there was no Arabian spring, stated in no uncertain terms that opening an Embassy in Saudi Arabia was not a priority of this Government. I would like to know from the...

(Interruptions)

Dr. A. Boolell: If the hon. Member would give way. We never said it was not a priority of the Government. We said under the difficult circumstances we had to look at our priority.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Member finish his question and then the hon. Minister can reply. The hon. Member is not giving way.

Mr Uteem: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, being given that Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are such important issues for the Muslim community and year after year, we have problems of visas, we have all types of problems, will he transfer a message to the Government that this be a priority of the Government that an Embassy be opened in Saudi Arabia to facilitate all the exchange, not only the religious exchanges but also the cultural and trade exchanges between the two nations?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, now the hon. Minister can answer!

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't understand why my hon. friend is so sensitive on an issue which this Government is taking excellent care of. I don't have to refer to the good work being carried out by the Islamic Cultural Centre. There are Ministers on this side of the Government...

(Interruptions)

On the side of Government who stand for what they believe to be the cause which is worth fighting for and we have no lessons to learn from anybody on the other side. We assume our responsibilities fully and we are delivering on promises made to any community for that matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister stated that it is a question of priority and budget constraint. Can I ask the hon. Minister when does he feel that the budget will allow such a thing to happen? Because this has been always the answer that given since 2007: "It's a question of budget constraint".

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't want our friend to walk down memory lane, but he should recall that nothing was made from 2000 to 2005. We have been proactive and we have done a lot. If my friend wants to play politics on this sensitive issue, he assumes his responsibility fully; we have no lessons to learn from him.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Dr. A. Boolell: Don't try! We know the kind of vicious campaigns they wage outside this House on this issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! In addition, we know what they do. I do not have to talk with my tongue in the cheek. We know the kind of campaign you constantly wage on this issue.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Soodhun! Last question!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! I urge hon. Members to...

(Interruptions)

No cross-talking, please! Yes, Hon. Soodhun! Order!

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many times the high delegation decided to visit Saudi Arabia and how many times has it been postponed?

Dr. A. Boolell: Only once.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer!

Dr. A. Boolell: I am in touch with our High Commissioner in Pretoria because the decision is taken through the Ambassador.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! No cross talking, please!

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said, the decision for a high official visit to take place and when we hike it up to the highest political level, it's not a task that can happen overnight.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking!

Dr. A. Boolell: It demands a lot of preparation. As I have said, there is a standing invitation. We have agreed to respond positively but we need our friends also to reciprocate. Under the difficult circumstances, they are taking the time and we have impressed upon them. As and when the time is appropriate, the visit will take place. I cannot understand why there is a lot of hurly-burly on this issue.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

Dr. A. Boolell: Let me make it quite clear. When it comes to consolidating national unity and when it comes to standing and defending the rights of minorities or for that matter any member of the community in this country, we have no lessons to learn from those who wage communal campaigns, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

That is what they stand for, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! This is what happened. This is what they are doing outside.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have been caught with the pants down with the Budget presented by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

No, please, don't be provocative. Hon. Dr. Boolell, please, you take your seat! Hon. Dr. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members! I urge all hon. Members from both sides of the House once again, I will take action if there is no order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I'll now call for the next question! Hon. François!

AGALEGA - RESIDENTIAL LEASES

(No. B/839) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the natives of Agalega, he will state if residential leases have been delivered thereto, over the past ten years and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) number thereof;
- (b) eligibility criteria therefor, and
- (c) conditions attached thereto, and if not, why not.

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

According to the records during the past ten years, 59 Agaleans have been allocated building site leases for residential purposes...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am suspending!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Mohamed and hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

I urge all hon. Members! Hon. Mohamed and hon. Ameer Meea, I am calling both of you to order! Hon. Bundhoo, it is your last warning! When I need help, I will call upon you and for the time being I know what I have to do.

Mr Faugoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shall I continue or start again?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, start again!

Mr Faugoo: With your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, I shall reply to this question. According to records, during the past ten years, 59 Agaleans have been allocated building site leases for residential purposes over the plot they were respectively occupying in Agalega.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the building site leases were granted to Agalean families who were employees of the...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking!

Mr Faugoo: ...Outer Islands Development Corporation and were occupying the quarters...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please!

Mr Faugoo: ...built by the Corporation over the land. Recommendations to that effect have been made by the Outer Islands Development Corporation.

As regards part (c), besides the usual terms and conditions applicable to all building site leases, the following specific conditions were included in the lease agreements to cater for the peculiarity of the Agalean Islands -

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am still hearing voices!

(Interruptions)

Yes, please! I have eyes also!

Mr Faugoo:

- (a) The building site leases are for a period of nineteen and a fraction years as from 09 April 2008 to expire on 30 June 2027 and include the building standing on the land;
- (b) The rental is at the rate of Rs1,000 per annum;
- (c) Repair and maintenance of the houses standing on the land leased is the responsibility of the lessees;
- (d) The lessees, except the pensioners, have to continue to contribute towards the cost of electricity supply;
- (e) The lessees may insure the buildings and structures erected on the land against cyclones;
- (f) The buildings should not exceed 2 floors (Ground+1) and a height of 10m from ground level to the ridge of the pitched roof, and
- (g) Any modification or addition to existing buildings or construction of any new structure should receive the prior approval of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Outer Islands Development Corporation.

Mr François: According to information I have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it looks like there are about 20 families living in Agalega who are waiting to have a land lease. Will the hon. Minister inform the House if this is correct or not?

Mr Faugoo: It is factually not correct, I presume, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I understand, apart from the 59 families, there are some 10 families who are waiting to be given a lease for building site.

Mr François: Will the hon. Minister inform the House how long it takes for the processing of a State land lease for Agaleans?

Mr Faugoo: There is no hard and fast rule. It depends on the circumstances, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, next question!

RODRIGUES – SCHOOLS – *KREOL MORISIEN*

(No. B/840) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of the Mauritian Kreol in schools, in Rodrigues, he will state if consultations have been carried out with the local authority and the stakeholders, and if so, indicate –

- (a) when;
- (b) the outcome thereof, and
- (c) if Government will consider reviewing this decision, in view of the specificity and cultural differences in Rodrigues.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply to Parliamentary Question 1B/659 on 23 November 2010, I had informed the house that in the context of the implementation of the decision to introduce Kreol Morisien in Std I in schools as from January 2012, my Ministry has embarked on a process of consultation at different stages with a wide range of stakeholders including Rodrigues.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that a National Forum was organised on 30 August 2010 and participation did include a representative of the Rodrigues Commission for Education.

Following the recommendations made at the level of that Forum, Government agreed to the setting up of the Akademi Kreol Morisien (AKM) administratively to look into the implementation of the decision to introduce Kreol Morisien in January 2012.

The Akademi Kreol Morisien (AKM) includes *inter alia* a representative of the Rodrigues Education Commission who has been attending the meetings of the AKM held on 27 October 2010, 10 November 2010, 16 December 2010 and 19 October 2011 respectively.

In the context of the admission of pupils in Standard I in 2012, an exercise was carried out in April/May 2011 and schools in Rodrigues were also taken on board in that exercise respectively in relation to those opting for ‘Kreol Morisien’. I am advised that some 384 pupils to be admitted in 14 schools in Rodrigues in 2012 have opted for Kreol Morisien as an optional subject.

With regard to training of teachers who will be teaching Kreol Morisien, consultation was held with stakeholders in Rodrigues in May 2011, following which arrangements were

made for 13 of them who opted to teach Kreol Morisien to attend training at the MIE, for the period August to November 2011. It is on, until the end of November of this year.

As for the curriculum part, phonetic and lexical variants specific to Rodrigues have been identified which are taken into consideration in the curriculum material and training sessions.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to highlight that I had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Education, Mr Jabeemissar, on Tuesday 18 October 2011 with regard to the issue of specificity and cultural differences of Rodrigues in the context of the introduction of the Kreol Morisien. We agreed that my Ministry, the MIE and the AKM should take on board these issues relating to phonetic and lexical variants specific to Rodrigues and further consultations are being programmed with other stakeholders in Rodrigues in November/December this year.

During the discussions, it was also pointed out that proposals will be made for the next edition of Diksioner Morisien to be enriched further to cover expressions drawn from rich and colourful kreol varieties of Rodrigues as well as of Outer islands.

Mr François: If I followed the answer of the hon. Minister well, that brings more confusion to my mind - with due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me - we are not against the introduction of Kreol in schools. However, is the hon. Minister aware that in Rodrigues - and I will quote - even the Chief Commissioner himself is contesting and opposing the proposal to introduce - maybe it is technical - the Mauritian Kreol in schools which is now being considered as a threat to our cultural identity and the fundamental rights for the people of Rodrigues instead of talking about the introduction of *Kreol Rodriguais*.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am not agreeable to what I am hearing. I would have to look into the matter that is raised by the hon. Member concerning the Commissioner for Rodrigues. I must say that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has set a dedicated Committee to contribute to this work and the work is still going on. One thing I can give the assurance to the House is that we are going to take on board all the specificities concerned with the Kreol that Rodriguans speak *kreol morisien*, the type of Rodriguais Kreol that they speak. This will be taken on board; in fact, in the preparation of materials, etc. we are working only for Standard I. We have all our time to include all that is being said. If the hon. Member has got expert opinion from Rodrigues, expert people who have their contribution, they can make, I am open to that and I will listen to what they have to say.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a manifest unease in Rodrigues concerning this issue. I have no reason to doubt the hon. Minister's work concerning past consultations, but, because this is such an important issue and we need to have consensus to move forward, will he, in a spirit of compromise and dialogue, agree to initiate a new ground of consultations involving civil society in Rodrigues and whoever else has an interest in this debate so that, as a nation, we can move together as one on this important issue.

Dr. Bunwaree: I have no quarrel on that. In fact, I invited all stakeholders, those who came forward did. I am going to look into the matter. In fact, discussions are still on.

Mr François: Just to point out a bit further. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the functionality of the introduction of Mauritian Kreol will not meet its main objectives. I have in hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a sort of draft book of the *kreol morisien*, Standard I. Allow me, to quote just one line.

The Deputy Speaker: I think it is better that the hon. Member makes representation to the hon. Minister if he has any.

Mr François: In that case, I will request seriously the hon. Minister to reconsider urgently the position with regard to the introduction of the *Kreol Morisien* and to make sure that there is proper consultation not only with the Chief Commissioner and the Commission of Education, but with all the stakeholders in Rodrigues, because there is a lot of confusion and there is this feeling of setback with regard to our cultural identity and emotional attachments to our mother tongues and our land.

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't think there is any need to have any confusion. In fact, we have 13 educators from Rodrigues who have opted to come and to follow the training sessions at the MIE. They have been very efficient contributors, but there are other stakeholders, of course, and we will take on board what has been proposed in this House. I am sure that we are going to do a very good work for the *Kreol Morisien* for Rodriguans.

The Deputy Speaker: A very last question!

Mr François: With regard to these educators at MIE, in fact, I will request the hon. Minister to make sure to discuss with them, because they have just been called to follow the courses and they are not fully agreeable to follow these courses. I will request the hon. Minister to see to it with these 13 educators at MIE, because, as I have said, there is a lot of confusion here and in Rodrigues also.

Dr. Bunwaree: I think for them the confusion was at the start and this confusion has been cleared, but I will try to meet them again.

R.S. FASHION LTD. AND R.S. DENIM LTD – SIC - MONEY INVESTED

(No. B/841) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to R.S. Fashion Ltd. and R.S. Denim Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to the -

- (a) amount of money invested directly or indirectly therein by the Corporation, indicating the -
 - (i) portion relating to equity and debt; and
 - (ii) programme under which such investments were made, and
- (b) amount of profit or loss made by the Corporation in respect thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the comprehensive information asked for in respect of R.S. Fashion Ltd. and R.S. Denim Ltd is being tabled.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether in respect to investment in R.S. Fashion Ltd, there has been any additional investment by way of loan, equity or whatever other mode of financing in 2011?

Mr Duval: I don't have the dates. I have a total situation. I am not aware whether this year there were. The hon. Member can have comprehensive information as to what the original investment was, how much was spent on ARCP and how much is expected to be recovered.

Mr Uteem: I insist on this matter because, according to the last audited accounts of R.S. Fashion Ltd, it is clearly stated that the company has an accumulated loss of over Rs169 m. and there is serious doubt whether R.S. Fashion Ltd is a going concern. In these circumstances, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if any additional grant was given and on what basis that was given?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that I am not sure. I am looking at this and I can't see any investments in 2011.

NTC - SECOND HAND BUS ENGINES & SPARE PARTS

(No. B/842) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if, since 2008 to-date

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- (a) second hand bus engines have been bought locally and, if so, from whom and the reasons therefor, and
- (b) new spare parts for buses have been bought locally and, if so, indicate -
 - (i) the total cost thereof bought from each supplier, on a yearly basis, and
 - (ii) if same were genuine and, if not, if they were labelled with the country of origin.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Corporation that second hand engines have been bought locally, as follows -

- In 2008, 10 engines were bought from SAI WAN
- In 2009, 4 engines were bought from SAI WAN
- In 2010: a total of 24 engines were purchased, 16 of which from Fast Parts Ltd, 4 from Sai Wan, 2 from Seebaluck Ltd, 1 from ACC Ltd, and 1 from Atawoo Ltd
- In 2011, 10 engines have been purchased namely: 3 from Ramlochun Brothers Ltd, 3 from Fast Parts Ltd, 3 from Atawoo Virak Trading, and 1 from S. Mungur Ltd

The NTC has been purchasing second hand engines since year 2000 from the local market due to the following reasons -

- (i) scarcity or unavailability of spare parts on the local market;

- (ii) inordinate delays in the supply of spare parts from overseas, resulting in buses remaining grounded for months;
- (iii) outdated models of buses;
- (iv) economical reasonableness of fitting second hand engines in old buses, and
- (v) the prohibitive cost of procuring brand new major components required for the reconditioning of failed engines such as crankshafts and engine blocks.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am tabling the list of suppliers from whom spare parts were purchased and the amount paid to each supplier.

I am informed that in most cases, the spare parts procured by the NTC are from licensed dealers, not the original chassis manufacturer. The spare parts are selected after physical, visual and dimensional checks are carried out to ascertain that they are brand new and fit for purpose. All spare parts are supplied in containers or boxes where, in general, the make, model and country of origin are printed.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister, whether there has been any tender or quotation exercise for the purchases?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, for all purchases, quotations are sought and tender exercises are conducted. I am also submitting a list of all registered potential suppliers. There are more than 100.

CEB - GENERAL MANAGER - POST

(No. B/843) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the post of General Manager, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if same was advertised and, if not, why not.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that in July 2011, the Central Electricity Board considered advertising the post of General Manager, which had become vacant.

However, on 28 September 2011, the CEB Board considered that the performance and output of Mr S.K. Thannoo, who was acting as Officer in Charge since November 2010, was

up to the expected level and decided to appoint him as General Manager on contract for a period of three years as recommended by the Appanah report.

Mr Thannoo holds a first class Honours degree with a Gold Medal Award in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Mauritius and also holds a Masters in Business Administration. He has 26 years of experience at CEB and satisfies both the qualifications and experience criteria for the post.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister why then did he, when replying to a Parliamentary Question on 12 July 2011, give the total assurance to the House that there would be international calls for candidates to that post?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, I did and it was the Board that had decided then about the course of action but, subsequently, they changed their mind.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know from hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the representatives of Government on the Board - and there is a majority of them - got directives from himself or any other Government quoter to take that line of action?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Board presented the motion, it was adopted. There was no question of anybody receiving directives.

Mr Bérenger: Should I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether his memory serves him well enough to remember that a few years back when questions were put concerning the appointment of a new General Manager and Mr Dabeedin was appointed, we protested in the same way, he stood up and said exactly the same thing that he has said today concerning the new gentleman. He said exactly the same thing concerning Mr Dabeedin and we know what happened afterwards. Why has not this *précédent* been taken into consideration?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr Dabeedin was not a *précédent*. Since 1995, there have been five appointments without advertisement. Five!

(Interruptions)

His contract came to term on 2010. For sure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the contract of Mr Dabeedin came to an end and was not renewed.

Mr Bérenger: He was suspended.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as stated, the recruitment of the former GM of the CEB was a subject matter of a PNQ in this House and the actual Deputy Prime Minister replied that the former GM had an outstanding track record and qualifications. This is the case for most engineers in the CEB. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether, the present General Manager has been recruited on some especial criteria or whether it is job for the boys?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I think the criteria that I have outlined speak for themselves. He is a Gold Medalist, first class Honours, 36 years of service!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state to the House for what reasons the Board has changed its mind not to resort to an international invitation for this post?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my reply, I underlined the reasons. His performance, since he has been appointed, was considered good. he was appointed.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether this gentleman who has been appointed, has been given a probation period or his contract is a firm contract?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, subject to satisfactory performance!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Since there is going to be a new principle that if Government is satisfied with the performance of an employee, then no invitation would be requested for jobs?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I have underlined that since 1995, five appointments have been made without invitation including one in 2003 and one in 2004.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

WASTEWATER TARIFFS

(No. B/844) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the wastewater tariffs, he will, for the benefit of the House obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if it is proposed to have same indexed to the increase of water tariffs, as from January 2012.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Wastewater Management of Authority Board has approved an average increase of 35% in wastewater charges, to be effective from 01 January 2012.

Out of 54,000 billed domestic consumers, connected to the sewer, 19,000 having water consumption not exceeding 10m³ are exempted from this increase.

Wastewater charges are based on metered consumption of potable water supplied by the CWA.

A tariff expert funded by the European Investment Bank carried out a review of the tariffs in 2010 and observed that, I quote: ‘the tariff for wastewater services is simple and transparent’, and he continues: ‘wastewater services are more expensive than water supply which is not sufficiently understood and accepted by a number of customers’. That is his comment.

I wish to inform the House that in July 2011, the Singapore Corporation Enterprise in collaboration with the Singapore Public Utilities Board has been awarded a contract to review the water sector. The study includes the rationalisation of water and wastewater tariffs. The report of the Singapore expert is expected in early 2012.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister how he reconciles the fact that wastewater, which is not metered, is indexed on the price of water that we are using. We know he has replied earlier that 50% of that water is wasted and now we are going to pay 35% increase on water tariff which is wasted through our pipes and again 35% of wastewater which is indexed on the price of water which is also being raised.

Dr. Beebeejaun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has it wrong. It has nothing to do with nonrevenue water, it is water used. I am surprised by this question.

(No. B/845) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation, he will state the –

- (a) number of people employed since its setting up and the number of employees currently in employment thereat;
- (b) details of the sources of funding thereof, and
- (c) outcome of the activities carried out thereat as at to-date.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation was set up in September 2007 and at that time there was no one employed thereat. To enable the Foundation to start its operations, in February 2008, one officer from AREU was seconded by my Ministry to the Foundation to act as officer-in-charge. In July 2008, a clerical officer from my Ministry was seconded thereat to assist the officer-in-charge.

It is only as from May 2008 that the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation started recruiting employees. As at to date there are 11 officers currently employed on a contract basis by the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation.

As regards part (b) of the question, to enable the Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation to operate, a sum of Rs16.32 m. from the National Parks and Conservation Fund of my Ministry has so far been allocated to the Foundation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Foundation needs to set up some basic amenities to operate in an effective manner and to derive revenue to make it self-financing. In this context, funds for capital costs were applied for from the Maurice Ile Durable Fund in March 2010. Indeed the MID Fund recommended an allocation of Rs50 m. for the capital projects. Unfortunately, this Fund was not released by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and consequently no capital works could be undertaken. Nevertheless, the Operating (recurrent) expenses were being met from the National Parks and Conservation Fund. Given that this Fund is now almost depleted, a request was again made in year 2010 to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for funds to be made available in the Budget so as to enable the foundation to meet its recurrent expenses. These requests were again unfortunately turned down.

As at to date the following activities have been carried out by the foundation –

- a) a master plan has been prepared for the development of the endemic garden;

- b) an interim inventory of the native species within the Vallée has been undertaken and the findings published in a booklet in 2008;
- c) publication of an interim inventory of native plants within the Vallée in 2009;
- d) publication of an interim inventory of fauna within the Vallée in 2011, that is this year;
- e) 2.5 km of trails within the Vallée have been cleared and are being maintained;
- f) 1 ha of Conservation Management Areas has been created, and
- g) some 2000 native plantlets have been potted for re-planting in the degraded areas of the Vallée.

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Will the Minister inform the House whether he is aware that there are some eight employees who have been affected to that Foundation since 2008 and they have been working on a month to month basis contractual employment? Can the hon. Minister see to it that these people keep on working on a month-to-month basis given that they do not have any increment; they don't have allowance for leave and all that? Does the Minister intend to correct the situation for those employees? It is four years now and they are still on a contract basis.

Mr Faugoo: As I said in my answer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the financial situation of the Foundation was so precarious. There was a request made to the Ministry of Finance in 2010 with a view to put these contract employees on establishment but there was no fund given. We have to establish the financial status of the Foundation so that we can consider these issues, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Minister is saying that funds were not available, but I have just been looking at the annual report which has been circulated. For the last two years up to June 2009, for both years that it has been published, we have seen surpluses of over Rs500,000. I do not see that fund is limited in terms of payment to those employees that have been in employment since 2008. It is clearly said here that there are surpluses and that there is money available, at least, to get those people paid and put on the establishment for their own benefit.

Mr Faugoo: As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a problem of finance. We are going to do the needful. We can employ them today, give them all the benefits, but we have to look at the long run. If we do that today, we will have to close the Foundation in one year's

time. We have a choice to make. We are carrying on with the business from the Conservation Fund as I said. There was a capital project. It was approved by the MID Fund and funds were not given by the Ministry of Finance last year. They are still carrying on with the limited funds that they have from the Conservation Fund. As I said, they are still on contract, good for them but we are going to consider if these people can be put on establishment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provided we get funds from the Ministry of Finance.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

DR. A. G. JEETOO HOSPITAL – HOSPITAL CARE ATTENDANTS – OVERTIME

(No. B/846) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Hospital Care Attendants posted at the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state if the latter have received the payment for overtime work performed over the past three years and, if not, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) if steps will be taken for the payment thereof.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following allegations of fraud and malpractices as early as 2009 in respect of excessive payments of overtime to certain categories of staff at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, the Internal Control Unit of my Ministry initiated an enquiry on the request of the then Minister on the matter. Several attendance registers were thus retained for the purpose of this enquiry. Consequently, payments of several overtime bills were withheld.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, soon after assuming office, I effected a site visit on 05 September this year at the same hospital and I raised concerns about the non-payment of overtime to Hospital Care Attendants. Subsequently, I had a meeting with senior officers of my Ministry with a view to remedy the situation at the earliest possible.

I am now informed that all overtime claims for the year 2008 have been paid. As regards the claims for years 2009 and 2010, most of them have been settled and arrangements are being made to settle the remaining ones by the end of this financial year.

I can assure the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir that I am personally looking into the matter since it has been raised with me during my visit both at the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital and other places.

SABLE NOIR PUBLIC BEACH – EXTENSION

(No. B/847) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Sable Noir public beach, he will state if consideration will be given for the extension thereof to the north side direction by annexing the plot of land adjacent thereto.

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

According to records, the plot of land being referred to by the hon. Member is uncommitted and is currently being used by the members of the public as an open space.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands is already giving consideration to a request to proclaim this site as public beach. There was a correspondence which has emanated from the Ministry of Local Government and we are considering seriously proclaiming this place as public beach.

Mr Barbier: May I know whether there is any time frame for the implementation of the project?

Mr Faugoo: There is no time frame, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

FESTIVAL KREOL 2011 – BUDGET EARMARKED

(No. B/848) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the celebration of the Festival Kreol 2011, he will state-

- (a) the budget earmarked therefor;
- (b) the names of the service providers therefor;
- (c) if tenders or quotation procedures have been launched to that effect, and
- (d) if local authorities and parastatal bodies have been requested to contribute to the financing thereof.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the context of the organisation of the 6th Edition of the Festival International Kreol, a Steering Committee under my

chairmanship has been set up to work on the proposed programme and the Budget implication.

Once the activities together with the sources of funding would have been finalised, my Ministry will embark on the organisational arrangements in accordance with the established procedures obtainable in the public service.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que je dois comprendre qu'il n'y a aucun budget qui a été voté à cet effet ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: On travaille là-dessus.

TOP RESA EVENT, PARIS – MAURITIAN DELEGATION

(No. B/849) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the last edition of TOP RESA held in France, he will state the composition of the Mauritian delegation which attended thereto, indicating the –

- (a) total cost of the mission, and
- (b) amount of *per diem* and other benefits paid to each member of the delegation.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the official Mauritian delegation which I headed to the TOP RESA Event in Paris in September, this year, consisted of my Permanent Secretary, the Chairman and the Director of the MTPA as well as the Tourism Promotion Officer, responsible for the French market. Some 30 stakeholders of the Mauritian Tourism Industry, including hotel groups and airlines companies as well as a local entertainment group also participated in the event.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the total cost of the mission in respect of the official delegation amounted to Rs861,307.68.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that each member of the official delegation was paid allowances in accordance with the approved rates.

STC – BETAMAX LTD – CHARTERING CONTRACT

(No. B/850) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the chartering contract with Betamax Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the –

- (a) daily freight charge, indicating if the charge is paid irrespective of the amount of oil transported;
- (b) amount of port dues, taxes and bunkering in respect of each trip effected by the tanker, and
- (c) cost of demurrage per day.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the contract agreement between the State Trading Corporation (STC) and Betamax Ltd. contains a confidentiality clause which, *inter-alia*, stipulates that, I quote –

“neither party shall issue or cause the publication of any press release or other public announcement in relation to the Vessel or the Agreement without the prior approval of the other party”.

The other party has been approached by my Ministry and they have, exercising their rights, indicated, I quote –

“Betamax Ltd. does not authorise the disclosure of information pertaining to the contract of affreightment”.

However, in a spirit of transparency and good governance, I am informing the House as follows that the STC does not pay freight charges on a daily basis.

The contract with Betamax Ltd. provides for an aggregate freight in a contract year during which some 16 round trips are undertaken. The freight charges comprise bunker cost and port dues. Freight is payable on a trip basis for a total quantity of about 64,000 tonnes.

I am also advised that in general terms the freight charges payable today are no less favourable than what was previously obtained. Any variation is accounted for by firstly, a quasi- doubling in the price of bunker between 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 and, secondly, the sub-optimal usage of the tanker capacity to carry a contracted load of about 64,000 tonnes owing to draft restrictions at the New Oil Jetty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, fluctuations in bunker price are beyond the control of both parties. The House may wish to note that whilst the price of bunker in 2008-2009 was around USD 401 per metric tonne, it shot up to USD 743 per metric tonne in 2010-2011. Moreover, I am informed that, when dredging works are completed at the New Oil Jetty, STC shall be able to avail of the full tanker capacity, thereby reducing the actual freight charge per tonne. In this respect, my Ministry has received a written undertaking from Betamax Ltd. that it will offset the amount short-shipped once the dredging works are completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of part (b) of the question, with your permission, I am tabling the information sought. It is to be noted that taxes are not payable for this purpose by the STC.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the cost of demurrage is USD 42,500 per day on a pro-rata basis.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the freight payable to Betamax annually is irrespective of the number of trips, it is a fixed fee that has to be paid, whether it is 16 trips, whether it is 10, whether it is one trip?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I said in my answer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that freight is payable on a trip basis for a total quantity of about Rs64,000 tonnes.

Mr Uteem: This does not answer the question. The question was: are the fees payable irrespective of the number of trips?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I still repeat. I said freight is payable on a trip basis.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that there is a demurrage fee payable of 42,500 dollar per day. May I know from the hon. Minister with respect to the trips that have been undertaken by the boat supplied by Betamax, has there been any demurrage fee payable and, if so, why?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Yes, there has been, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do have that information. Demurrage fees paid to Betamax over the last six voyages amount to USD204,236.11. Why? Demurrage, of course, is paid when the ship is immobilised for any reason and that demurrage can be either in Mangalore, where we have a contract with Mangalore Refineries, with MRPL, that in case – one minute I will explain that. We have an agreement, a written contract with MRPL that when the ship nears Mangalore, a notice is

given that the ship is nearing and space is provided for the ship to come and take delivery of the products. There is a minimum delay which is available to Mangalore to provide that space and in case that delay is expired, then Mangalore takes charge of that demurrage. Of course, it does happen also that demurrage is payable in Mauritius when discharging of the products from the vessel goes beyond a certain time which is agreed on contract.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned about bunkering fee which is to be added to the fees payable to Betamax. May I know from the hon. Minister, on average, what is the bunker cost that has to be added to the 1.1 million dollar that is paid per voyage?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: In the paper that I have tabled, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is indicated roughly, apart from the first voyage of the Red Eagle, the first trip which was on 27 May 2011, the bunker cost was US\$327,000; for the five others, that is from June 2011 to September 2011, the average is around US\$552,000, but you have the precise figures from the Table that I have given.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister made reference to a confidentiality clause in the chartering contract between Betamax and the State Trading Corporation, may I ask him whether this chartering contract as a whole, but more particularly the confidential clause contained therein was cleared by the State Law Office?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot answer this question for certain, but I am confident.

(Interruptions)

Of course, if a substantive question is asked to that effect, I will check and revert to the House. I am confident that this contract was cleared with the State Law Office. The confidentiality clause being what it is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to respect that confidentiality clause.

Mr Bérenger: Which is which? The hon. Minister says that he does not know, that he must check, and then he says he is confident. Is he definitely telling the House that this chartering contract between Betamax and STC, including its confidentiality clause, was cleared by the State Law Office?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Virahsawmy, please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I was not in office when this was done, and so I cannot say for certain. I said firstly that I am confident that this was the case and, secondly, if a substantive question is asked to that effect, I will check and revert to the House.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister gave a global figure for demurrage paid to Betamax Ltd, and then said that some of it was paid in Mangalore and some here in Port Louis. Can we have a breakdown about how much was paid by Mangalore to Betamax and how much here?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: This is not the way it is done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Demurrage is paid by STC because Betamax does not have a contract with Mangalore. Betamax has a contract with STC. Any demurrage due is paid by STC to Betamax. Then the contract is between STC and Mangalore. In case there is demurrage due to the fact of delay by Mangalore, then the arrangement is between STC and Mangalore. There is some sort of an offset by Mangalore to STC. Again, I do not have the precise figures, which I can supply to the House.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the State Law Office has stated that the procedure to go about to retain the services of Betamax is not in order, and that the procedures, as laid down in the Public Procurement Act, have not been followed, and the approval of the Central Procurement Board has not been obtained?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have information today referring to the question that was asked, which has to do with daily freight charges, with amount of port dues, taxes and bunkering and cost of demurrage for the chartering contract between STC and Betamax. Again, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will happily reply to that.

Mr Uteem: I just made a quick mental calculation of the freight charges payable. The price works out to about 27 dollars per ton, whereas the STC used to pay around 23 dollars a ton last year. Can the hon. Minister state why we had a bad bargain and are paying 4 dollars more per metric ton?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figure mentioned by the hon. Member of 23 dollars per ton was not the average of the total liquid petroleum transported to

Mauritius for the STC. The average of USD23.10 per ton was the average of the cost of oil carried by Pratibha, a particular company, and that was only part of the story. The other part of the story is that there were other ships transporting oil to Mauritius, and the average cost per ton was much higher than that. Actually, the average was around USD27.35 over the whole volume of petrol transported to Mauritius. Again, I said in my answer that, firstly, the cost of transporting petrol has increased because of the literally 80% increase in the cost of bunkering and then, secondly, that we are having a sub optimal usage of the tanker capacity because of draft restrictions. These restrictions are being addressed by works to be completed at the new oil jetty, and Betamax Ltd has given my Ministry a written undertaking that it will offset that amount of oil under shipped or short shipped once the dredging works are completed. If we take all this into consideration, we will come down to about USD27.34 per ton of oil carried, in spite of the fact that bunkering has increased by about 80%.

Mr Jugnauth: In his reply, I heard the hon. Minister say that Betamax has, in the contract, undertaken to carry out 16 trips and transporting 64,000 MT of products. Is the hon. Minister aware that Betamax can, in fact, only carry about 59,000 MT of products because it cannot come close to the quay, and physically they can only carry out 14 trips. Therefore, the remaining expenses will have to be borne by STC. We have a case where they were not able to carry enough bunkering and, in fact, STC had to freight another ship, Alpine Eternity, in order to carry diesel for ships that had to wait in the harbour.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are three sections in that series of remarks or questions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Number one, that the vessel cannot carry 64,000 tons, because if it does it cannot come close to the jetty. Had the hon. Member listened to the answer which I just gave...

The Deputy Speaker: Be brief, please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I have answered the first part of that question. I have said that ...

(Interruptions)

It is alright!

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: With regard to the first part of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - I repeat for the third time - we have draft restrictions at the new oil jetty, and I have said twice again that we have a written undertaking that, once these restrictions are removed through dredging works, then Betamax is going to make good the short shipment. Number two, as far as the remark made by the hon. Member to the effect that the Red Eagle can only carry out 14 trips instead of 16, I would like to be enlightened on that. We have not yet reached that point.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We will get there; we will be doing it.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister does not have the information...

Mr Sayed-Hossen: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is not a question!

(Interruptions)

No, it does not mean that I don't have the answer to a question. This is only a hypothesis which is being stated by the hon. Member that the Red Eagle will not be able to make 16 trips, but only 14. Now, we are at six or seven trips. Let us wait for the 16 trips or 14 trips to arrive, and then we will come to that. I have forgotten the third point!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/807 has been withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

Order! Order, please! Order! Order! Hon. Soodhun! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Soodhun! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

(Interruptions)

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF SO 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Supplementary Appropriation (2010) Bill (No. XXI of 2011) was read the third time and passed.

At this stage, Mr Speaker took the Chair.

At 3.50 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.30 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2012) BILL

(NO. XXVI OF 2011)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2012) Bill (No. XXVI of 2011).

Question again proposed.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): Mr Speaker, Sir, avant de parler sur le budget lui-même, qu'il me soit permis de faire deux remarques.

Premièrement, je souhaite dénoncer - comme quelqu'un d'autre que moi vient de le faire récemment - un enfantillage. En effet, comparer la performance économique de l'île Maurice à celle des pays qui sont le plus en difficulté, en particulier la Grèce. L'autre jour, l'honorable Premier ministre faisait peur à tout le monde en parlant de la Grèce et le ministre des finances, vendredi dernier, lui aussi, a fait référence à la Grèce. C'est un enfantillage.

La Grèce est le pays le plus en difficulté au monde en ce moment.

Le déficit budgétaire de la Grèce est le plus fort au monde, autour de 10%, et encore les chiffres grecs sont à être pris avec des pincettes.

Le *GDP* est en train de baisser de 5% cette année. Le chômage est à 17%. Alors, que cesse cet enfantillage de comparer notre performance économique aux pays qui sont les plus en difficulté, et en particulier la Grèce.

Le Premier ministre lui-même et les autres ministres aussi n'en finissent pas de nous parler de Singapour. Au lieu de faire référence à la Grèce, pourquoi ne pas faire référence à Singapour? Singapour, où le *GDP growth* cette année sera de 5%, le déficit budgétaire de 0.3% ; le chômage est à 2% et l'inflation à 4%! Mais laissons Singapour de côté ! En termes de *GDP growth* pourquoi ne pas parler de la Chine, 9% de *GDP growth* cette année ; l'Inde 8% cette année, l'Indonésie 7% cette année et je pourrais continuer. Mais, je préfère revenir plus près de chez nous.

Plus près de chez nous, l'Afrique Subsaharienne. Le *International Monetary Fund*, le mois dernier, dans son rapport sur l'Afrique Subsaharienne, a confirmé que cette année l'Afrique Subsaharienne, en moyenne, verra son *GDP* augmenté de plus de 5% et prévoit que l'année prochaine, en 2012, ce sera plus de 6%! Alors, arrêtons avec ce badinage! M. le président, en fait c'est cela la vérité. La vérité est qu'à 4.2% supposément cette année, - je ne suis pas sûr que nous finirons à 4.2% cette année - 4% l'année prochaine, probablement moins que 4%. La vérité c'est que quand nous comparons notre performance à la performance en moyenne en termes de *GDP growth* de l'Afrique Subsaharienne, nous sommes en train de faire bien moins bien que l'Afrique Subsaharienne en moyenne.

Je disais tout à l'heure que le Fonds Monétaire International, le mois dernier, prévoyait que cette année l'Afrique Subsaharienne verra son *GDP growth* augmenté en moyenne de plus de 5%. Hier, l'*International Monetary Fund* a sorti son rapport sur la Tanzanie - notre voisin dans la SADC comme nous, juste à côté.

La Tanzanie - c'est confirmé par l'*International Monetary Fund* - fera plus que 6% de *GDP growth* cette année. Voilà la vérité et voilà un enfantillage que je souhaite voir s'arrêter, M. le président.

Deuxième point, c'est l'absence de cohérence économique et les zigzags économiques du gouvernement que nous avons depuis 2005, dirigé par le même Premier ministre depuis 2005. Pourquoi je parle de manque total de cohérence et de zigzags? Nous avons eu trois ministres des finances en moins de deux ans. Le Dr. Rama Sithanen est parti, et l'honorable

Pravind Jugnauth et aujourd'hui l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval. Ce n'est pas mal comme performance d'avoir trois ministres des finances en moins de deux ans! En moins de deux ans le Dr. Sithanen est parti à telle date, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth est venu à telle date, il est parti à telle date, trois ministres!

(Interruptions)

Trois ministres en moins de deux ans, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Ecoute le reste, ou pou arret dire merci!

(Interruptions)

Alors pendant cinq ans, j'étais le *Leader* de l'Opposition presque. Le Dr. Rama Sithanen venait présenter un budget ultra libéral à la Banque Mondiale ; tout le monde applaudissait. Une certaine ligne économique! Puis, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth remplace le Dr. Rama Sithanen, défait tout ce que le Dr. Sithanen avait fait ou presque. Ils applaudissent ; le Premier ministre le premier.

Un an plus tard, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval arrive et il défait tout ce que l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avait fait. Les mêmes applaudissent, le Premier ministre le premier.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, vous aurez noté que chaque année quand le Dr. Rama Sithanen avait fini de présenter son budget et quand l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avait présenté son budget l'année dernière, quand l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval présente son budget vendredi dernier, année après année le Premier ministre vient dire: 'Cela a été fait sous mon contrôle général...

(Interruptions)

'...ou cela a été fait sous ma supervision'. Mais c'est un prix Nobel des zigzags!

(Interruptions)

Quelle incohérence!

(Interruptions)

Quels zigzags! Incroyable! Mais seulement M. le président....

(Interruptions)

M. le président, mais seulement moi j'ai des manières ...

(Interruptions)

Moi j'ai des manières devant ces zigzags et cette incohérence, je ne parlerais pas d'illettré économique. Non, je me retiendrais de faire cela mais par contre c'est vrai qu'en termes d'incohérence économique, en termes de zigzags, on peut difficilement faire pire, M. le président. Difficilement!

Ce qui m'amène à *my good friend*, l'honorable Dr. Vasant Bunwaree, même chose que le Premier ministre. Même chose ! Je viens de lui dire que si je ne parle pas aujourd'hui, il se tait. Il parle en référence à ce que je vais dire, autrement il n'a rien à dire. Ce n'est pas normal du tout. Si vous vous respectiez, *you would behave differently. What have we seen? Rama Sithanen comes*, présente un budget ultra libéral à la Banque Mondiale; je critique. L'honorable Dr. Vasant Bunwaree se met debout, félicite Rama Sithanen et me critique.

L'année suivante, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth vient avec un budget qui est le contraire de l'ultra libéralisme du Dr. Rama Sithanen et le même Dr. Vasant Bunwaree, aussitôt que j'ai fini de parler, se met debout, félicite chaudement l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth et me critique. Cette année, il est là pour cela encore une fois.

(Interruptions)

Faute d'être ministre des finances, il est condamné à ce rôle.

Vendredi dernier, Xavier Duval a présenté le budget; aujourd'hui je vais le critiquer et tout à l'heure il va se mettre debout et il va se féliciter et me critiquer.

(Interruptions)

L'année prochaine pas pou ena; avant ça pou ena changement. Don't say that!

Ce sont les deux remarques que je souhaitais faire, M. le président, avant d'en arriver au budget. En ce qui concerne le budget lui-même, permettez moi de reprendre les commentaires que j'ai faits à chaud vendredi dernier et que je détaillerai aujourd'hui, M. le président. J'ai dit que pour moi c'est un budget décevant, face à la crise économique internationale et surtout européenne. C'est donc un budget décevant face à la crise et en terme de croissance c'est un budget décousu et désordonné en terme de mesures sociales. Je m'explique. Face à la crise économique internationale qui est revenue maintenant sous une autre forme, c'est vrai, c'est un budget terriblement décevant, M. le président. Il y a un

manque d'imagination, de vision, d'ambition pour faire face à cette crise. Il y a une absence de mesures qui permettraient au pays de faire face à ce qui frappe avant tout les pays exportateurs comme Maurice. C'est cela qui est terriblement mauvais pour nous. Il y a eu une crise en 2008/2009, cette fois-ci, c'est une crise de *sovereign debt* qui frappe avant tout les pays exportateurs et Maurice est parmi les pays qui exportent le plus ses activités économiques mais nous allons avoir mal, M. le président, malheureusement. Pourtant, l'heure est grave. L'honorable ministre des finances le dit lui-même dans son discours du budget. Je le cite à la page 7 –

“There are ominous signs that trouble is in store. There is urgency.”

C'est vrai. Dans une situation pareille, je trouve incroyable que le nouveau ministre des finances ne cite aucun chiffre en ce qui concerne l'investissement et le *FDI*, le *Foreign Direct Investment*. Aucun chiffre! C'est incroyable mais aussi très inquiétant, M. le président. Pas un mot, alors que le ministre des finances nous dit qu'il faut avant tout promouvoir les exportations et faire venir plus de touristes. En même temps qu'il nous dit cela, il n'y a pas un mot dans son discours du budget sur la roupie forte et du *repo rate* fort, alors qu'il y a quelques jours dans la presse et à la radio le ministre de l'industrie et du commerce a pris publiquement position contre la politique actuelle de la roupie forte et de *repo rate* fort pratiquée par le gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice, M. le président.

L'honorable ministre des finances a donné au secteur privé tout ce que le secteur privé lui demandait et plus que cela. Malgré cela, je doute que la confiance soit rétablie et que l'investissement privé va repartitionner. Il n'y a pas eu de déclics. J'ai écouté les réactions à chaud; j'ai écouté ce qui se dit, ce que le ministre lui-même a dit dans ses interactions avec le secteur privé. Il n'y a pas eu de déclics. Le secteur privé a eu plus que ce qu'il demandait, mais je doute que l'investissement privé reparte, M. le président, et que la confiance soit rétablie.

Quand à la grande mesure annoncée, le *National Resilience Fund* de R 7 milliards, c'est du bluff tout simplement. D'ailleurs le ministre des finances, lui-même le dit, car en fait il ne fait que *consolidate* les fonds déjà existants. Je me permettrai, M. le président, de faire référence à la page 671 des *Estimates* qui a comme titre le *National Resilience Fund*. Si vous regardez à la page 671 alors que le ministre des finances nous a donné l'impression – je ne dis pas qu'il a induit l'assemblée en erreur, mais il a certainement donné l'impression que c'était un fonds nouveau de R 7 milliards. Eh bien, quand vous étudiez ce qu'on trouve à la

page 676, on se rend compte, M. le président, que le *opening balance* après une contribution de R 4 milliards en 2011, le gouvernement a contribué R 4 milliards en 2011 et zéro ne sera contribué en 2012. Ce chiffre de R 7 milliards est le *opening balance*. Je le répète, en 2012, le gouvernement ne mettra rien dans ce fonds. Ce fonds c'est l'addition, la consolidation de tous les fonds et R 4 milliards mises dans ces différents fonds l'année dernière, M. le président.

The objective, Mr Speaker, Sir, was to boost growth, *remettre l'économie sur les rails comme avait dit le ministre des finances, relancer l'économie, remettre l'économie sur les rails*, boosting growth, and yet we are moving from 4.2% GDP growth this year to 4% next year. This is boosting growth! This is *remettre l'économie sur les rails!* And mind you, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister himself said at page 6, early in his speech, he said -

“For 2012 (...) we are cautiously forecasting a growth rate of 4 per cent.”

Il se protège quand à ce que la vérité sera dans quelques temps, mais quel aveu d'échec d'avance; *boosting growth* voudrais dire passer de 4.2% GDP growth cette année à 4% l'année prochaine, et en fait, M. le président, je pense, malheureusement, qu'on sera au dessous de 4%. Je vois que la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie n'a pas changé ses prévisions et prévoit que notre *GDP growth* sera de 3.8%. Nous verrons ! Mais en tout cas, ça s'appelle *boosting growth!* Remettre l'économie sur les rails! Relancer l'économie ! Passer de 4.2% à 4%, 3.8% *maybe even lower!* Quel aveu d'échec d'avance, M. le président!

Il est bon de rappeler puisque'une large part de notre destin économique ne se trouve pas entre les mains du ministre des finances, mais entre les mains du gouverneur de la Banque Centrale. Une large part de notre destin économique est décidée par lui. Et ce même gouverneur de la banque jusqu'en juin de cette année, M. le président, prévoyait que le *GDP growth* cette année serait *more than 4.6% ; not 4.6%, more than 4.6%*. *How wrong can you be? How can you mistarget in that way?* Mais ce n'est pas la seule performance éloquente du gouverneur de la Banque de Maurice. A 4% ou moins de 4%, le chômage va continuer à augmenter surtout chez les jeunes. C'est inévitable! Le ministre des finances a fait une référence en passant au chômage chez les jeunes. C'est bouleversant quand nous pensons, M. le président, que 35% des chômeurs ont moins de 25 ans. Avec ce genre de *GDP growth* là, c'est eux qui vont souffrir.

J'espère que j'aurais tort, mais je prévois, quant à moi, l'année prochaine, une année dure. Une année où il y aura des licenciements, des fermetures d'entreprises, des faillites dans

le secteur du tourisme surtout, mais ailleurs aussi, et c'est ce genre de prévision, ce genre de situation qui, d'après moi, demandait des mesures beaucoup plus courageuses, beaucoup plus ambitieuses que celles que nous trouvons, y compris le National Résilience Fund, dans le budget qui a été présenté vendredi dernier, et je trouve cela quand même extraordinaire. Je disais tout à l'heure : un ministre des finances qui présente un budget mais qui ne cite aucun chiffre en ce qui concerne l'investissement en général et l'investissement privé, en particulier, qui ne cite aucun chiffre concernant le FDI l'année prochaine et qui ne cite aucun chiffre concernant le chômage non plus. L'évolution du chômage d'ici la fin de l'année et l'année prochaine - aucun chiffre. Mais c'est la même pour l'inflation. C'est la première fois qu'un ministre des finances présente un budget et il n'y a pas de prévision, il n'y a aucun chiffre sur les prévisions d'inflation pour l'année prochaine.

Quant à *l'innovative measure* - ce sont les mots du ministre des finances - annoncée à la page 27, le *Sponsored Pre-Job Training Initiative*, là encore, j'espère que le ministre des finances me convaincra que ce n'est pas pour la deuxième fois du bluff, M. le président, parce que là-aussi, j'ai lu entre les lignes. J'ai regardé les chiffres, ce *Innovative Measure* qu'est le *Sponsored Pre-Job Training Initiative*, est une question avant tout de *consolidation* des *schemes* déjà existant à la HRDC, à la NEF et la MITD.

C'est pourquoi quand un ministre dans son discours vient citer un chiffre de 8,000, il parle de 8,000 jeunes qui auront l'occasion de profiter de ce *Free Employment Training*. 8,000 en tout! 8,000 *all schemes together!* J'aurais aimé, sans aucune mauvaise intention, demander au ministre des finances de nous dire actuellement *the existing schemes, how many youth are at present benefiting from this pre-employment training and then we will see how many new possibilities will be created by this sponsored pre-job training*. D'ailleurs le ministre des Finances ne peut que souhaiter que les employeurs utilisent ces *revamped schemes*. Je le cite : *these revamped schemes «I hope will be used extensively by employers»*.

Cela ne va pas empêcher cette détérioration dramatique concernant le chômage parmi les jeunes et il faudra penser à beaucoup d'autres *schemes* et d'autres mesures.

J'ai dit cela pour confirmer que, de mon point de vue, les mesures proposées face à la crise sont totalement insuffisantes. Manque d'ambition! Manque de vision! Alors que *the objective was to boost growth, we are going down in terms of GDP growth, Mr Speaker*. Quant aux mesures sociales que j'ai décrites comme étant décousues et désordonnées, je répète que le ministre des finances avait la marge de manœuvre budgétaire nécessaire pour

frapper un grand coup du côté du social. Ceci dit, plusieurs des mesures préconisées sont positives. Je viendrai, en particulier, sur certaines d'entre elles dont certaines que j'ai proposées moi-même dans un récent passé, mais plusieurs des mesures proposées sont positives. Je suis le premier du moins à le reconnaître, M. le président.

Là je tiens à dénoncer un deuxième enfantillage. Cela a été enfantin la semaine dernière d'essayer un exercice de *public opinion management*, de faire circuler en ville la nouvelle à l'effet que la *Value Added Tax* va être augmentée. *Childish!* Cela a été systématiquement véhiculé en ville pour supposément faire peur aux gens et, ensuite, il n'y aura pas d'augmentation, *how childish, Mr Speaker, Sir!* Je pense que nous avons atteint un degré de maturité qui nous impose de ne pas avoir à nous tourner vers ce genre d'enfantillage, *Mr Speaker, Sir*. Pourquoi je dis que le ministre des finances avait la marge de manœuvre budgétaire nécessaire pour frapper un grand coup du côté du social, M. le président ? En fait, comme le ministre des finances dit lui-même, l'année prochaine, le déficit budgétaire restera à 3.8 % seulement, alors que pour cette année, il était prévu qu'il soit de 4.2%.

Donc, il restera à 3.8% l'année prochaine, ce qui donne une belle marge de manœuvre au ministre des finances. Mais cela n'est pas suffisant pour excuser le fait qu'il n'y ait pas un mot sur le gaspillage malgré le dernier rapport du Directeur de l'Audit ; rien sur la corruption qui nous coûte chère et rien sur une réforme des corps paraétatiques et des compagnies d'Etat, mais surtout rien sur le gaspillage, alors que nous parlons de milliards et pas de centaines de millions! Par contre, on refuse aux pensionnés, aux veuves les R 330 qu'on a données aux salariés au bas de l'échelle, et j'insiste là-dessus. La tradition a été que, toutes ces dernières années, la même somme, qui est allouée aux salariés au bas de l'échelle, soit allouée aux pensionnés, aux veuves, aux orphelins. Pour la première fois, cette année, les salariés au bas de l'échelle auront une compensation salariale de R 330 alors que les pensionnés, par exemple, pour ne prendre que cette référence, auront R 126 en moins que les R 330 auxquelles ils et elles ont droit.

C'est ainsi que le *old age non-contributory pension* sera – l'honorable ministre des finances l'a annoncé fièrement - de R 3,350 au lieu de R3,476. La deuxième chose que je trouve inacceptable, alors que le ministre des finances avait cette marge de manœuvre budgétaire, c'est cette nouvelle taxe de 10 sous sur les jeunes, 10 sous sur chaque message SMS et MMS ! Franchement, je ne vois pas la logique. Le ministre des finances se vante que nous ayons un taux de fiscalité des plus bas à 15% et cette introduction de 10 sous sur chaque

appel représente une taxe de 20% puisqu'aujourd'hui on paye 50 sous par appel ce qui fait 20%. Une taxe de 20%, M. le président ! C'est une taxe contre les jeunes, contre le *knowledge*, contre les loisirs et, M. le président, on fait tous ces jeunes, ces modernistes, souffrir pour 130 millions de malheureuses roupies !

Je me retiens de parler de sadisme. Je me retiens. J'ai réussi à me retenir mais franchement, c'est inacceptable, M. le président. Vous savez ce qu'il ne dit pas, c'est que ces revenus, d'ici l'année prochaine, en 2012 - là je viens de parler de 130 millions de malheureuses roupies - vont augmenter de R 8 milliards. Je me demande si ce n'est pas sans précédent. Les revenus de l'État vont augmenter par plus que 10%; 11%, je le précise.

(Interruptions)

Oui, y compris l'inflation bien sûr. On va accélérer l'inflation pour que vous ayez plus de revenus; R 4 milliards de revenus additionnels en terme de TVA et on va tirer R 130 millions!

(Interruptions)

Ces revenus, M. le président, vont augmenter de R 8 milliards. La TVA va augmenter de plus que R 4 milliards. La TVA va rapporter plus que R 42 milliards mais par contre la taxe sur les compagnies restera à R 86 millions en 2012 comme en 2011, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

C'est pourquoi, M. le président, en tant que leader de l'opposition je demande solennellement et formellement au Premier ministre, au gouvernement, de revoir ces deux choses et je suis sûr qu'il m'écouterà comme dans le cas des malades inopérables à Maurice. Je viendrais là-dessus tout à l'heure. Je demande donc solennellement et formellement au Premier ministre et au gouvernement de revenir sur ces deux choses. Premièrement, donnez aux pensionnés, aux veuves, aux orphelins, les R 330 auxquelles ils ont droit et, deuxièmement, au nom de la jeunesse, au nom du développement du *ICT Sector*, au nom du *knowledge hub* que nous prétendons devenir, abolissez cette taxe de 10 sous sur chaque appel SMS MMS.

Je trouve aussi, M. le président, que le ministre des finances va un peu trop fort quand - avec cette marge de manœuvre budgétaire dont nous parlons, avec une augmentation de ces revenus de R 8 milliards d'une année à l'autre - à ce moment-là il choisit d'annoncer la privatisation totale des casinos du Domaine Les Pailles, du Lake Point Complex, du Port Louis Waterfront et du Belle Mare Tourist Village. Le moment est particulièrement mal

choisi quand on a cette marge de manœuvre budgétaire et ce genre d'augmentation de revenus. Incroyable mais vrai, M. le président! Pour la première fois dans un budget, un ministre des finances ne nous donne pas de chiffres sur les investissements et le *Foreign Direct Investment*; sur le chômage, sur l'inflation. Rien! Pas un chiffre, M. le président! Première fois sans précédent. J'ai écouté beaucoup de Budgets dans cette Chambre, c'est sans précédent.

Ce que je trouve aussi inacceptable, c'est qu'il n'y ait pas un mot sur le *current account of the balance of payments* par contre le ministre se félicite qu'il y aura un surplus de la balance des paiements de R 3 milliards en 2011. Nous allons terminer avec une année, M. le président! Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire? Nous savons que le ministre des finances est un expert-comptable. Tout le monde est d'accord de par le monde que la vraie mesure pour savoir qu'elle est l'état de santé de l'économie d'un pays, c'est le *current account budget or surplus* et non *balance of payments! It is agreed across the world.* Pas un mot sur le *current account*, pas de chiffres ; mais, par contre, détérioration dramatique de notre *current account*. Le surplus de R 3 milliards dans notre balance des paiements se compare comment avec les R 12 milliards de surplus en 2009? Avant-hier, la balance des paiements, le surplus a dégringolé complètement mais ce n'est pas cela le plus inquiétant. Le plus inquiétant, M. le président est la détérioration de notre *current account* et moi, je maintiens qu'on est en train de jouer avec le feu. Je le répète; de par le monde, tout le monde est d'accord que c'est le *current account deficit or surplus* qui permet de juger de l'état de santé d'une économie et d'un pays.

Les derniers chiffres - il n'y a pas de chiffres dans le discours du budget – disponibles venant de la *Bank of Mauritius* pour le *fiscal year* se terminant en juin sont de R 24 milliards de déficit de notre *current account*, *Mr Speaker, Sir*; ce qui représente 8% de notre GDP although the *IMF, World Bank: everybody agrees that when the current account deficit goes over 3% of the GDP we have entered danger zone.* Nous ne sommes pas à 3%. Nous sommes arrivés, d'après les derniers chiffres de la Banque de Maurice, à 8% de notre GDP. Je considère que c'est une situation dangereuse qui pourrait se détériorer rapidement en 2012 à cause de la crise parce que cette différence entre le *balance of payment* et le *current account*, c'est le FDI, les dons de l'étranger. Nous sommes et serons l'année prochaine en pleine crise. Ça risque d'avoir un impact encore plus dévastateur sur notre *current account*. Le gouvernement sera obligé d'emprunter dans une telle situation pour continuer à importer à ce moment-là notre *debt situation* aussi se détériorera et j'ai peur que cela aille très vite

l'année prochaine. Je souhaite, je prie le ciel que je me trompe mais je pense que nous sommes dans une situation dangereuse. Si la crise nous frappe l'année prochaine comme je la prévois, cela va provoquer une détérioration rapide de notre *current account deficit*; cela va impacter sur notre balance de paiements évidemment. Ça va nous obliger à emprunter et la situation deviendra très, très grave.

Notre dette est déjà à 58% et non à 54%; 58%, si nous calculons comme nous avons toujours calculé dans le passé jusqu'à il y a deux ou trois années où la définition a été changée de façon à ce que toutes les dettes des corps paraétatiques, des compagnies d'État ne soient pas garanties par le gouvernement mais par les compagnies d'État, ce sont des corps paraétatiques. On a adopté une formule où on retire tout cela. *Debt is debt. Today, if we include all parastatals and public companies, we are at 58% and everybody knows that 60% of GDP is the entrance to the danger zone, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

Donc, je tiens à dire mon inquiétude. Je souhaite, je prie le ciel que j'ai tort; mais 2012 va être *a tough year* si ce que je dis se concrétise, cela sera très difficile pour notre pays.

J'en viens aux sommes allouées au *poverty alleviation* et à la *social housing* dans le budget. Là, il est bon de se souvenir - nous venons de voter un budget supplémentaire pour 2010 - de l'*underspending* qu'il y a eu. Il y a eu un budget de R 1 milliard qui a été voté pour le *social housing* et le *poverty alleviation* et une somme de moins de R 400 m. a été dépensée. Cela vient de se passer. Nous n'avons pas encore les chiffres pour 2011. Si le ministre des finances a des projections - parce que nous sommes quand-même arrivés à novembre- j'aimerais savoir s'il y a eu le même *underspending* en 2011 en ce qui concerne le *poverty alleviation* et le *social housing*.

Le ministre des finances et le gouvernement sont venus de l'avant avec une idée nouvelle de *not-for-profit Housing Development Trusts*. Je vois que c'est au pluriel. On ne parle pas d'un *not-for-profit Housing Development Trust* mais *Trusts*, au pluriel, M. le président. Je pense que cela ne sera pas facile *to implement*. Nous serons là, dans les mois à venir, pour voir comment cela va se passer. Je pense que cela ne va être guère facile *to implement this not-for-profit Housing Development Trusts' idea*, Mr Speaker, Sir. Je souhaite que le ministre des finances éclaire nos lanternes : qui va *manage* ces *trusts*? Il est bon que le pays et la Chambre sachent si cela sera la NHDC, un *special vehicle* ou un *special instrument*? Il est bon que le pays sache et cela nous permettra de voir avec quel sérieux prendre cette idée nouvelle de *not-for-profit Housing Development Trusts*.

L'honorable Kasenally est en pèlerinage - si je comprends bien. J'espère que vous n'avez pas profité de son absence pour venir de l'avant avec cette idée de syndic qu'il rejetait avec véhémence ! En tout cas, à la page 42, le ministre annonce que le gouvernement a enfin décidé d'allouer R 200 *per housing unit* pour aider à la mise sur pied de syndic. Je l'avais proposé déjà il y a deux ou trois ans. On se souviendra que le ministre du logement et des terres, l'honorable Kasenally, avait pris position contre – jusqu'à tout récemment - complètement. Mais je suis heureux que l'idée ait fait son chemin. *The devil will be in the implementation*. Ce n'est pas sans raison que le Premier ministre avait défini ce problème d'absence de syndic, de *high-rise blocks* de la NHDC, surtout *as the hardest nut to crack. It is going to be very tough to implement*. Il faudra le faire avec doigté parce qu'il y a quand même neuf syndics - je cite de mémoire- qui fonctionnent. Faites attention, *in the implementation*, de ne pas créer des *incentives* pour que ceux qui ont fait l'effort arrêtent de le faire. Il faudra trouver le moyen de continuer à encourager ceux qui font les efforts nécessaires et encourager là où il n'y a pas de syndic. Cela ne doit pas être un an. Si c'est un an, c'est autant d'argent gaspillé. Cela doit être pour le temps qu'il faut pour que des syndics solides se mettent sur pied. C'est vraiment difficile. Il y a un travail d'éducation à faire. *It is really the hardest nut to crack, but it is an urgent one otherwise, we will meet with riots in the near future. In fact, there are already mini riots in some cases, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

J'en viens au SMEs. *The Small and Medium Enterprises* sont les plus touchés déjà par la crise économique internationale. Les SMEs seront les plus touchés l'année prochaine et cela, alors que le ministre concerné a donné des chiffres ce matin, si j'ai bien compris. Les SMEs, aujourd'hui, emploient plus que 50% de notre main d'œuvre. C'est extraordinaire, ce sont eux qui sont déjà les plus touchés et seront les plus touchés l'année prochaine. C'est fantastique quand on réalise qu'ils emploient plus de 50% de notre économie! En même temps, j'étais effaré quand j'ai écouté les chiffres que le ministre a donnés. Par exemple, pour 2011, combien a été dépensé pour les SMEs? *Peanuts!* R 15 m., si j'ai bien entendu. R 15m. *of assistance* pour le secteur qui emploie plus de 50% de notre main d'œuvre et qui est le secteur déjà le plus touché par la crise. C'est effarant !

(Interruptions)

M. le président, cela fait des années qu'on promet aux SMEs monts et merveilles mais qu'on les abandonne à leur sort. Encore une fois je souhaite me tromper, mais la grande idée du côté des SMEs me laisse profondément sceptique. L'honorable ministre des finances a parlé dans ce contexte de *revolutionary measures*. La grande idée, c'est que les banques privées

prêteront R 3 milliards sur trois ans à 8.5% d'intérêt. Pourquoi cette mesure me laisse-t-il profondément sceptique, M. le président ? D'abord 8.5%, ce n'est pas bon marché pour ce genre de secteur. 8.5%, c'est fort pour le secteur dont nous parlons, M. le président. Ce qui est annoncé, malheureusement, de mon point de vue, *is easier said than done*. Premièrement, c'est volontaire. Le ministre parle de *participating banks* qui veut dire, qu'il y aura aussi *non-participating banks*.

“Participating banks will collectively make available 3 billion rupees for the next three years...”

Nous sommes en droit de demander les détails avant de mettre ce chiffre en avant. Donner les noms des banques qui se sont engagées à mettre cela en pratique et les sommes pour lesquelles ces différentes unités bancaires se sont engagées parce que j'entends dire que les banques ne sont pas des œuvres charitables et, entre eux, ils ne vont pas se faire de cadeau aux SMEs. Donc, nous sommes en droit de demander des détails. Un *scheme* volontaire, donc sans détail à ce stade - j'espère que le ministre éclairera mieux notre lanterne. Quelle garantie ces banques vont demander quand on sait que les grosses banques mauriciennes et les banques, en général, ont été très frileuses et conservatrices. C'est une ironie parce que si l'île Maurice a réussi à faire face à la première crise financière de 2008-2009 c'est avant tout à cause de cela, du conservatisme, de la frilosité de nos grosses banques surtout. Maintenant, est-ce que ces banques vont laisser derrière elles ce conservatisme, cette frilosité, M. le président ? Quelles garanties vont être demandées aux SMEs et est-ce que ces banques vont vraiment prendre les risques qu'elles se sont engagées à prendre comme le dit l'honorable ministre des finances.

Je reste convaincu, et je répète ce que j'ai dit l'année dernière. C'est vrai qu'un des plus gros problèmes des *SMEs* c'est le crédit, et là on essaye de régler le problème. Je suis sceptique, mais on verra. A part de cela, ce qui manque le plus aux petites et moyennes entreprises c'est le *support mechanism* nécessaire dans le *management*, dans le *marketing*. Beaucoup de ces petits et moyens entrepreneurs n'ont pas de formation professionnelle. Ils se retrouvent en difficulté très rapidement. Il faut un *support mechanism*, M. le président. Je vois que le ministre des finances est venu dire que *The Development Bank of Mauritius* va devenir un *SMEs bank*. Très bien ! Mais je répète ce que j'ai dit l'année dernière et ce qui se passe en Afrique du sud, où nous pourrions prendre beaucoup de leçons de ce côté-là.

Oui, *the Development Bank of Mauritius* doit devenir un *SMEs' bank*, mais il doit aussi être un *agency to provide, apart from credit, the support mechanism which I have just referred to. It must be a double barrel entity*; et ça existe en Afrique du Sud. Être un *SMEs' bank* oui, mais être en même temps un *support mechanism provider* en termes de *management*, de *business plan*, de *marketing* à Maurice et à l'étranger.

Par ailleurs, ce qui est prévu côté petits planteurs, pêcheurs et éleveurs de porcs ne va pas bien loin, M. le président. A la page 21 - j'espère que le Premier ministre a bien lu cela - quel aveu à la section 133 ! C'est un aveu de taille, mais je le félicite, parce que c'est vrai. C'est un aveu, mais je le félicite, parce que c'est là où commence le problème. Je cite le paragraphe. C'est pour le repeuplement de nos lagons, réparer les dégâts dans nos lagons etc.

“Mr Speaker, Sir, this will only be possible if we have the total support of the local communities and importantly if lagoons supervision can be enhanced to a reasonable level.”

It means what it means. Et ce n'est pas la fois que je soulève ce problème ici au parlement. Il faut revoir complètement le service des pêcheries. Il faut revoir complètement le *National Coast Guard*, et il faut que le service des pêcheries, le *National Coast Guard* et la police mettent fin au pillage illégal qui continue dans nos lagons. *This is what this paragraph means. It means that, at present, pour reprendre l'expression, there is no reasonable level of lagoon supervision.* Il est bon que cet aveu ait été fait, et le commencement de la solution, comme je viens de le dire, M. le président, c'est de faire de façon à ce que le service des pêcheries, le *National Coast Guard* et la police travaillent ensemble et mettent fin au pillage, à la corruption, aux trucs du métier qui existent depuis je ne sais combien de temps tout au tour de nos côtes.

Je passe à l'infrastructure. On nous parle de milliards ; c'est très bien. Mais ce que je note c'est qu'il y a une demi-ligne pour dire que il y aura *pursuit of harbour bridge* and métro léger *projects*, sans aucun détail ; sans absolument aucun détail, et sans aucune somme prévue, évidemment. Ce n'est pas sérieux de venir nous dire que les projets de *harbour bridge* et de métro léger vont en avant, sans dire un mot de plus et sans prévoir aucun investissement de l'Etat.

Il y a une ligne sur la CWA pour nous dire que, comme toujours, les magiciens de Singapore sont là et travaillent. Et quand les magiciens auront fait leur travail, le miracle va

avoir lieu à la CWA. Ce n'est pas sérieux! *No reference to the 35% increase in water rates that has been announced for January. Not even a reference, Mr Speaker, Sir!*

Mais, au moins, il y avait une demi-ligne sur la CWA! Par contre, pas un mot sur le CEB, sur Jin Fei, Neotown! Zero, M. le président! Dans une large mesure, le développement, l'année prochaine et dans les années à venir, de notre pays dépend du CEB; et je répète, la situation est délicate au CEB. Il y a des décisions stratégiques à prendre ; des décisions qui auront un impact sur le coût de l'électricité à Maurice, et cela est important pas seulement pour les consommateurs mais pour les exportateurs aussi, pour tout le monde. Je trouve ça assez effrayant qu'il n'y ait pas un mot sur le CEB. Au CEB, autant que je sache, il n'y a pas de magicien Singapourien au travail. C'est vrai qu'il y a des magiciens du Qatar. Nous reviendrons là-dessus, M. le président. Mais ce n'est pas acceptable que lorsque le ministre parle des infrastructures, il n'y a pas un mot sur le CEB, Jin Fei et Neotown.

Maurice Ile Durable ! Ce qui est dit est tout simplement insignifiant. C'est honteux. Le projet de MID est un grand projet. *you must put beef on it*. Quelques mots sur les *waters heaters*, sur ceci, sur cela est inacceptable ; c'est insignifiant, M. le président. Ce n'est pas étonnant que le professeur Khalil Elahee de l'Université de Maurice ait tout de suite réagi. Je ne sais pas s'il m'a entendu dans un récent passé ; mais, enfin, ce qu'il a dit c'est que ce budget est à des années lumières du projet MID.

(Interruptions)

Mais, M. le président, la lumière se reflète très vite chez nous ! Tandis que là, c'est le professeur, une des meilleures têtes pensantes de l'Université, qui vient dire, avec raison, que ce budget est à des années lumières du projet MID. C'est vraiment insignifiant ce que est dit. Et ce n'est pas fini ! Qu'est venu dire la personnalité de réputation internationale que le gouvernement lui-même a approchée pour présider le *MID Fund*, M. Vasantt Jogoo - que je connais de longue date ; il était conseiller municipal MMM à Quatre Bornes il y a des années de cela. Il a fait son chemin internationalement ? Lui qui vient d'être pressenti est venu dire avec raison que le MID est toujours au stade de slogan. Ceci dit, on peut rattraper le retard accumulé ; on peut, et on doit rattraper le retard accumulé. Moi j'avais parlé d'une coquille vide. M. Jogoo vient parler d'un slogan; *that it remains a slogan, Mr Speaker, Sir*.

Alors qu'il y a tant à faire de ce côté, et alors que d'autres pays font tant, il suffit de lever la tête et de regarder en direction des Maldives. C'est un modèle ! Ici nous parlons du projet MID, Maurice Ile Durable ; là-bas, ils sont en train de construire un archipel dans des

conditions terribles ; ils risquent de disparaître, d'être parmi les premiers pays à être balayés par le *climate change*. Ils sont un modèle de combat contre le réchauffement, de promotion des énergies renouvelables. Un modèle! Un modèle pour les nations unies! Un modèle qui est cité en exemple dans toutes les conférences. Notre voisin, notre petit voisin est en train de faire autant que cela mais dans ce contexte ce n'est pas étonnant qu'on n'entende plus parler du Professeur de Rosnay. J'espère que nous aurons à nouveau de ses nouvelles dans un proche avenir.

Si le projet Maurice Ile Durable est traité de la sorte même chose pour le *food security* ; annoncer que l'argent mis de côté passe à 150 millions de roupies après le fiasco que le *Food Security Fund* de un milliard de roupies a été. Coïncidence, un de nos meilleurs experts qui était conseiller au gouvernement et qu'on a remercié, probablement parce que compétent, a écrit une tribune dans « L'Express » de ce matin pour dénoncer le fait que le *Food Security Fund* a été un fiasco complet. Je trouve cela inacceptable que dans son discours, alors que le ministre des finances parle de *food security*, il n'ait pas un mot à dire sur notre collaboration; sur la coopération régionale en général mais surtout sur notre coopération avec d'autres pays d'où notre peuple est venu dans le passé - Madagascar et le Mozambique. Il y a des raisons stratégiques, économiques, agricoles de coopérer mais ce sont aussi d'autres pays de peuplement de Maurice. Pas un mot ! A Madagascar la situation est troublée mais au Mozambique, nous sommes supposés en train de faire beaucoup de choses. Pas un mot ! Et pas un mot non plus, M. le président, sur quelque chose que je suis de près, c'est la production de riz à l'île Maurice.

M. le président, nous savons que nous importons tout notre riz. Il y a un projet de *VITA Grain*. Rose Belle a alloué cinq cents arpents à *VITA Grain*. C'est un projet d'avant-garde et que je souhaite réussisse. Ce genre de projet doit être encouragé y compris dans le discours du budget. Je me permets de rappeler ce que le ministre de l'agriculture avait dit, répondant à un *parliamentary question* le 14 juillet 2009, c'est-à-dire, il y a plus de deux ans de cela.

Il disait, je le cite - le projet que je viens de parler, M. le président :

« *The project is of particular interest to Mauritius being given that we are net importer of rice. For VITA Grain, Mauritius represents an ideal location as no rice is cultivated here and this facilitates production of highbred seeds. With this ambitious project, Mauritius is being offered a unique opportunity to produce its rice requirement* ».

Donc, il y a deux ans de cela, le ministre de l'agriculture a été jusqu'à dire, qu'avec ce projet, s'il se développe correctement, nous pourrions cesser d'importer du riz et produire tout le riz que nous consommons. Je le répète c'est un projet que j'essaie de suivre au plus près possible. C'est un projet d'avant-garde. C'est un projet qui a un énorme potentiel. Je m'attendais à ce que ce genre de projet soit salué à l'occasion du discours du projet et encouragé. Il n'est pas trop tard pour que nous soyons informés sur l'évolution de ce projet.

D'ailleurs, M. le président, il y a un deuxième projet qui de mon point de vue est encore plus important et 'qui est tombé par accident, dans canal'. C'est le *Land-Based Oceanic Industry*. Je pense que nous sommes en train de rater une occasion historique. Je suis de ceux qui croient. Vous savez de quoi il s'agit. On va prendre de l'eau glacée au fond de l'océan, on pompe et qui sert dans un premier temps à faire un parc industriel, à climatiser, etc. mais éventuellement à produire de l'électricité; produire de l'électricité d'une façon non polluante. C'est vrai que c'est une technologie d'avant-garde mais c'est l'avenir. Je suis de ceux qui croient que, dans cinquante ans, la production de l'électricité à partir de cela sera aussi importante que le nucléaire, sans danger et sans pollution. Nous sommes en train de rater une chance extraordinaire. Nous devons commencer ici à Médine. Ça devrait commencer incessamment. Des investisseurs, des promoteurs étrangers ont été choisis par le gouvernement.

Le terrain a été trouvé à Médine. Nous devons commencer par un parc ; climatisation, ensuite eau en bouteille, aquaculture, etc. et à l'horizon production d'électricité. Et notre chance inouïe, M. le président, c'était qu'à la Réunion à côté - le Président Sarkozy est venu à la Réunion et a dit son intention de faire de la Réunion le modèle, la machine d'avant-garde de la France pour la production d'électricité à partir de cette technologie. J'avais supplié presque le gouvernement de ne pas rater cette occasion, de travailler avec l'EDF - l'électricité de France, avec la Réunion parce que cela demande des milliards et des milliards d'investissement. Mais l'avenir est là. Qu'est-ce que nous avons réussi à faire ? Le projet est tombé à l'eau complètement. L'investisseur étranger concerné a été arrêté par la Police sous une histoire de lettre, dénoncé par quelqu'un qui se croit le nombril du monde au bureau du Premier ministre. Il a été à la Police. La Police l'a arrêté ; il a été relâché sous caution et l'honorable *Deputy Prime Minister* a paniqué. Tout s'est arrêté. Tout est abandonné. Il va falloir maintenant refaire les appels d'offres. Il va falloir maintenant aller chercher d'autres et on aura perdu combien d'années alors que c'est l'avenir mais il faut du souffle, il faut de la vision. Le drame c'est que dans l'intervalle, Paul Vergès, qui était le

moteur en faveur de ce projet à la Réunion, a perdu les élections régionales un peu comme les fanatisés de 2005 – ceux, qui ont gagné, ont cru nécessaire de faire le contraire que ceux d'avant eux faisaient. Ce qui fait qu'en ce qui concerne la France, ce n'est plus la Réunion qui va être la vitrine, qui va être le moteur de la France de ce côté c'est parti pour les Caraïbes. Ce sont la Martinique et la Guadeloupe qui vont recevoir des milliards d'investissements. Je trouve cela désolant.

La semaine dernière – je ne sais pas si je l'ai dit tout à l'heure mais j'avais dit au Premier ministre mais je crois que le gouvernement ne s'est pas vraiment intéressé à la chose - j'avais dit qu'une des unités de production de l'électricité à partir de l'eau puisée au fond se trouve où, ou plutôt ne se trouve pas, est en train d'être construite où – à Diégo Garcia of all places, Mr Speaker, Sir. Cela n'a pas provoqué un grand intérêt du côté du gouvernement. D'autres poursuivent dans cette voie et il y a trois semaines les *tenders* sont sortis pour la production des deux premières unités d'électricité sur une base commerciale dans les Îles Marshall. Les choses risquent d'aller vite, enfin pas aussi vite que cela mais ça va s'accélérer et il ne faut pas que l'île Maurice rate une occasion pareille. Nous avons déjà 'fané' comme on dit. Nous avons déjà 'fané' à Médine ; 'arrête fané !' Qu'on remettre les choses sur les rails et qu'on prenne ce projet au sérieux comme il mérite de l'être. Même chose en ce qui concerne l'éthanol, M. le président. Combien d'années nous avons perdu ! Combien d'années encore nous allons perdre ?

M. le président, depuis des années, les tests ont été faits sur les voitures. Les opérateurs sont prêts ; même la *STC* veut aller de l'avant ; elle est prête à aller de l'avant. Où est-ce que cela bloque? Mais dans l'intervalle combien d'années perdues et on nous annonce, encore une fois, cette année, que le projet éthanol va aller de l'avant.

C'est à pleurer! J'ai écouté le ministre, j'ai lu, rien sur la réforme qui doit être complétée de notre industrie sucrière, qui n'est plus l'industrie sucrière, qui est l'industrie cannière de l'île Maurice - une bonne partie de la réforme nécessaire à sa survie. Il y a des pays où l'industrie sucrière s'est écroulée complètement, des pays ACP. Nous, nous avons réussi une partie de notre réforme, mais beaucoup reste à être fait. Qu'est-ce qui bloque ? Il y a des unités qui doivent être fermées, qui ne sont pas fermées. Il y a une meilleure utilisation de la bagasse, une utilisation optimale de la bagasse qui ne se fait pas. D'un côté l'éthanol, de l'autre côté compléter cette réforme de notre industrie cannière qui s'est bloquée ; tout est bloqué. Année après année - et ça c'est une chose qui m'angoisse - plus de petits planteurs abandonnent leurs terres, parce que ce n'est plus économique, parce qu'il n'y a plus de main-

d'œuvre. Année après année, nous voyons des chiffres effrayants et ce qui, moi, m'effraie c'est que il y a un *threshold*, il y a un *bottom line* à partir duquel tout va s'effondrer. Si nous atteignons un point où nous ne produisons plus un minimum de cannes, si nous descendons au-dessous de ce *threshold*, tout va être menacé et, pas seulement production de sucre, production d'énergie et demain production d'éthanol. Et pourtant, M. le président, il faut savoir écouter aussi parfois. Des idées ont été émises - des idées que j'ai reprises ici *ad nauseum* - pour intéresser financièrement et dans la pratique les petits planteurs à arrêter d'abandonner leurs champs. On ne peut pas les blâmer, ce n'est plus économique. Il y a toutes sortes de problèmes, mais il y a eu des idées, il y a des gens d'avant-garde qui sont venus avec des idées pour intéresser les petits planteurs à être actionnaires, à partager les profits, à être fait dans l'énergie, etc., de façon à les encourager à rester sur leurs champs. Tout est bloqué. J'ai mentionné quelques projets là, tout est bloqué. J'espère que la situation sera débloquée en ce qui concerne ces projets.

Le tourisme, franchement ! Moi, je répète que c'est l'industrie du tourisme qui va être le plus menacée l'année prochaine. Elle est déjà profondément secouée et les dégâts, M. le président - ce matin on parlait du Groupe Apavou, mais les dégâts qu'un groupe comme ça a fait, le tort fait en terme de dégringolade des prix, de dégringolade des *standards*, mais je trouve triste que dans une situation pareille, alors que l'industrie du tourisme est déjà en difficulté et que l'année 2012 sera l'année de tous les risques pour l'industrie du tourisme. Malheureusement, mes informations, mes analyses me disent que 2012 il y aura licenciement, il y aura dépôts de bilans, il y aura mise en faillite par les banques de certaines unités, tout ce que l'ex-ministre du tourisme, actuellement ministre des finances, tout ce qu'il trouve à nous dire : *back to basics*. C'est vrai qu'il y a certains *basic things*, certain *fundamentals* que nous devons préserver, oui. *Mais what the tourism industry needs is much more than back to basics. I won't get personal - either in the case of the SMEs or in the case of the tourism industry - to a comment whether the right men in the right places. That is also very important. If we want to move ahead with projects like this, Land-Based Oceanic Industry and so on, there must be the right people, men or women, in the right places, including the right Ministries for Mauritius to move forward, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between Mauritius and India. Là encore, voilà ce que le ministre des finances nous dit - bien mal fait le budget, all the pages are going all over the place, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

I had said that it is a *budget confetti* and it is, in fact, a *budget confetti*, Mr Speaker, Sir, what the Minister of Finance said at paragraph 142 is –

“The Government of Mauritius will continue to protect our country’s best interest with regard to the India/Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement.”

Does the hon. Prime Minister, does the hon. Minister of Finance really believe that the best way of defending our interest in relation to the Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty with India is to have the absence of an Ambassador in New Delhi for *très bientôt deux ans*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Probably, by the time you find somebody, somebody will have left your Government again.

(Interruptions)

No, but more seriously, that is not serious! I mean, India is a great country, they perceive things, il y a des signaux, qu’il n’y a pas besoin de longue-vue pour voir. Therefore, I appeal to Government because this is getting tricky, do the necessary.

As far as tertiary education is concerned, I hope that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education *vont éclairer nos lanternes*. Because what the hon. Minister says at page 25 is not at all what the hon. Minister for Tertiary Education has talked about recently. He has told us a campus Montagne Blanche is going ahead, and there will be one there and one there. in the Budget Speech, there is reference to one and only one new campus and it is at Réduit. I quote –

“And we will develop the capacity to cater for even more students. SLDC will reserve land next to the Knowledge Triangle in Réduit for campuses of renowned foreign tertiary education institutions.”

The reference is not just for the next financial year, but in an open way it is to only one campus. Je pense que nos lanternes méritent d’être éclairées.

Merci pour les malades inopérables à Maurice. I had, in a recent press conference, pointed out that this is not a subject on which I wish to play party politics. Cette somme de R 200,000 remontait à 1999. We are all needy, all of us. Cette somme est restée à R 200,000 depuis 1999. I pointed that out and I asked pending the day when all operations will be possible in Mauritius. I appeal to Government to increase *substantiellement*, immediately that

sum and I put in a word directly to the hon. Prime Minister. I am happy that the hon. Minister of Finance has included in the Budget a measure to increase that sum of Rs200,000 to Rs500,000, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am going to come back to a subject which every year I raise. I raised it here, I raised it in socio-cultural activities and so on and every time the hon. Prime Minister says: yes, yes, and nothing happens in that Budget. *Je parle de nos archives nationales. Nous sommes en train de commettre un crime contre la mémoire nationale.* Any day all our archives can go up in flames, rats are eating our archives. *C'est inacceptable!* I again repeat it, in 2003, we had allocated a plot of land at Réduit for *une maison de la culture*, because keeping archives is a professional thing, we must have an air-conditioned, special purpose building and so on, if you want *de garder la mémoire du pays*. We had allocated a plot of land and funds have been earmarked *pour construire une maison de la culture* which would have been our archives *plus le ministère des arts et de la culture, plus la bibliothèque nationale* - right in the knowledge, heart of Mauritius, next to the University campus! Nothing has been done since 2005 and that beautiful piece of land has been given to whom? Of all people – MBC! This is where this horrible MBC building, *en passant*, is situated, Mr Speaker, Sir. I appeal again to Government. *Nous avons déjà perdu beaucoup de temps.* Any day, the whole thing can go up in flames. Therefore, it is not too late. I hope that when the Prime Minister speaks, when the Minister of Finance sums up, that there would be a reference to our national archives.

Local Authorities - what a mess! Funds are provided for six additional District Councils: three new and three split into six; in all, nine additional District Councils. *Pas un mot sur les élections municipales!* God knows what is going to happen to the Local Government Bill, *version Aimée 2011*. I am not sure even God knows!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member of all people, I am sure, does not know, Mr Speaker, Sir! *Donc, pas un mot, mais par contre il y a un unit qui m'inquiète profondément, M. le président. Je ne vois plus où c'est. C'est une espèce de centralisateur.* When you read the different measures: the MRA is going to take over this; the MRA is going to take over that, there is going to be a central unit to control the management of the Municipalities. *Mais c'est le contraire de la vraie démocratie régionale.* The world over, true democracy does not mean free and fair elections only. *De par le monde*, a real democracy means a real regional democracy. Here, we are going in the opposite direction. *On centralise, on renvoie les élections.* It is

unacceptable, Mr Speaker, Sir! We are getting close to the end of the year, I hope that, in a very near future, elections will come and that regional democracy will flourish again, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I will end on one point and then I will conclude. It is Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have been quite nice to the hon. Minister of Finance and I will do my best in the case of Rodrigues. It is good that we are going to invest Rs600 m. in a submarine fibre cable to link Rodrigues to Mauritius. It is a very good thing - Rs600 m.! From what the hon. Minister says, Mauritius should advance the money and it will be refunded. What I would like to know is: who is going to do the thing? Is it Mauritius Telecom or a consortium? It is important to know whether it is Mauritius Telecom or a consortium. There are consortia already active in that sector, which include Mauritius Telecom. I think we should think well about that, we should not lose time, but we should choose the right operator. If it has already been chosen, let us know whether it is Mauritius Telecom or a consortium and if it is a consortium, a consortium of which operator. We are told that the Universal Service Fund will be funding the service of the law. I take it that service means not just interest, but also capital repayment of whatever sum that the Government will loan to the operator concerned. Then, I would like to know what is the sum to be found in the Universal Service Fund. As at today - it is a new fund which, I think, was set up in 2010 - what amount of money is there in there, what amount can we expect year after year and will it be sufficient to fund completely those Rs600 m.? It will certainly add to more than Rs600 m.; therefore, some clarification on the Universal Service Fund, Mr Speaker, Sir.

However, one thing which I do not like, it is the paragraph 343, where in this case really the Minister is adding insult to injury. He says -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, the grant to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will amount to 1.649 billion rupees (...)”

He proudly says -

“(...) - an increase of 45 million rupees over the previous year.

(Interruptions)

For God’s sake, that increase represents 2%! *Même pas les 10 sous du SMS. Il y a de quoi provoquer nos frères et nos sœurs de Rodrigues.* 2%, Mr Speaker, Sir! Here, our Government revenue is increasing by 11%. There, they are granted peanuts of 2% increase one year over

the next year, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is, I believe, adding insult to injury. there is adding insult to insult because the Minister says -

“This increase of Rs45 m. will enable the RRA to have a stronger development focus. As a result, the RRA will be able to clear land for airport development (...)”

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has for an amount of time been pleading: let us get on with *l'agrandissement de la piste de Sir Gaëtan Duval Airport à Rodrigues*.

Instead of giving it the funds either to accelerate things or to start the project *d'agrandissement*, they are given this sum which will allow them to clear the ground, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not think this is good for Rodrigues and there are already tensions with what is included in the Local Government Bill. There is already tension. Let us not add to it. Let us have our good dialogue with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, give them what they require, Mr Speaker, Sir. Therefore, nothing on airport development! One thing which, I am sure, the hon. Prime Minister is aware of: the water problems in Rodrigues are worse than here. Right now, there is no water at the hospital for the washing of bed sheets and so on, Mr Speaker, Sir. The situation is explosive. It is bad here, very bad in Mauritius, but there, the water situation is explosive. I am glad when I referred to the Local Government Bill of this year, I saw the hon. Minister of Finance say - I take it that it has been chopped, that somebody's head has gone. Well, I read - I think all of us should read it! There is a very good, although I know they do not like particularly 'l'Express', but nevertheless, you have a good l'Express de Rodrigues, very well done by Rodriguans themselves, with a lot of information and the documents are with me. I read statements by hon. Aimée that: *devant la levée de boucliers*, he is going to move an amendment, when the Bill comes before the House, that all references to Rodrigues in the Bill will be deleted, Mr Speaker, Sir. I hope that the hon. Prime Minister confirms that because what has happened in that case is very bad for relations between Mauritius and Rodrigues, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir. Expectations had been raised very high on the occasion of the presentation of this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, *et de mon point de vue, rien n'illustre mieux le crisis of expectations qui a suivi que le sommeil en directe à l'écran....*

(Interruptions)

du Premier ministre présenté fièrement par la MBC à la population toute entière. There you are! The hon. Minister of Finance delivering his Speech and the hon. Prime Minister dans les bras de Morphée!

(Interruptions)

I saw it! I saw it. All of us saw it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I request

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now!

Mr Bérenger: ...that we have a projection here in the House of that episode, Mr Speaker, Sir. then, I know

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: I am sure that the hon. Prime Minister is going to tell us *que c'était le sommeil du juste.*

(Interruptions)

Mais c'était le sommeil quand même, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Therefore, un budget décevant, décousu et désordonné alors qu'il fallait donner au pays les moyens de faire face à la crise qui nous frappe déjà et qui frappera très fort en 2012 et alors qu'on pouvait frapper un grand coup du côté du social. Pour moi, M. le président, cela a été une occasion ratée. Je le dis....

(Interruptions)

Shut up!

(Interruptions)

Je le dis sans gaieté de cœur, Mr Speaker, Sir, car oui I was quoting the hon. Minister of Finance the words that he used, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am going to try to find it. I quoted him as saying –

“...there are ominous signs that trouble is in store, there is urgency ...”

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are times when it is worth talking of *état d'urgence économique* and this is where we are

(Interruptions)

This is where we are *et l'année prochaine sera véritablement une année d'état d'urgence économique pour tout le monde.*

(Interruptions)

Et nous sommes

(Interruptions)

We will be here, I do not think that there is anything to laugh about when we hear what the hon. Minister himself has stated 'ominous signs'. It is very serious and we are all in the same boat, Mr Speaker, Sir.

J'espère que les mois à venir me donneront tort. *I am afraid for my country, Mr Speaker, Sir. The country is not well* et les choses vont empirer en 2012, Mr Speaker, Sir. En tout cas, ce budget n'aura pas aidé le pays à faire face à cette crise. Loin de là, mais, finalement, *Mr Speaker, Sir*, c'est notre pays à tous et bon budget ou non, c'est à notre pays que nous devons tous penser avant tout.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(6.05 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, *n'en déplaise au Leader de l'opposition*, let me first start by congratulating the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for this very realistic Budget *dans la conjoncture* which he presented to the nation last Friday and for his excellent, I must say, maiden Budget Speech. *Coup d'essai, coup de maître* compared to what I will call '*le discours raté*' du Leader de l'opposition.

(Interruptions)

Son discours n'est pas décousu, mais trop cousu.

(Interruptions)

The population, Mr Speaker, Sir, in general has widely acclaimed and is still widely acclaiming this Budget because it contains so many new positive measures which will bring definitely a lot of relief to various segments of the population ranging from the old citizens to the youth, the working class, the down trodden, those involved in the SMEs, the women folk, young athletes, the pupils and students population and the parents. Everybody, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, has got a fair treatment from the exchequer. It seems that it is only the Opposition that is baffled. Indeed, it has received a severe blow from the Budget Speech last Friday. Unfortunately for them, and I was watching all the faces when the hon. Vice-Prime Minister was reading his Speech, it has been indeed like a tsunami drowning them in all their misfortunes.

(Interruptions)

I could see on their faces last Friday, but deep inside their heart, si on essaie à éplucher le discours du Leader de l'opposition qui, dans son introduction et dans sa conclusion, a été dur mais dans le fil de sa pensée il y avait beaucoup de choses positives, il le disait lui-même. Il nous donnait des conseils: il faut faire attention à ceci, attention à cela. Très bien, c'est bon. C'est responsable bien sûr et j'apprécie. Mais c'est pour vous dire que deep inside their heart, all of them know that the Budget 2012 is indeed a very good one and is being well received by the whole of the population. Nevertheless, in any democratic society, Mr Speaker, Sir, everybody enjoys the freedom of criticising the Government's actions and, of course, it is the duty on this side of the House to rebut these criticisms.

Let me summarise the criticisms as I have been listening to them just now but also, as we have heard from Members of the Opposition outside. First, it is said that the Budget lacks vision and imagination *que le Leader de l'opposition a dit, face à la crise en Europe et aux Etats-Unis*. Secondly, it lacks ambition and it is merely – I have heard that on radio from one of the Members of the other side – a rebranding of old measures'. Thirdly, it is a pro-capitalist Budget. Fourthly, the Budget contains '*des mesures confettis*' – *mais des confettis gros comme des feuilles que je n'ai jamais vus de ma vie*.

(Interruptions)

Five, it is *décousu, désordonné et décevant*. Six, the Leader of the Opposition said that much more could have been done on the social front and judging by the available *marge de manoeuvres* as they say. Finally, it has not been said here today but, I have heard it outside from them: '*l'écart entre les riches et les pauvres va en grandissant*'. Mr Speaker, Sir, I can

outright reaffirm that none of these above criticisms are valid. They are, in fact, baseless and without justification whatsoever.

M. le président, le *Leader* de l'Opposition a commencé à parler d'enfantillage et parler d'exemple de la Grèce, à qui nous avons fait allusion, pour dire que ce n'était pas la Grèce qu'il fallait prendre en exemple, mais le Singapour, la Chine, l'Indonésie, l'Afrique sub-saharienne et l'Inde.

M. le président, on n'a pas dit que la Grèce est l'exemple à suivre. On a voulu démontrer que la Grèce, c'est l'exemple à ne pas suivre parce qu'effectivement, l'exemple de la Grèce démontre que quand les difficultés et les tsunamis économiques surgissent, quelle est la situation. Il fallait ouvrir les yeux des mauriciens. Bien entendu, il faut aussi prendre en considération ce que le *Leader* de l'opposition n'a pas dit, il a été Premier ministre, et il a été ministre des finances. L'île Maurice a ses spécificités, *we are a small island economy*, il ne faut pas oublier cela. Nous n'avons pas de pétrole. Nous n'avons pas de l'or. Nous sommes à la merci des toutes les intempéries; cyclone, sécheresse et tout, la distance qui nous sépare des grands marchés et nous vivons sur l'exportation. Donc, il faut prendre tout cela en considération, pas seulement de nous comparer à d'autres pays, mais il faut comparer ce qui est comparable. Pour venir, nous dire que la croissance aurait dû être mieux, mais ce qu'il ne nous dit pas, c'est que, si nous continuons dans la voie qui a été tracée par l'ex-ministre des finances - qui n'est plus avec nous aujourd'hui - les grands experts qui connaissent l'économie, vous disent que si le vice-premier ministre n'avait pas pris les mesures qui s'imposent aujourd'hui; la croissance aurait été peut-être 1.5% pas plus. Donc, il fallait réagir, il fallait prendre les taureaux par les cornes et il fallait faire quelque chose. Et on vient de nous dire aujourd'hui, qu'il n'a pas mentionné tel chiffre, *current account deficit*, toutes ces choses sont intéressantes et importantes mais s'il commence à tout dire, il ne finirait jamais son discours. Il y a d'autres ministres qui sont là et chacun va défendre son ministère - comme je vais le faire tout à l'heure pour l'éducation et le ressources humaines.

Donc, il faut prendre en considération que le ministre des finances ne peut pas tout dire et concernant le *current account deficit* etc. ce sont des chiffres qui apparaissent officiellement, lui-même a mentionné les chiffres de la Banque de Maurice. Ne venez pas faire oublier à la population que nous sommes dans une zone incertaine, aucun ministre des finances - que ce soit à l'île Maurice ou même dans les autres pays - dans la conjoncture, ne peut venir donner des chiffres exacts ou plus ou moins exacts, des prévisions. Le ministre a bien dit que nous sommes dans une zone incertaine. Voilà ce qui est devant nous, voilà des

problèmes et voilà ce qu'il faut faire et comment il faut s'attaquer à ces problèmes pour essayer de ne pas s'engouffrer dans une situation telle comme connaît la Grèce et certains autres pays aujourd'hui.

M. le président, nous avons parlé aussi du problème de FDI que le *Leader* de l'opposition a dit qui n'a pas été mentionné. Le *Leader* de l'opposition a dit que le secteur privé a eu tout ce qu'ils ont demandé, mais il faut savoir, M. le président, que le FDI a bien diminué et je vais vous donner des chiffres. Le *FDI and private investment* a chuté dans le premier cas de 2011, c'est-à-dire, cette année, effectivement ce sont les résultats de quelqu'un autre. Ce sont les résultats de son travail. Le FDI a chuté de 69.6% comparé à l'année 2010 et dans le premier quart de 2011. Deuxième quart de 2011, *a fall of FDI 45.3% compared to second quarter of 2010*. Si on prend le *private sector investment, excluding residential building as a share of GDP, there also a fall of 12.5% in 2010 compared to 11.1% of GDP in 2011*. La chute a été plus importante. M. le président, on peut continuer comme cela, pour vous dire, qu'il faut être sérieux.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government, since 2005 under the able and strong leadership of our hon. Prime Minister – I am talking about 2005 because *la crise était bien là* – achieved an excellent track record of weathering all the economic storms, be it during the worst financial turmoil in 2008, *jamais vu ça!* The biggest surge in oil prices and the worst food price inflation. We have weathered and we have a track record. Other countries, Mr Speaker, Sir, reputable international institutions have praised and keep praising our economic management of these difficult times and it is certainly not now that the Opposition can argue that we lack imagination, *ce n'est pas possible! Vision ou l'audace* to handle a crisis situation. Nous avons fait notre preuve et nous continuons à le faire.

We are a strong and ambitious nation and we have the capability, Mr Speaker, Sir, of withstanding any calamity that approaches us. It needs the right vision, as being shown by my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. It needs economic competence and it needs the capability of understanding the aspiration of our people.

The House will recall that the population, Mr Speaker, Sir, has re-elected this Government because, in fact, of the professional manner it has handled the economic crisis in 2007 essentially. We are ready to face this new challenge. It is with this vision and this idea in mind that the hon. Minister of Finance, has in fact, set up the National Resilience Fund, precisely to react swiftly and firmly to any deterioration of our economy especially on the

employment front. In difficult times, Mr Speaker, Sir, flexibility and ability to act fast are the key stands to adapt. In the present precarious international scenario, it is futile to discuss about the rhetoric of pro or anti-capitalism. Government has to adopt bold measures that are required to safeguard the interest of the country and its population.

The fight against the loss of jobs should be our top national priority and it has been so. In this regard, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has not hesitated to abolish bold measures, to abolish the recently imposed taxes that could harm investment and the savings culture; capital gains tax *essentiellement*. *Vous savez combien de fois dans le passé quand cela n'existait pas encore - parce que cela a été introduit récemment et puis maintenant on est en train de faire disparaître encore - dans le temps et toutes les campagnes de promotion de l'île Maurice* abroad. This is one of the points that will be canvassed repeatedly. No capital gains tax in Mauritius to attract investors; *venir investir et cela était un argument qui était important et qui faisait bon chemin*.

Le *Leader* de l'opposition a parlé de DTEA avec l'Inde. Quand la taxe a été introduite récemment, heureusement enlevée maintenant, mais cela a été un problème. Parce que à chaque fois que ses techniciens de l'Inde et autres techniciens venaient pour discuter avec les techniciens mauriciens de la haute finance, on utilisait cela comme argument, nous n'avons pas de *capital gains tax*, on ne taxe pas cela. Maintenant, on sait quel problème on doit faire face vis-à-vis cet *agreement* avec l'Inde. Le *capital gains tax* est introduit et on vient couper sous nos pieds, un élément solide de la défense qu'on devait donner vis-à-vis de ces techniciens étrangers. Heureusement que le ministre des finances est là et il a pris les taureaux par les cornes.

Je dois dire, M. le président, que nous avons un modèle économique effectivement. Je pense que le ministre des finances l'a dit ailleurs qu'ici, et il va surement le répéter encore que nous avons un modèle économique qui a été déformé l'année dernière, et qui a été cassé je dois dire. Nous sommes en train de récolter des fruits négatifs. C'est normal pour le ministre des finances de venir essayer de corriger la trajectoire. Mais, il ne faut pas oublier aussi que le sort le voudrait, aujourd'hui, que nous sommes face à une opposition où il y a deux personnalités qui ont été ministre des finances, qui ont travaillé ensemble pendant quelque temps dans le même gouvernement. Entre 2000 et 2005, un a été même Premier ministre et l'autre est devenu ministre des finances, et c'est à ce moment-là qu'on a eu des résultats économiques les plus catastrophiques de notre histoire. En moins de cinq ans, 45,000 emplois ont été perdus. Le chômage a dépassé le chiffre de 11%, et aujourd'hui ils

viennent demander d'enlever les dix sous de taxe sur les 'sms', alors qu'eux-mêmes avaient introduit en l'espace d'un an, à deux reprises, une augmentation de la TVA de 10 à 12% et de 12 à 15%. Si ce n'est pas de la démagogie, c'est quoi alors !

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir, has qualified the Budget as containing '*mesures confetti*', but they are really baffled, I am sure. This Budget contains 178 new budgetary measures. These measures will stimulate definitely a paradigm shift, in creating a better future for Mauritius. There are programmes such as matching skills with the requirements of the economy - *Je vais revenir là-dessus à la fin quand je vais parler de la formation* - supporting the SMEs through better access to capital. Ils viennent nous dire aujourd'hui '15 petits millions seulement'. Mais cela, c'est la somme qui a été puisée de ce *Business Growth Fund* qui avait été mis sur pied ; un fonds qui devait être utilisé pour quatre ans. On a commencé à puiser de cela, mais il faut voir combien d'autres mesures sont à la disposition des *SMEs*. Alors, comparez ce qui est comparable!

Giving a push to emerging sectors, the development of the film industry, the setting up of the housing development trust, and the construction of 175 units for SMEs will definitely also pave the way for greater development over the medium and long term. There are other measures among these 178 measures which will have an immediate effect. One interesting measure announced in the Budget concerns the setting up of a mechanism to determine the accepted range of inflation.

Le leader de l'opposition n'a pas mentionné le chiffre. Rarement cela est mentionné - si on va voir dans les différents budgets. Il y a beaucoup de ministres des finances qui ne veulent pas s'aventurer, mais au moins ce budget fait la part des choses en annonçant that a mechanism to determine the accepted range of inflation will be set up. We all know the effect of inflation on the economy and the cost of living of the population. However, Mr Speaker, Sir, in period of economic crisis, we have to strike the right balance between controlling inflation and maintaining a right level of GDP growth to keep on check the unemployment rate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the budget you will find that the agricultural sector also has not been forgotten, the VAT Refund Scheme proposed for small planters and small breeders on the acquisition of agricultural machinery, equipment and tools is most welcome. A New Freight Rebate Scheme has been proposed to encourage the export of non-sugar agricultural products in the context of the agro diversification programme. In spite of funding all these

measures, yet a new forward-looking approach aiming at achieving current budget balance as from 2012 has been introduced. In addition, the hon. Minister of Finance has come up with a timetable for the implementation. *Cela est nouveau; il faut l'accepter. On met tout le temps un monitoring committee pour monitor l'évolution, les mesures budgétaires.* at least, this time, it has come as an official document; a timetable for the implementation of the announced measures, which has been published for the first time. The government has not spared any effort, Mr Speaker, Sir, in alleviating the financial difficulties of the poor and those who are in need.

Je pourrais mentionner un tas de choses, et je vais essayer d'aller vite. Mais le *leader* de l'opposition est venu dire qu'il fallait aller beaucoup plus loin encore. C'est cela l'acrobatie du budget. Il faut savoir équilibrer les choses, et il faut savoir agir de façon réfléchie.

The budget has allocated more substantial resources to finance its social programme and this, in spite - I will repeat it always - of the present world economic problems. New measures have been introduced in different sectors such as social housing, health care services, social and pension benefits, and child protection to offer a better social net to the population.

The Leader of the Opposition mentioned rural development - it is a fact -and the setting up of three district councils; new ones.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to improve the quality of life of our citizens, government is coming up with an innovating programme of funding the syndics on NHDC estates. *Le leader de l'opposition a présenté les difficultés qui pourraient surgir. Nous en sommes conscients, et allons prendre tout cela en considération pour ne pas tomber dans les pièges du passé.*

I must also say that, to reduce the number of road accidents, duties on tyres have been removed, 25 new speed cameras will be installed across the country. We know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the anguish and sufferings when a member of the family has been involved in a serious road accident. We cannot, therefore, remain indifferent to such human tragedies, and we have acted.

Je pense qu'on a fait quelque chose d'extraordinaire pour Rodrigues cette année. Cela me rappelle lorsqu'on avait déclenché les mesures pour rendre Rodrigues un *duty free island*, ce qui a créé un *boost* extraordinaire et a permis aux Rodriguais jusqu'à maintenant de continuer à avoir les bons effets de ces mesures ; ce fut dans le temps.

Maintenant, on prend une mesure exceptionnelle, notamment *the Loan Process for Sub Marine Fibre Cable to the Island, and works at the port and airport*. Essentiellement le câble à fibre optique qui va créer une véritable révolution non seulement pour les jeunes, mais pour tout le monde, pour les businessmen de Rodrigues, dans le domaine de la facilitation du business. La qualité de la vie des Rodriguais va être transformée quand cela va devenir effectif. Donc, félicitations au ministre des finances pour ces mesures, en particulier, celles qui touchent les gens les plus faibles économiquement.

Je suis sûr que mon collègue, le ministre de l'Intégration sociale, l'honorable, Suren Dayal, ainsi que d'autres ministres vont venir de l'avant avec une série de mesures. On ne peut pas dire que l'écart entre les riches et les pauvres s'agrandit.

On a pris une série de mesures, en commençant par les taxes qu'on a enlevées sur les items qui touchent le petit peuple, toutes les facilités pour les enfants pour aller à l'école - et je vais revenir là-dessus -, le *VAT refund* pour les petits planteurs, sur les *fishing gears, outboard and inboard engines*, motocyclettes. Qui cela va-t-il toucher ? Les petites gens ! Donc, c'est une façon pour montrer la solidarité du gouvernement avec ces gens qui sont dans la difficulté.

Si on vient au *job training, scholarships*, il y a le recrutement de 800 *additional police officers*. Ce sont les petites gens qui auront ces jobs. Il y a le *recruitment of 300 nurses, recruitment of 20 additional support officers at the National Children's Council*. Le programme du *Trust Fund* pour l'excellence du sport va être étendu à 250 athlètes l'année prochaine. Le *Sponsored Pre-Job Training Initiative* qui a été mentionné par le *leader* de l'opposition tout à l'heure. On va lui donner toute les indications qu'il faut pour montrer que c'est une mesure révolutionnaire, parce que cette mesure touche essentiellement à la formation dans le domaine où les Mauriciens ne sont pas suffisamment formés, où on est obligé de faire venir des étrangers pour travailler, on est obligé de donner des permis, parce que nous n'avons pas ces *skilled workers*.

On voudrait identifier ce domaine où les *skilled workers* sont manquants et ce sont des formations, entre autres, qui vont être dirigées vers eux, qui auront un double avantage. Premièrement, de donner du travail aux mauriciens ; deuxièmement, de diminuer le nombre d'étrangers qui viennent travailler à Maurice.

M. le président, je peux continuer dans le *Social Housing* mais je suis sûr que mes collègues vont revenir là-dessus.

Now let me, at this point in time, Mr Speaker, Sir, come *au domaine qui m'intéresse et dont j'ai la responsabilité : l'éducation et les ressources humaines*. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government strongly believes that education and training are the pillars for sustainable economic growth. Therefore, investing in our citizens' education and improving the skills and competencies of our workforce are critical.

Without an in-built resilience in our human resources, there can be no resilience in the economy.

This budget has clearly recognized the key role played by education as a lever of change and innovation and its contribution to the economic growth of the country.

It indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, provides the necessary resources to translate Government's commitment to bring about far-reaching transformation and fundamental reforms in line with our vision of providing a quality education for all and developing a Human Resource base to transform Mauritius into a knowledge hub.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to my colleague, the Minister of Finance, that, despite the very difficult economic circumstances, the budget for education and training has increased from Rs9.8 billion in 2011 to Rs10.7 billion in 2012, representing an increase of some 10 per cent.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already, at the level of education, embarked on long-awaited and much needed reforms in the education sector since the last three years.

We are now at an important turning point, which is the implementation phase. I know that the proposed reforms have had widespread acceptance, and stakeholders have recognised that need for change.

It will now take a concerted effort from all involved in education and specially a changed mindset to ensure that the proposed reforms meet the set objectives in line with the vision we have for the future direction of the education sector.

M. le président, je ne vais pas pouvoir entrer dans tous les détails de l'éducation. Je vais déposer un petit document pour montrer un peu le reste de ce qu'on fait pour ne pas avoir à tout expliquer. C'est un document qui pourrait aider les membres de la Chambre pour mieux comprendre les développements qui se font dans le domaine de l'éducation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that the 2012 Budget brings the necessary financial support required to sustain our reforms.

It would be difficult here, as I said, to enumerate all that has been accomplished but we are going to continue our mission to improve performance at all levels of education.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to pre-primary education. It is believed - and we all agree - that the foundations of human development are laid during the child's early years.

Learning begins at birth - *peut être que les gens ne savent pas trop, mais comme un spécialiste aussi en génétique, je pense que learning commence même avant la naissance*. It begins, at least, at birth and it continues throughout life. Therefore, investing in pre-primary education means investing in our country's future.

We all know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the early years of life are critical to the development of the child. It has been scientifically proven that well-designed preschool programmes improve school readiness, raise the academic achievement level of the child in the early grades of primary schooling, reduce school dropout and risky behaviour. This has been proved.

I would like to refer the House to the latest findings of the SACMEQ, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2011. SACMEQ is the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring of Education Quality. SACMEQ has confirmed, in its findings, that pupils who attend preschools tend to perform better. *Cela a été prouvé dans cette étude*.

With a view to bringing more equity into the system and democratizing access to education, this Government is committed to ensuring that all children, aged 3 to 5 years in the Republic of Mauritius, benefit from quality pre-school education as per the Government Programme 2010-2015.

This Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, makes provision to extend the existing grant scheme which covered 4 year-old children, to include 3 year-old, that is, the *per capita* grant of Rs200 will be extended to this age group of 3-year as from January 2012.

C'est une mesure encore révolutionnaire. C'est en 1997, je pense, que feu l'honorable David, ministre à cette époque-là, qui est venu avec cette mesure pour les R 200. Mais, étant donné les contraintes budgétaires de l'époque, on avait limité à ceux qui avaient déjà quatre ans. Mais il fallait, bien sûr, continuer cela pour trois ans parce que c'était la seule phase de la vie de l'enfant - trois ans et quatre ans - où l'État ne contribuait pas directement pour l'éducation. Donc, pourrions-nous dire à cette époque-là que l'éducation était vraiment gratuite? Peut-être, oui, à partir de cinq ans *onwards*, mais pas à partir de trois ou quatre ans. En 1997, on est venu avec la mesure pour les enfants de quatre ans. L'année

dernière, j'ai essayé d'avoir pour les trois ans mais, malheureusement, avec les contraintes budgétaires on ne l'a pas eu. Cette année, on a été voir le ministre et, peut-être, que suite à son passage au ministère de l'intégration sociale, cela a fait bouger les choses et cette mesure devient aujourd'hui une réalité. C'est une mesure révolutionnaire pour les gens, surtout pour ceux qui sont en difficulté.

L'école devient pratiquement gratuite dès la rentrée à l'école, c'est-à-dire, à l'âge de trois ans, ce qui n'était pas le cas depuis de nombreuses années.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure this measure will help us to improve, what we call, the enrolment rate.

Je vais vous dire une chose, M. le président. *Enrolment rate for this age group* - trois et quatre ans, disons trois ans – *was, in 2007*, à 85%. Ce qui veut dire que 15% des enfants, qui avaient atteint l'âge de trois ans pour aller à l'école pré-primaire, restaient à la maison. Donc, aucune éducation pour eux et à l'âge de cinq ans, les enfants étaient obligatoirement emmenés à l'école. Donc, ils se retrouvaient dans une classe où 85% de ces enfants ont été eux à l'école pré-primaire. Il avait deux ans de retard à rattraper, ce qui était impossible. Alors, en 1985, 15% des enfants n'allaient pas à l'école. Maintenant, il n'y a que 5% mais, bien sûr, on n'est pas content avec ces 5% non plus et je dois dire que pour rattraper les derniers pourcentages, cela devient de plus en plus difficile. Mais dans un laps de trois ans, on a eu un résultat spectaculaire et ceci *thanks, I must say, to targeted intervention programmes which were put in place during the last three years*.

Now with the coming into practice of the Rs200 allowance for three plus kids, les parents qui sont en difficulté seront obligés d'emmener leurs enfants à l'école dès l'âge de trois ans en pré-primaire. Donc, un résultat spectaculaire *and I am pleased to announce that this year, 950 of these children have been successfully enrolled in both private and public schools*. Donc, en un an : 950. Alors, si on continue à ce rythme on va rattraper ces 5% très, très rapidement.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must also say, to ensure that children coming from deprived and vulnerable conditions do attend school, the ECCEA is working in close collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation to sustain appropriate social, financial and educational interventions that will best mitigate the risks and vulnerabilities confronted by these children and their families. Un travail exemplaire est en train d'être réalisé. Cela avait déjà été

commencé par mon collègue, aujourd'hui ministre des finances, qui avait la responsabilité de NEF l'année dernière.

An additional provision of Rs40 m. has been allocated to Early Child Care and Education Authority to enable us to implement all these measures announced for the Early Childhood Sector.

Another revolutionary project, Child Minding Services. Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that poverty has been one of the reasons for some parents not to send their children to school. In our quest, Mr Speaker, Sir, to combat poverty and encourage women to take up employment, we are making provision for schools to offer child-minding services before and after normal school hours and during school holidays.

New regulations under the ECCEA Act have already been made to allow preschools to offer this service. *Donc, c'est déjà une réalité. Mon ami, le ministre des finances peut déjà mettre un tick à cette mesure déjà accomplie. Maintenant, il faut quand même le faire accélérer.*

This will allow young mothers to secure full time employment thus increasing their family income while their children are in a safe, secure and inclusive environment, conducive to their overall development.

My Ministry will ensure that those schools offering these services abide by the proper norms and standards for the care and custody of these children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since January 2011 some 177 parental empowerment programmes have been organised for parents with a view to sensitising them to issues like health, nutrition, protection, education and development of the young child.

While much attention, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been laid on broadening access and equity in the pre-primary subsector, our focus remains on the improvement of quality. For this, norms and standards governing the provision of quality education are being reviewed and I must say that we have already published a National Curriculum Framework for the pre-primary. In fact, it is for all sectors: pre-primary, primary and secondary. The pre-primary came in 2010. We have been publishing and working along these curriculums. *Ce qui veut dire que dans n'importe quel endroit du pays où il y a une école maternelle, il y a une forme de standardisation dans le curriculum.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us come to primary education, where we know that our biggest challenge is to tackle the rate of failure at CPE. Many of my predecessors, Mr Speaker, Sir, have, over the years, been toying with the idea of reforms and remedial action that need to be taken to address this problem but they met with very little success.

With the necessary support of this Government, we decided to take the bull by the horn and introduce the necessary reforms that would give a new orientation to the whole primary sector for provision of quality education to every child, not only in terms of learner academic achievement, but also to give a new impetus to his holistic development, integral development of the child, as we say.

Now, our overriding concern is how to provide the best educational environment for every child to obtain maximum benefit from his six years of primary education to be able to ensure his readiness for secondary education - *parce qu'il s'agit de cela surtout, il faut voir le CPE dans ce contexte là, pour que les enfants arrivés au niveau du CPE et le niveau requis pour pouvoir continuer et être prêts à faire face à l'éducation secondaire*, and allow him, at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, to successfully proceed along his learning path with confidence. This is our mission for primary education.

Fundamental changes have accordingly been brought to the primary sector such as the restructuring of the six years of primary schooling into now three stages instead of two. We have Stage I, Stage II and Stage III. Stage I: Standards I and II; Stage II: Standards III and IV; Stage III: Standards V and VI and the provision of an updated national curriculum design, here also, supported by innovative child friendly teaching and learning materials.

In recent years, Mr Speaker, Sir, several innovative measures have been successfully implemented and are now proving to be, what I can say *en français* - 'incontournable'.

Mr Speaker Sir, I will mention just one or two. An education system needs to have in-built evaluation mechanism at crucial points in the system in order to address weaknesses identified at the right time to prevent the accumulation of learning deficits. Several of these innovative practices are now fully ingrained in the primary sector. These include -

- (i) Diagnostic assessment, at the beginning of Standard III à *l'école primaire, troisième comme on dit, en début de l'année*. It aims at identifying pupils' strengths, weaknesses, and charting their progress in English and Mathematics essentially. It thus helps educators with an early identification of learning difficulties for the adoption of a timely and structured remedial work plan.

Cela nous donne le temps parce qu'on passe à ce moment là en deuxième stage, Standards III and IV. Au début de Standard III, il y a ce diagnostic assessment. On voit, surtout les faiblesses de l'enfant qu'il faut corriger. Nous avons le temps de le faire rapidement.

- (ii) Then, we have introduced also the continuous assessment, which is currently in place in Standards III and IV, et petit à petit cela va aller dans toutes les classes de Standard I à Standard VI. For the time being, it is already in Standard III and IV. Continuous assessment improves teaching and learning and helps to prevent the accumulation of learning deficits. There also, continuous assessment, le professeur évalue ses enfants en fonction de son programme, Ce n'est pas un test qu'on fait après six semaines ou un test qu'on fait à la fin du terme. C'est une évaluation des enfants de la classe, programme après programme et c'est une façon pour le professeur de se juger, lui-même, est-ce qu'il a réussi à faire comprendre à ses élèves tout ce qu'il voulait leur faire comprendre. S'il y a un problème, il peut faire marche arrière, corriger avant de passer au chapitre suivant.

This has already started, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and timely remedial support is provided at Standards III and IV to bridge learning gaps and improve performance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these practices were introduced quite recently, as I said. Diagnostic assessment, *il y a trois ans de cela* et continuous assessment, *cette année*. this is to say that we will only be able to gauge the effectiveness of these measures when these pupils – who are now in Standards III and IV - take part in the CPE examinations, that is, in the years 2013/2014. C'est normal. Je voudrais attirer l'attention de la Chambre à cela. Il y a beaucoup de mesures qui sont déjà enclenchées, mais il faut attendre pour voir les résultats et un moment où on peut voir les résultats, ce serait pour les examens du CPE. Mais quand la mesure a démarré, par exemple, on a amélioré l'accès au pré-primaire, beaucoup plus d'enfants vont venir au pré-primaire maintenant. Donc, le retard va être rattrapé entre ces enfants qui perdaient avant et ceux qui allaient en pré-primaire. Mais il faut attendre les six années arriver pour voir quel a été le résultat de cette mesure en faisant les enfants de pré-primaire rejoindre la classe à l'âge de trois ans. Donc, il faut attendre; il faut avoir de la patience.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as you are aware, my Ministry has already also shown its determination to eliminate the scourge of private tuition at Standard IV, at least. The

necessary amendments are being made to the Education Act accordingly. We are all convinced that private tuition stunts the holistic development of the child.

In this regard, the Enhancement Programme has been introduced in Standards III and IV, in 2011, Standard III et 2010, Standard IV. Donc *Standard IV a maintenant une expérience de deux ans*. This programme focuses on a new learning mode whereby differentiated pedagogical techniques are applied to attend to the varied learning needs and personality development of children.

The use of a diversity of strategies to suit the learning needs of pupils aged seven and eight, *troisième et quatrième*, with different ability levels, has made learning a pleasant and lively activity.

Annual competitions are held in Enhancement Programme, they have revealed the creative potential of our children, and that potential was only waiting to be unleashed.

This confirms, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are on the right track and we have enriched the learning experiences of the child through the Enhancement Programme which has also integrated in the course of this year- about four or five months ago - Asian languages and Arabic and it will certainly integrate the Creole language when it will become a reality in schools.

In due course, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is expected that the Enhancement Programme will eliminate the reliance of parents on private tuition and, at least, in Standard IV for the time being.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry fully realises the importance of an evaluation of the programme and two years have passed, but I must say that two years of implementation is too short a period and maybe an impact evaluation would be more appropriate. An evaluation is projected soon for the Enhancement Programme to gauge its effectiveness, bearing in mind that better results are bound to be forthcoming with its reinforcement. Furthermore, certain expected long-term benefits are intangible and non-measurable in quantitative terms, but will be of positive contribution to the whole society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it cannot be denied that all the above measures will eventually impact positively on performance at the end of the primary cycle.

This year, my Ministry has given also a special attention to those pupils who are repeating standard VI. A special programme for, what we call, the CPE repeaters, the 'CPE Repeater Project', has been prepared to ensure that a minimum level of achievement in core

competencies is attained by these students, thus improving significantly their chances of success.

In addition, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is worth noting that my Ministry has embarked on a review of the CPE examinations that currently focus on certification and selection. I have already announced that in December this year, that is, next month, my Ministry will organise a brainstorming session with all the stakeholders. At least, a first forum will be organised and, based on the findings of that forum, we will define the way forward.

The Government has also made history, Mr Speaker, Sir, once again, by giving due recognition to *Kreol Morisien* and Bhojpuri.

My Ministry is now ready to introduce *Kreol Morisien* as an optional subject in primary schools in Standard I as from January next year and with regard to Bhojpuri it will be taught as an oral component in schools also as from January next year.

The Budget has made necessary provision for the recruitment of some 80 new trainee Educators for the *Kreol Morisien* for 2012 and beyond. Furthermore, I must inform the House that the *Akademi Kreol Morisien, which was set up administratively*, will now be established statutorily under an appropriate legislation to foster the development of this language.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another innovative measure, the Summer School Programme ...

(Interruptions)

For hon. Bhagwan, it is very interesting!

(Interruptions)

My Ministry is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that no child is left behind. We are introducing as from next year, the Summer School Programme in schools, as has been announced in the Budget Speech, with less than 50% CPE pass rate. The programme will, in fact, start on a pilot basis in 12 schools this year itself. Here also, I am going to please my colleague the hon. Minister of Finance. We are going to start on a pilot project in 12 schools this year itself during November/December holidays from mid November to mid December 2011 on three days a week from 9.00 to 15.00 hours.

Pupils of Standards III and IV will be able to attend a school in their vicinity on three days a week and will benefit, as has been mentioned in the Budget Speech, from a hot meal each time they come. This programme will be activity based to give slow learners the opportunity to improve in literacy and numeracy

It is expected, Mr Speaker, Sir, that such a measure will encourage a greater participation in the education process and impact positively on successful transition from primary to secondary and will further consolidate the achievement made through a number of pedagogical programmes including the ZEP schools project.

I would like, here, to thank the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having so well understood the need for an extra support to young schoolchildren to help them overcome their learning difficulties.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to achieve our goal in laying the foundation for the new citizen of tomorrow, other important projects and supporting measures have been initiated to make education more effective.

The digitisation of classrooms, which seemed a distant dream a few years ago, has now already become a reality thanks to the support of the hon. Prime Minister and my colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

The Sankoré project, which has equipped classrooms with interactive boards, projectors and laptops and provided for e-learning materials, has become a reality.

I wish to inform the House that this project has successfully been initiated in 2011 with Standard IV classes of all primary schools of Mauritius now being equipped with one interactive board, a projector and a laptop. These will also be provided to schools in Rodrigues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already completed a first cycle of training of Head Masters, Primary Educators and ICT teachers in the use of the equipment. *C'est quelque chose de nouveau. Il a fallu former et c'est terminé.* I must congratulate those responsible people at the MIE. They have done a marvellous job. I thought I would take three or four years to do what they have already achieved in a space of six months. A key aspect of the project, Mr Speaker, Sir, has also been the creation, thanks to MIE, of a learning factory at the Mauritius Institute of Education which ensures that we now have the capacity to produce our own digital educational materials in line with the provisions of the primary curriculum. In this regard, e-materials for standard IV have already been produced by the MIE and they have started for standard III for next year.

Je voudrais qu'on comprenne ce que je suis en train de dire, M. le président, parce que avec cette nouvelle technique pédagogique, on utilise un *interactive board*, un projecteur et un laptop qui permettent de voir en image souvent dynamique où le professeur peut interagir avec ses élèves, faire venir ses élèves au tableau au lieu d'utiliser la craie, mais le

stylet pour faire la classe. Cela demande quand même une transformation extraordinaire de notre *learning factory*. Il faut que tout ce qui est dans les bouquins des enfants de Standard I et Standard II de chaque classe, soit transformé en matériels digital. Donc, tous nos livres doivent être transformés pour que ça puisse apparaître à travers ce système et la MIE a déjà réalisé cela pour toutes les classes de quatrième du début de l'année jusqu'à la fin de l'année. Et l'année prochaine, ce sera pour la troisième. On va continuer comme cela et j'espère que, dans l'espace de quatre ou cinq ans, on va couvrir l'ensemble du pays. Véritable révolution!

To further support the digitisation process, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are currently completing the elaboration of an e-Education plan which will chart out the processes required for improvement of educational programmes through the use of ICT with, in particular, the promotion of administrative and managerial excellence in the education sector, enhancing teaching and learning through the use of latest technologies, and promoting community interaction with the setting up of an ICT platform, bringing together all stakeholders in education.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having provided necessary funding to regularise the situation of some 172 ICT Support Teachers. *Quelque temps de cela, ils étaient anxieux sur leur sort.* This situation will now be regularised and funds have been earmarked for that. The teachers had been working on a contract basis for some nine to ten years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Open School Program which will allow the use of school premises by the community will further democratise and optimise access to school infrastructure and school facilities. The community will be provided with opportunities for the pursuit of learning, social, cultural and sports activities.

In the same vein, a Club des Parents will be set up in all schools. Parents are one of the most important stakeholders of the education system. Parental empowerment has accordingly to be facilitated such that they are more fully involved in the *parcours scolaire* of their children as well as in their out-of-school behaviour. School infrastructure will be used, Mr Speaker, Sir, to create a platform for their self-learning and meaningful interaction with the school.

My Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir, is also committed to ensure the overall well-being of the student whilst, at the same time, creating conditions for schools to become nurseries for future sports professionals. *Nous aurions beau parler d'avoir des professionnels. Nous avons*

vu ce matin l'espace d'une question parlementaire que nous n'avons pas de professionnels, mais pour avoir des professionnels, il faut de l'entraînement. Je pense que c'est à partir du pré-primaire, primaire que le travail devrait commencer. C'est ce que je suis en train de dire.

In this context, we fully support the setting up of the Mauritius Schools Football League which will involve organisation of Saturday inter-schools tournaments among secondary schools.

This measure will help to revive football at grass roots level, detect young talents at an early stage and develop spirit of fair play among young players (13 to 17 years).

It is also worth mentioning that Physical Education, Mr Speaker, Sir, has, as from this year, become an examinable subject at S.C – *les enfants ont déjà passé cette année-ci pour la première fois dans l'éducation physique et sportive* - and, as from next year, it will be offered as a subsidiary subject at HSC level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to one point which is very important to me at least – student tracking. The increasing trend in dropout rate at the lower secondary education level is, in fact, a cause for serious concern. Up to now, the matter has been dealt with in a haphazard manner because the real number of out-of-school children could not be really ascertained.

For the first time ever, Mr Speaker, Sir, a tracking mechanism has been set up by my Ministry this year to follow every child who enters the school system and monitor his individual school-going status and progress in school and beyond.

Such a tracking will cover all schools including those institutions not registered by the Ministry of Education & Human Resources. The collection and speedy dissemination of such data on schooling will be a priority for my Ministry for prompt intervention for reintegration to schooling with the support and collaboration of State and non-State Actors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, talking of prevocational education now, it is a fact that it has not delivered on its promises and there is urgency for its revamping. More than a decade after its inception, a new strategy has been charted out whereby a 4-year schooling will be added to the programme. I would like to express my appreciation again to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having agreed to provide the necessary funding in this regard.

The curriculum is also being reviewed to suit the needs of children attending the prevocational education and will place greater emphasis on the work-based experience, social skills, lifelong learning skills and development of trade skills.

I am also proposing to introduce a 'Bridging the Gap' project based on practical activities aiming at helping these children regain their self-esteem and develop their self-confidence. The 4-year programme will also lead to a formal certification pitched on the national qualification framework. This would open up pathways to further education and training and for either vocational educational, or reintegration of the academic stream or again becoming functional and employable. The implementation plan for this project, Mr Speaker, Sir, has already been worked out and will definitely again be effective as from January 2012.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come now to a few of the measures in secondary. I am speaking only of the innovative measures – those which have been introduced in the past three years apart from what is known for education which everybody knows.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the five-year span of schooling after CPE to Form V does not allow the detection of weaknesses of students which would have enabled remediation. *C'est à la fin de la cinquième année qu'on voit des faiblesses et c'est souvent trop tard.* The National Assessment at Form III has been introduced in 2010 at pilot level in 33 schools and it addresses this problem. This assessment aims at evaluating the level of competencies acquired by Form III students after the first 3 years of secondary schooling and helps timely remedial action to be provided to them. The data obtained will also serve as a basis for improvement of the quality of education in general. The project has, this year, been extended to 139 schools in 2011. There were 33 in 2010 and 139 in 2011 and all schools will be concerned in 2012 because during these two years, it was on a pilot basis. *A partir de l'année prochaine, ils entrent dans le système;* it covers five subjects for all secondary schools.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also, I must say, very unfortunate that, in the past, many students saw their, what we call, *parcours académique* coming to an abrupt end due to rigid conditions for promotion from Form V to Lower VI. This rigidity was out of tune with the new paradigm which advocates opening up learning opportunities for higher education in the context of the building of a knowledge-based society.

Necessary steps have been taken this year for increased flexibility to be brought into the system to allow students to proceed to Lower VI. I have already replied to PQs on this

subject in this Assembly, so I won't enter into detail, but I must say that some 2000 students have thus acceded 'A' Level studies in 2011 and this number is expected to increase during 2012.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another most important priority in education is what we should call Quality Assurance. Quality, Mr Speaker, Sir, cannot be ensured unless we have the proper monitoring and inspection mechanism. This budget makes available to us the necessary financial resources – I have been fighting for that for three years and I am happy that I have it this year - to be able to fill all the posts of Quality Assurance Inspectors.

With a dedicated team in place, we shall now be in a position to ensure quality assurance and inspection in secondary schools. The importance of ensuring quality has been stressed at all international fora on education. Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be more accountability at all levels and an improvement in the teaching and learning process will be shown in not only the percentage of pass at School Certificate, but also in the quality of the results. All schools, state and private will be taken on board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we welcome the setting up at the level of the Prime Minister's Office of what is known now as the National Institute for Civic Education. This will support our efforts to promote good citizenship, values and patriotism.

At my Ministry, we are working at different levels to address various problems of indiscipline and misbehaviour in schools. In line with our objective to maintain a safe and supportive environment for the school, necessary efforts have been deployed to enhance school preventive programmes. Greater emphasis has been placed on co and extracurricular activities for the overall development of students with particular attention to their physical and emotional well-being.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have reviewed the curriculum framework recently to integrate the teaching of values in education. We are also promoting intercultural dialogue to help children understand each other better and respect the beliefs and traditions of their fellow students because, Mr Speaker, Sir, we believe that, at school, it must be started and taught.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the SMS alert system which informs parents of the absence of their wards from school is now fully operational in all our State Secondary Schools and in most of the private secondary schools. The system is being further enhanced to improve communication with parents for other educational purposes – *pas seulement pour les absences, mais pour les autres choses aussi.*

As a further effort to curb absenteeism, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are seriously considering making regulations to ensure a minimum compulsory attendance rate at schools for all students during the school year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius should, at all costs pursue its efforts to invest in human resources - because these also fall under the purview of my Ministry; I am coming to that at the end of my speech – as this is the key for achieving growth for the greater good.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we welcome the pre-job training initiative announced in the Budget Speech and for the financial resources that will be provided for the benefit of young unemployed graduates. This is in line with the vision of my Ministry to empower every young Mauritian.

Everybody in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir, will agree that one of the worst things that can happen to a person is to lose his/her job or being unable to find his/her first job. This does not only lead to hopelessness, but also to loss of self- respect among the unemployed people, and their families as well do endure greater hardship.

I must say that the present Government has spared no effort in ensuring a conducive environment for job creation, especially during these times of financial crisis. Due to the world economic crisis, the number of unemployed people in the world is on the increase.

However, I must say that during the 2007-2010 period, the number of unemployed people in Mauritius decreased by 3.4% thanks to the sound economic measures adopted by this Government. We believe that investing in education, Mr Speaker, Sir, and training and promoting research in leading edge technologies will provide the workforce with the opportunity to acquire the skills needed for jobs in today's labour market. Further, providing training and education opportunities for the unemployed to reskill and upskill will enhance their chances of securing employment. I did mention what we are planning for those people who are unskilled.

My Ministry, through the Human Resource Development Council, has started a labour and skills shortage survey which involves around 1,100 organisations both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, the aim of which is to build a database of skills required by employers in the major economic sectors while analysing at the same time the skills mismatch. The findings of this survey will be published soon and will provide pointers as to the orientation the economic sectors will be taking.

In today's rapidly changing work environment, Mr Speaker, Sir, guidance is essential to enable all the young people and adults also to make informed choices in both their professional and personal lives.

We believe that it is essential to bring together all the relevant guidance stakeholders and put up a programme for an integrated lifelong guidance service for the benefit of all young Mauritians. This vision is enshrined in the Government Programme 2010-2015.

The Human Resource Development Council is setting up an ICT-based *Centre d'Orientation Académique et Professionnelle* in order to help citizens better manage their education, training and future employment. This will help young people plan their future and help them to 'match' their interests and qualification aspirations to a list of suitable careers through an innovative online tool.

The Careers Guidance Section of my Ministry and the HRDC have accordingly piloted a web-based platform in September 2011 through a case study of potential users. We will leverage on this piloting to ensure that the process is rolled out in 2012, with more schools joining this piloting which will provide a wider stage for an expanded online career guidance and information program.

Mr Speaker, Sir, through the National Training Fund, we will continue to support the training of existing employees so that they acquire the skills and competencies necessary for them as lifelong learners. Not all children, Mr Speaker, Sir, are academically endowed and can pursue the traditional routes of study. All those who do not have a propensity for academic pursuits can find fulfilment in the Technical and Vocational Sectors where there are opportunities for them to develop further their aptitudes.

There is already a heavy demand at the MITD for admission to courses leading to National Certificate Levels 3, 4 and 5 and, thereafter, the possibility to read for a diploma. The MITD is, therefore, increasing its capacity by opening new training centres across the country. It is diversifying its programmes to cater for the emerging needs of new sectors and is also enlarging its focus, Mr Speaker, Sir, to cater for other target groups, such as women and the disabled. The '*Brevet de Technicien*' course offered by the MITD, dispensed by the *Lycée Polytechnique de Flacq*, is being phased out internationally. In this respect, the BT will be now upgraded into what we call the Bac-Pro with the help of French expertise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, local trades need to be encouraged, certified and benchmarked. The MQA has been *avant-gardiste* and has developed qualifications in fields where there were no

qualifications previously, such as the seafood and marine industry, agriculture, nursing, BPO and adult literacy amongst others.

Currently, the MQA is developing standards based on international benchmarks in fire fighting, hospitality on cruise ships, scaffolding and marine safety. In its quest to review pre-vocational programmes, the MQA is proposing to provide more relevancies to students with learning difficulties whereby learners are able to acquire the NQF Level 2 qualifications as a stepping-stone for further learning. It is to be noted that 125 NQF qualifications have already been developed and some 25 additional NQF qualifications will be developed next year. Mr Speaker, Sir, the NQF has enabled clear learning pathways for all learners which never existed before. For instance, fast growing sectors like tourism, BPO, ICT, automotive trades, construction and seafood and marine industry now have well defined pathways. Shortly, the MQA will be coming up with pathways for other sectors like electrical trades, health & social care and beauty care & hairdressing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for too long Paper Certificates were the only means whereby there was recognition of the level of skills attained by an individual. Those having wide experience with no formal qualifications were not given their due recognition.

The implementation since 2010 of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Mauritius has brought a new dimension to TVET whereby people having wide experience without any formal qualifications can now have their experience recognised into formal qualification.

To date, RPL has been implemented in tourism, plumbing, printing, construction and adult literacy. The MQA is now envisaging to extend the RPL to other sectors like agriculture, automotive trades, electrical trades, panel beating and spray painting. In addition, the RPL will be introduced in Rodrigues next year, in 2012.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as pioneer in the implementation of the RPL in the region, Mauritius is leading the concept in various African countries where workshops, conferences and training have been conducted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now conclude. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government

(Interruptions)

Leur bateau, c'était le bateau 'naufrage' - vous vous rappelez de cela – qu'on a sorti de la zone rouge et qu'on a amené dans le meilleur port. Maintenant on est en train de conduire vers les destinations où il y a le plaisir, le bonheur pour les mauriciens.

Let me conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, in saying that this Government is fulfilling most of its electoral promises that it made to the nation, although it could have easily invoked the European crisis to shirk from its responsibilities. *Cela aurait été trop facile.*

One of the key messages that this Budget has sent to the nation as a whole, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that of resilience. If a country does not have an economy that is resilient in the face of variegated and incessant exogenous changes, then the future is, indeed, bleak.

If a country does not have an economy that is resilient in the face of validated and incessant, exogenous changes then the future is indeed bleak. We welcome positive criticism. I said it at the beginning and I am repeating it now. Mr Speaker, Sir, let us give this Budget its chance to succeed for the country. For this, we need the helping hand of one and all. We are in a democracy which gives us all reasons to feel proud to be Mauritian. In such a context, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Opposition has and will have its say but Government must work and deliver and thus, must have its way. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be adjourned.

Dr. Hookoom rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move for the adjournment of the House to Wednesday 09 November 2011, at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

Mr Speaker: I would like to hear short interventions and short answers.

(Interruptions)

(7.31 p.m.)

CEB – EMPLOYEES - SALARY INCREASE

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): our issues are not so short. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue concerning the hon. Deputy Prime Minister regarding the CEB.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since April 2006 I have been raising on many occasions the case of retired CEB workers concerning the indexation of the salary increase at each salary increase which the CEB has been undertaking. My first PQ was B/398 and the then Minister Dr. Kasenally stated before the House that the matter was under consideration.

I raised the issue on 13 July 2006. The matter is still alive and will be determined in due course. The issue was raised in November 2010; the Deputy Prime Minister gave a long reply stating that the Appanah Report was looking after the problem. The issue was raised again by me on 05 April 2011 and the Deputy Prime Minister informed the House, I quote –

“I am advised by the CEB that the matter will be finalised in the weeks to come and I thank the hon. Member for the Question as I have also received representations to that effect.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this question is long outstanding and many employees of the CEB have passed away and their relatives have not received any of the amount which they should have been earning at each salary increase. I am appealing to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister as so many years have passed. I think it is the duty of the CEB and in recognition to the past CEB workers – I can see that the former Chairperson of the CEB is agreeable – that this matter be thrashed out. The more so, Sir, that the CEB, following the Appanah Report has been perceiving money from the CEB employees because their contribution has been increased and in return, they have not been receiving anything. Again, I appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if he could look into the matter, inform the House and inform the employees of the CEB of the situation. I have also been informed that the unions have written to the DPM on several occasions, especially the manual workers because this is causing a lot of hardship to their families.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have requested the new Chairman of the CEB to take this as a matter of urgency and it is one of his top priorities. He is going to address it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, your name is on the list. Have you withdrawn it?

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I have informed the Clerk that I will not be speaking today.

Mr Speaker: the Clerk did not inform me because your name is still on the list. Hon. Baloomoody!

(7.34 p.m.)

CAMP CHAPELON – MOTORCYCLES - RALLY AT NIGHT

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an important issue which may turn out to be a serious state of affair in the region of Camp Chapelon. I am addressing myself to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure. hon. Bachoo, and probably the Prime Minister's Office as well will be concerned.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an issue which might create a serious state of affair in the region of Camp Chapelon. In fact, it might create high tension which, I hope will not turn out violent. This is the issue of night rallies by motorcycles and auto cycles especially in the region of Camp Chapelon which, of course, is not only a danger to road safety but, it is also creating much inconvenience for old age people who are sleeping and especially students who are studying at night. They go through the *passerelle* on motorcycles and come down and they go round. They have alerted the Police and we are supposed to have a community service in this country. On paper, I have seen that we have but, unfortunately, in Camp Chapelon the Police are not cooperating. We have had meeting with the *Forces Vives* in the presence of the three Members of Parliament; the Police were invited but they did not turn up. They have promised to put, at least, one or two police officers at night on the bridge but, unfortunately, they did it only on the night of 20 October when there was high tension between the inhabitants. Nearly 200 to 250 people were on the road to protest. Unfortunately, nothing has been done. What is worst is that this state of affairs is continuing and there is a betting going on there. They bet among themselves on who will come first or second or who will create more noise by having more decibels from their auto cycles. They are appealing urgently for the Ministry. I know that the Police have informed them that the law has to be amended as there is no contravention as regards rally and it is not an offence if you ride your motor bike at night. I do not know if the law has to be amended – probably the Road Traffic Act has to be amended. Pending that amendment, they suggest that two things that can be

done urgently. First, to have obstacle on that flyover but not to obstruct the passage of motor cycles because they need their motor cycles to leave their residence which is sometimes on the right side and to go and work on the left side; to allow motor cycles to go through but they are prepared to push their motor cycles on the flyover. Secondly, for the time being at least we could put some speed cameras in that specific region. There is a camera around 200 meters down but they want to have one there so that they cannot speed. If the law has to be amended to prohibit rally at night, so be it. Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that we are taking it very seriously and definitely we are going to report the matter to the Commissioner of Police. Possibilities of even amending the regulations will be considered.

(7.38 p.m.)

LES SALINES PORT LOUIS – HARBOR BRIDGE PROJECT

– AFFECTED PROPERTIES

Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue that I am going to raise today concerns again the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. It is about the project of the Harbour Bridge.

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a new survey in this region, I put the question to the hon. Minister sometimes back and I wanted to know who are those inhabitants who are going to be affected by this project. Recently, some more properties have been surveyed and it seems that now there is a new list of properties which are going to be affected. The hon. Minister will have to inform the inhabitants of Les Salines accordingly.

Up to now, we are in confusion as we do not know which property is going to be affected by this project. I will maybe ask the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure to publish a list of all the properties which are going to be affected by the project, whether totally or partly, and even indicate on a case-to-case basis how the Minister is going to remedy the situation by giving either another possibility of relocating them or compensate. Until now,

there is complete confusion on this issue. I would like the Minister to just clarify the situation in the interest of the inhabitants of Les Salines, Port Louis.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, this matter concerns the Ministry of Housing but my colleague the Minister of Housing and Lands is not here but, one thing that I am aware of, is that, section 6 has already been published in Government Gazette and it means that all those plots of land which will be required for the Harbour Bridge have already been identified. Publication has already taken place in section 6. Now we are moving to section eight. So everybody whose land will be taken partly or wholly has already been informed because they have been served letters. Nevertheless, when the hon. Member will be back, I am going to communicate with him and we will see in what way, we can call all those persons who were involved in that and talk to them. In fact, the offers will be made by the Valuation Office. The Valuation Office will take over this work.

(7.40 p.m.)

EUGENE DU PONCEL STREET - BRIDGE

Mr M. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

M. le président, le problème que je vais soulever concerne le ministre des administrations régionales et donc la municipalité de Port Louis. Cela concerne le pont qui se trouve à la rue Eugene du Poncel. J'ai déjà soulevé ce problème à trois reprises ici même; deux fois à l'ajournement et une fois à travers une question écrite.

Le pont était complètement délabré et représentait un danger pour les habitants. La reconstruction a déjà commencé par la municipalité de Port Louis, mais cela fait plus que deux semaines que les travaux ont cessé et les murs ne sont pas encore élevés et cela représente un danger pour les piétons, les automobilistes et pour tout le monde.

Donc, je demande ici au ministre, s'il peut faire le nécessaire pour que les travaux reprennent immédiatement et que les travaux soient complétés dans le plus bref délai.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Speaker: I am not trying to intervene, but I will just say that these small matters can be resolved by a phone call to the hon. Minister, and if the hon. Minister would not respond to the hon. Member, he could raise it here.

(Interruptions)

I take the point of the hon. Bhagwan, but today the hon. Member met the hon. Minister so many times in the corridor and he could have raised the point with him.

(Interruptions)

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): M. le président, j'ai entendu le *request* de l'honorable Ameer Meea et je vais aviser la municipalité.

(7.42 p.m.)

«SITE DE RENCONTRE LOCALE» - PUBLICITY

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): M. le président, en l'absence de l'honorable Premier ministre, je m'adresserai à l'honorable vice-Premier ministre. Je voudrai réitérer – cela tombe bien que vous dites qu'on peut répéter – la requête que j'avais faite à l'honorable Premier ministre, le 18 Octobre dernier.

Je me réfère à cette publicité à nouveau, qui passe à la radio tous les matins, au moment même où les enfants se préparent pour aller à l'école. C'est une publicité faite pour vanter un site de rencontre locale. Nous entendons une mère, donc une adulte, exprimer sa joie parce qu'elle a rencontré, à travers ce site, un bel homme et qu'elle est persuadée qu'il fera son bonheur parce qu'il est beau. Nous l'entendons dire à sa fille, dont on ne connaît pas l'âge : essaye toi aussi, ma chérie.

M. le président, nous savons le danger que ces sites de rencontre peuvent représenter pour les jeunes. Il y a eu pas mal d'incidents. Nous déplorons aussi l'augmentation des cas de viol et d'agression de jeunes et de la pédophilie. Ainsi, nous ne pouvons que nous élever avec force contre cette publicité qui continue sur les ondes en ce moment malgré le fait qu'on s'est élevé contre cela il y a bientôt 15 jours.

Je demanderai donc à nouveau au vice-Premier ministre de bien vouloir passer le message à l'honorable Premier ministre pour s'assurer, une fois pour toutes, que cette publicité soit enlevée de la radio. Et dans le même souffle, je demanderai à l'honorable

Premier ministre d'insister auprès du *IBA to cast a closer eye on advertisements when children are implied.*

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It will be done. It will be transmitted to the hon. Prime Minister.

(7.44 p.m.)

(1) PELLEGRIN/ST. JEAN - UNDERPASS

(2) ST. JEAN/PHOENIX - UNDERPASS

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes): Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to address two little things to the hon. Minister for Public Infrastructure. One is the underpass for pedestrians between Pellegrin...

(Interruptions)

No, there have been many representations.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let me listen to the hon. Member.

Ms Deerpalsing: And the other side, coming from St. Jean, if we could get it cleaned up and then if we could put security cameras. The most dangerous one is the overpass, a bit further up, between St. Jean and Phoenix, where the glasses have become completely opaque. There have been several requests for it to be cleaned up, but it has not been. Can I ask the hon. Minister if it could be cleaned up and needful be done for security cameras also?

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the needful will be done.

Mr Speaker: During lunchtime, this could have been talked out with the hon. Minister.

(7.46 p.m.)

CHEMIN GRENIER - MARKET FAIR

Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, I will raise an issue, which concerns the hon. Minister of Local Government, who also happens to be the MLA of Constituency No.14.

It concerns the fair, which is operational on Sundays in the premises of Keats College, Girls Department and at Lotus road, Chemin Grenier behind Bank One, site belonging to the Chemin Grenier Islamia Masjid. Both the manager of Keats College and the President of Chemin Grenier Islamia Masjid, have received letters from the Grand Port/Savanne District Council, asking them to stop operations on their premises. There are more than 75 hawkers working on those sites and they have been there for more than 16 years, they have been earning their living out of this activity. In fact, they were all operating in Chemin Lotus, but there was a verbal arrangement between the District Council and the hawkers to leave this site and to move where they are because of the activities of the Health Centre there.

Now they are being asked to move in the new market place at Surinam. The hon. Minister surely knows what is the distance between Surinam and Chemin Grenier. It is four kilometres away. Surinam market does not have any amenity. It is surrounded by cane fields and there is no activity as such. People from le Morne, Baie Du Cap and Bel Ombre, all come to Chemin Grenier to purchase their vegetables every Sunday. They take this opportunity to see the doctor, the dentist, to use bank facilities, to buy their medicines and to buy whatever they need from the hawkers.

These people already pay transport to the tune of Rs100 to come to Chemin Grenier. If they have to move to Surinam, they will have to bear additional costs. I am, therefore, asking the hon. Minister of Local Government, to look into the matter, to discuss with the District Council and to plead in favour of the hawkers until a suitable place is found for them in Chemin Grenier.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Je remercie l'honorable membre. Je vais aviser le *District Council*, mais je suis au courant du problème qu'on a à Chemin Grenier. C'est dans le *pipeline* maintenant, on va construire *a new market fair* à Chemin Grenier.

At 7.48 p.m. the sitting was, on its rising adjourned to Wednesday 09 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BHAKTIVEDANTA STREET, QUATRE BORNES – CAR ACCIDENT

(No. B/811) **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 car accident that occurred on Saturday 8 October 2011, at about 12.30 p.m., opposite the Merritt Complex, along the Bhaktivedanta Street, Sodnac, Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the make and number plate of the car involved, indicating the -

- (a) name of the driver and of the occupants, if any, and
- (b) name of the person
 - (i) who reported the accident to the Police Station, and
 - (ii) to whom the responsibility of the car was entrusted.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 08 October 2011 at about 12 50 hours, a Government car make Mercedes Benz E250 and bearing registration number BX 450 (79 RM 10) was involved in a road accident along Bhaktivedanta Street, Sodnac, Quatre Bornes.

About part (a) of the question, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police Constable 8304, the driver of the vehicle was alone in the car at the time of the accident.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the Police Constable reported the accident to Sodnac Police Station, and he had the responsibility of the car then.

ROCHE NOIRES – VIP BUNGALOW - THEFT

(No. B/812) **Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case of theft in a bungalow reportedly belonging to a Very Very Important Person, at Roches Noires, in July 2011, was reported and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 03 July 2011, a case of theft in a bungalow at Roches Noires was reported at Rivière du Rempart Police Station.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that in a statement given by the complainant to the Police, the latter stated that an unknown person broke into his room, threatened him with a knife and took away a sum of Rs20,000.

During the course of the Police enquiry, several persons were questioned. The enquiry is still in progress.

AGRICULTURAL FIELDS – VEGETABLES - LARCENY

(No. B/813) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the larceny of vegetables in agricultural fields, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, over the past two years, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and if so, the -

- (a) outcome thereof, and
- (b) steps taken to prevent the commission thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of reported cases of larceny of vegetables is as follows -

- (i) 46 for the period November to December 2009;
- (ii) 248 for the period January to December 2010, and
- (iii) 216 for the period January to October 2011

In regard to part (a) of the question, in 37 cases, the accused were fined. In 16 cases, the accused were sentenced to imprisonment. 295 cases have been classified and 7 cases are pending court judgment. 155 cases are still under enquiry.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the local CID and the ADSU are tasked to conduct joint operations for the arrest of suspects and checking of vegetable carriers. Police carry out roadblocks at strategic places and more regular police patrols at critical hours are concentrated in regions where harvests of vegetables and fruits are expected. The Police Crime Prevention Unit conducts awareness campaigns with the planters.

At divisional level, Divisional Commanders of the Police hold regular meetings with vegetable planters in their respective divisions in order to prevent larceny. The Vegetable Planters' Association representatives have a dedicated telephone line to seek assistance from the Police.

The Small Planters Welfare Fund participates at the National Awareness Campaign against Crime-Security and Safety Week which is organised annually by the Police to sensitise planters on the above measures. The Small Planters Welfare Fund together with the Police have established four Permanent Regional Committees which includes the Local Authorities and planters' representatives. These Regional Committees meet regularly to define actions for localities falling under specific region and to ensure follow up and efficacy of actions taken. A first Regional Committee was organised at the Police Division, Curepipe on 04 April 2011.

The Local Authorities are having more rigid control measures on the sale of agricultural produce more particularly on the roadside so as to eliminate these sales outlets where a large quantity of stolen vegetables are being sold.

The measures adopted by the Police and the Small Planters Welfare Fund have yielded positive results and the number of cases reported to the Police have decreased from 407 in 2009 to 248 in 2010.

PUBLIC SECTOR – PSC - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/814) 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 recruitment in the public sector, he will state if Government proposes to review the powers of the Public Service Commission in relation thereto.

Reply: Section 89 of the Constitution empowers the Public Service Commission to appoint persons to hold or act in any offices in the public service, to exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and to remove such persons from office. Furthermore, the PSC is empowered to regulate its own proceedings.

In fact, the mission of the PSC goes beyond that of an ordinary recruiting body. The PSC shares the highly sensitive responsibility of maintaining ethical standards and

safeguarding public confidence in the public service. This is the reason why the founding fathers of our Constitution introduced all the necessary safeguards to guarantee its independence. This independence must be maintained at all cost, as it is vital for the PSC to discharge its constitutional responsibilities in all serenity.

The Government therefore does not propose to review any of the powers of the Public Service Commission.

I wish to reassure the House that this Government has never done, and will never do, anything that will jeopardise the independence of this institution or usurp its powers.

The House will recall that in his 2010 Budget Speech the former Minister of Finance proposed that, I quote -

“We need to ensure, however, that positions provided for are speedily filled. To this end, we will adopt the more modern procedures put in place by other Commonwealth countries, such as Singapore. In particular, the PSC will further delegate recruitment and promotion authority to Ministries and Departments for technical and managerial staff, except at the most senior grades”.

In my reply to PQ 1B/692, I explained very clearly the intention of the Government and the rationale behind that proposal. I emphasised the fact that the PSC is empowered to delegate its powers of recruitment and it has, in fact, already delegated this power in many cases. Further delegation was considered desirable in order to ensure that posts for which funds were available were filled speedily. However, I also stressed on the fact that we need to take precautions so as to ensure that the merit principle is observed and that the kind of abuse revealed in the Supreme Court judgment in the case of Raj Ringadoo v/s Ashok Kumar Jugnauth is avoided.

Besides, the Government can only make recommendations to the PSC for further delegation. It is for the latter to decide on the extent of such delegation and the extent of control it will exercise on recruitments under delegated powers.

CUREPIPE – MCIT - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/815) 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 the Major Crime Investigation Team of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if same has been disbanded and if so, indicate the -

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) steps taken for the taking over of the services the team has been providing up and until the disbandment thereof.

Reply: The Major Crime Investigation Team (MCIT) was set up under the Central CID to investigate into cases of murder and homicide committed island-wide in June 2000.

Over the years, the role of the MCIT has been expanded to cover other high profile cases, including crack down operations against hardened criminals.

In September 2005, for practical reasons, the MCIT was decentralised with the creation of the MCIT (North) and the MCIT (South) covering the northern and southern parts of the island, respectively.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as part of the implementation of the National Policing Strategic Framework, which was launched in February 2010, existing units/sections are being restructured and new ones are being set up to meet new challenges.

In this regard, the investigative procedures, processes and structure of the Central and Divisional CIDs are being reviewed with a view to promoting a high standard of investigation.

As part of the restructure exercise, as from 28 September 2011, the activities of the MCIT have been centralised and it is based at the Line Barracks with an adequate number of staff to investigate only into cases of homicide and other high profile cases where accused are unknown.

The restructure of the MCIT would ensure greater operational efficiency and more judicious use of its resources. This would also enable the MCIT to focus only on its main function which is to investigate into cases of homicide and other high profile cases rather than carrying out parallel duties that the local CID/Regular Police perform themselves.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the MCIT is adequately staffed to carry out its duties. The cases which were previously handled by the MCIT Curepipe have been taken over by the MCIT Line Barracks.

RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS AND CEREMONIES – POLITICIANS - SPEECHES

(No. B/816) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if he proposes to hold consultations with all the political parties with a view to reaching a consensus among politicians to abstain from making speeches of a political nature at religious functions and ceremonies.

(Withdrawn)

PoCA & DECLARATION OF ASSETS ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/817) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the fight against corruption, he will state if he will consider introducing amendments to the –

- (a) Prevention of Corruption Act to give more power to the Independent Commission Against Corruption in order to enhance the effectiveness thereof, and
- (b) Declaration of Assets Act to -
 - (i) redefine the ambit thereof, and
 - (ii) make provision for the declarations to be submitted to Mr Speaker.

(Withdrawn)

ICAC – CASES - INQUIRIES

(No. B/818) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the inquiries carried out by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, since its setting-up to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the number of cases wherein -

- (a) the Commission has recommended

- (i) no prosecution
 - (ii) prosecution and where the Director of Public Prosecutions has administered a warning to the accused
 - (iii) prosecution and the cases have been dismissed and
- (b) conviction has been secured.

Reply: I shall reply to Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/818 and B/820 at the same time as they relate to the same issue.

As the House is aware, pursuant to section 36 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002, as subsequently amended, the annual reports on the activities of the Independent Commission Against Corruption are laid down before the National Assembly.

The information requested in the parliamentary questions is already available in these annual reports.

HIGHLANDS PROJECT

(No. B/819) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Highlands Project, he will state if it has been reviewed by the Prime Minister's Office, as announced in the Budget Speech of November 2010, and if so, where matters stand.

Reply: The project for the construction of a satellite city at Highlands was initiated in September 2004.

Following an announcement in the November 2010 Budget Speech that the Highlands Project will be reviewed and will be under the responsibility of my office, my office has indeed reviewed the whole project.

The findings of this review are that, from the perspective of the Private Promoter/Developer, the Highlands Project would have been a mega bonanza. Indeed, 2,000 acres of land were to be given to a Private Promoter/Developer, out of which 50 acres were to be used for the construction of Government Offices by the Private Promoter/ Developer at his own costs.

Thus, the value of land which the Private Promoter/Developer would have got is estimated at Rs19.5 billion, that is 1,950 acres at the rate of Rs10 m. per acre, value of land estimated and indicated last year by the Valuation and Real Estate Consultancy Services (Valuation Department).

According to the report of the Government Office Management Unit (GOMU) of April 2008 on office space requirements for Ministries/Departments at Highlands, it was indicated that 1.9 million square feet would be required for Government Offices. The construction cost for the Private Developer was estimated at Rs3.8 billion, that is, 1.9 million square feet at the rate of Rs2,000 per square foot. The mega bonanza profit of the Private Promoter/Developer would have been Rs15.7 billion, that is, Rs19.5 billion for 1,950 acres minus Rs3.8 billion for construction cost of 1.9 million square feet.

In summary, to get 1.9 million square feet of office space, Government would have given to the Private Promoter/Developer a mega bonanza profit of Rs15.7 billion or about USD 520 m.

The Private Promoter/Developer spends Rs3.8 billion for construction of Government Offices and, in return, gets 1,950 acres of land free to develop. The landed cost per acre to the Private Promoter/Developer is Rs190,000 per acre, that is, Rs3.8 billion divided by 1,950 acres, representing 20% of estimated market price which is Rs10 m. per acre.

There is no disputing that Port Louis, the capital, is the nerve centre of the country, and it should stay as the Administrative Centre of the country. There are quite a few glaring examples of countries that have suffered serious adverse effects, economically, financially, and socio-culturally, in shifting their historical administrative capitals to other geographical areas. Ivory Coast and Tanzania are two such examples. To advance congestion as a key reason for shifting Ministries/Departments to Highlands does not hold in the context of the various initiatives of Government to precisely solve the congestion problem: the Ring Road and the Harbour Bridge projects are reminders of such initiatives which are well under way under the PPP-BOT model.

Apart from the now tenuous issue of congestion as a key reason to shift the Administrative Centre from Port Louis to Highlands, no other convincing reasons have been put forward to do so. On the contrary, there are likely serious adverse repercussions in effecting such a shift.

The whole world knows and recognises Port Louis as the historically significant Political, Administrative, Economic, and Financial capital and nerve centre of the country. Moving Ministries/Departments away from Port Louis will not only reduce this significance, but will also impact negatively on the psyche of the inhabitants and residents of Port Louis, adversely affecting downwards the value of property, and creating a socio-cultural vacuum that, in turn, will bite deeply into the relevance of the hitherto sacrosanct memorial statues, and other living symbols of our past, like the Aapravasi Ghat. In addition, our relatively and geographically small country can ill afford likely confusion in international eyes and minds in moving the Government administrative centre to an internationally unknown area which might take years to be identified and recognised as such.

Consideration is being given to moving all gaming houses inclusive of casinos to Highlands, as well as to creating thereat Leisure Parks and other amenities. In fact, the total area of 2,000 acres will be put to the best possible use in the public and national interest, like the establishment of a new Driver Education and Training Centre.

ICAC – CASES – DPP

(No. B/820) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to fraud and corruption, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Director General of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, over the past two years, indicating the number thereof –

- (a) in which an inquiry has been carried out and
- (b) which have been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

(Vide to PQ No. B/818)

MINORS - CRIME CASES

(No. B/821) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the minors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of cases of serious crime in which they have been involved over the past year.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from 01 November 2010 to 31 October 2011, 97 cases of serious offences involving 126 minors as accused parties have been reported to the Police. For the same period, 279 cases of serious offences involving 283 minors as victims have also been reported.

With a view to addressing cases of offence involving minors, the Police Family Protection Unit, the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs* and the Crime Prevention Unit not only focus on intervention, but also on crime prevention. These units carry out sensitisation campaigns island-wide with children on –

- (a) protective behaviours and personal safety;
- (b) services provided by the Police, the Ministry concerned and other stakeholders;
- (c) relevant laws and other instruments, and
- (d) reporting and providing information on suspected cases to the Police.

In primary and secondary schools, pupils and students are informed about their rights and responsibilities, at-risk behaviours, relevant legal provisions/instruments on sexual offence, and discipline as well as personal safety. Sensitisation campaigns on juvenile delinquency and the consequences in case of any breach of the law are also organised. Since year 2005 to 03 November 2011, 33,102 minors from primary schools and secondary schools, have been sensitised by the Police Family Protection Unit.

Additionally, the Mauritius Police Force has conducted a series of training relevant to criminal activities against children for Police officers working at Police stations, and other units such as the Criminal Investigation Department, Police Prosecutors Office, Passport and Immigration Office; and Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit with a view to providing them with necessary knowledge, skills and techniques to deal with such cases.

In the Government Programme 2010-2015, it was announced that the administration of juvenile justice would be reviewed in order to bring same in line with the “United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice”. It is proposed to repeal the Juvenile Offenders Act and replace it by a new Juvenile Justice Act. Among others, it is proposed to include the following provisions in the new legislation –

- (a) the setting up of Central Juvenile Court to prosecute juveniles without delay. The said court would be staffed with trained Judges, legal officers and other professionals;
- (b) the adoption of a minimum age of criminal responsibility. Juveniles below the minimum age would not be dealt with by the juvenile criminal justice system, and
- (c) the provision of a wide range of diversionary measures and extra-judicial sanctions to be applied by the Director of Public Prosecutions, in lieu of prosecution.

ROAD ACCIDENTS (FATAL) – MINI-BUSES/VANS

(No. B/822) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to fatal road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof in which mini-buses/vans have been involved, since January 2008 to end of October 2011, indicating the –

- (a) number of victims, and
- (b) average age of the drivers.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2008 up to 31 October 2011, a total of 131 fatal road accidents involving 137 mini-buses or vans occurred, in which 164 persons were killed.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the age of the drivers involved in the accidents ranges between 18 and 60 years.

I have, on numerous occasions, stated in this very House that road safety remains one of the priority issues of Government. A number of measures have already been put in place to address the issue of fatal accidents in a coordinated manner by the Police Department, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, and the Special Road Safety Unit of my office. These measures include –

- (i) intensification of public awareness and sensitisation campaigns through the media on road safety aspects and defensive driving for drivers in specific sectors such as the Sugar Industry, Transport Companies, factories and commercial firms;
- (ii) regular snap roadblocks and stop and search operations carried out at strategic points by officers of the Special Mobile Force, the Special Support Unit, the Traffic Branch, the Emergency Response Service and the regular Police;
- (iii) purchase of 900 belisha flashing lamps by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to be installed at pedestrian crossings along classification roads, and
- (iv) purchase of 53 additional fixed and mobile speed enforcement cameras by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

In addition, amendments to the Road Traffic Act are currently being finalised for the introduction of the Penalty Point System under which road traffic offenders will be sanctioned not only by fines, but also by penalty points which may lead to disqualification of the licence of a driver. Further amendments will also be worked out for the introduction of a probationary driving licence scheme.

Emphasis is also being laid on the need to review the way people drive in Mauritius. It is in this context that the Special Road Safety Unit of my office is working on the project for the setting up of a Driver Education and Training Centre to provide for formal and systematic training and education programmes designed to improve road user skills, and to promote respectful and responsible attitudes and behaviours amongst drivers. The ultimate objective is to ensure safe driving by drivers and riders.

DETAINEES – RELAPSE

(No. B/823) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the detainees who relapse after their release, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the –

- (a) rate thereof, and

(b) additional steps that are being, or will be taken, if any, to address the issue.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the information requested, as provided to me by the Commissioner of Prisons. The majority of the offenders going back to prisons are persons having committed drug-related offences.

In regard to part (b) of the question, emphasis is being placed on the rehabilitation of detainees with a view to enhancing the detainees' skills so that they can find employment on their return to normal life.

As part of rehabilitation programmes, literacy and numeracy courses are being provided to detainees with the assistance of Non-Governmental Organisations. Other education and vocational training are also provided to detainees and they are encouraged to take MITD examinations. Spiritual courses are offered by appropriate organisations in order to promote ethical and moral values which normally prevent offending behaviour.

In addition, preventive and rehabilitation programmes are being provided to address the problem of substance abuse and proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the prisons. These include detoxification and HIV/AIDS care programmes which are being carried out in collaboration with other Governmental Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations.

Since 2005, around 6,200 detainees have participated in the rehabilitation activities.

My Government will step up the rehabilitation programmes, literacy and numeracy courses to be provided to detainees with the assistance of Non-Governmental Organisations and other voluntary organisations.

In July this year, the University of Technology in collaboration with the Mauritius Prisons Service and the UNODC conducted a national workshop on the subject "Incarceration and Recidivism – Perspective and Challenges in Mauritius". The draft report of the workshop will be validated with the stakeholders on 23 November 2011. The current rehabilitation programmes will be reviewed in the light of the recommendations emerging from the workshop.

The Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is also working on projects in collaboration with NGOs to provide support to former detainees upon their release. Additionally, the Ministry has commissioned the National Economic and Social Council to carry out a study on the social integration of stigmatised and vulnerable groups, including former detainees.

Further, at the request of my office, the UNODC has agreed to provide assistance for the development of a strategic framework for the Prisons Department, including rehabilitation and treatment intervention programmes and re-integrative planning for detainees returning to the community.

**COMMONWEALTH HEAD OF GOVERNMENTS MEETING CONFERENCE-
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE**

(No. B/824) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the recent Commonwealth Head of Governments Meeting Conference (CHOGM), held in Perth, he will state –

- (a) if the issue of human rights was debated thereat and, if so, the outcome thereof, and
- (b) the stand taken by Mauritius as to the choice of venue for the 2013 CHOGM Conference, in view of the alleged allegation of human rights abuse in Sri Lanka.

Reply: With respect to part (a) of the question, the issue of human rights, which is one of the core values of the Commonwealth, was extensively discussed during the CHOGM 2011, more particularly within the purview of the recommendations of a report prepared by an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and entitled ‘A Commonwealth of the People : Time for Urgent Reform’.

One of the key proposals of this report was the appointment of a Commonwealth Commissioner for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights. However, due to the absence of consensus on the issue, Heads of Government have decided to task the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth to further evaluate relevant options relating to the EPG’s proposal and to report to Foreign Ministers at their meeting to be held in New York in September 2012.

As regards part (b) of the question, at the CHOGM held in Uganda in 2007, Heads of Government took note of the offer from the President of Sri Lanka to host the 2011 CHOGM. However, at the 2009 CHOGM held in Trinidad and Tobago, Heads of Government agreed that Australia will host the 2011 CHOGM and Sri Lanka will host the 2013 CHOGM. This

decision was reaffirmed by the Heads of Government at the CHOGM recently held in Perth, Australia.

PRISONS – NGOs – HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS - VISIT

(No. B/825) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the prisons, he will state if he will consider liaising with the Commissioner of Prisons, with a view to ensuring access to the compounds thereof to the local and international Human Rights Organisations/Non-Governmental Organisations to visit the prisoners.

Reply: Under section 4(1)(d) of the Protection Human Rights Act, one of the functions of the National Human Rights Commission is to visit prisons to study the living conditions of the inmates and the treatment afforded to them. Whenever the Commission receives complaints about conditions of detention, an enquiry is carried out. In the light of the outcome of the enquiry, the Prisons authorities are requested to take actions as appropriate.

The Boards of Visitors, which are set up under the provisions of the Reform Institutions Act, have also access to prisons to enquire into the condition of detention of detainees, to hear any complaints by a detainee and to inquire into any abuse within an institution.

In addition, the Ombudsman investigates complaints received from detainees.

Further, Non-Governmental Organisations have access to prisons for rehabilitation and education purposes.

Our prisons are also open to international inspection under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) which has been signed and ratified by Mauritius. In this regard, the subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment visited Mauritius in October 2007. This was the first visit of the Subcommittee following the entry into force of the OPCAT in June 2006.

I would like to inform the House that it is proposed, as part of our obligations under the OPCAT, to create the National Preventive Mechanism Division within the National Human Rights Commission whose functions will include visit to places of detention on a

regular basis so as to examine the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty with a view to ensuring their protection against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The draft Bill is in the process of being finalised by the State Law Office.

MAURITIUS DUTY FREE PARADISE LTD – MR V. C – RE-EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/828) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr V. C., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) date and reasons of his dismissal as Human Resources Manager, and
- (b) capacity in which he has been re-employed, indicating his present terms and conditions of employment.

Reply (The Prime Minister): The Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Co. Ltd., as any company governed by the Companies Act and its Constitution, has its own internal procedures to recruit its personnel. The management of the company is vested in its Directors and its management. It would, therefore, not be appropriate to embark on a debate about human resource or labour issues in the company which fall under the responsibility of senior management and Board of Directors.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES – ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – POSTS

(No. B/829) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the posts of Assistant Chief Executive in the local authorities, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from each of the municipal and district councils information as to if vacancies exist and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number thereof;
- (b) since when, and
- (c) if same -

- i. were advertised in 2010 and examinations conducted and, if so, if candidates were called for interview in early 2011, indicating the outcome thereof, and
- ii. have recently been advertised and, if so, when, indicating the reasons therefor.

Reply (The Prime Minister): In reply to previous parliamentary questions on this subject, the House has already been informed that appointments and promotions in the Local Government Service fall under the sole responsibility of the Local Government Service Commission, which in the exercise of its functions shall not be subject to the directive or control of any other person or authority.

It would, therefore, not be proper to provide such information.

STC - HEDGING TRANSACTION

(No. B/807) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the hedging transaction carried out by the State Trading Corporation, on 22 July 2008, he will state if Government was apprised thereof and had given approval to proceed therewith.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY DOCUMENT - PUBLIC CIRCULATION

(No. B/851) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the National Open and Distance Learning Policy Document for Mauritius, he will state –

- (a) if same contain mistakes and irregularities and, if so, indicate if an inquiry has been carried out to determine how the document was publicly circulated for validation and
- (b) obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if the Board thereof has

- (i) approved the public circulation thereof and
- (ii) taken any sanction against the Head of the Distance Education Department.

Reply: A National Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Policy for Mauritius is currently under preparation.

I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that a draft ODL policy document was circulated at a validation workshop organized on 21 April 2011 in Mauritius by TEC on behalf of the Southern African Development Community - Centre for Distance Education (SADC-CDE). The document has been updated in the light of views and comments expressed during the workshop.

With regard to part (b)(i) of the question, the approval of the TEC Board was not required as the first draft of the document circulated at the workshop did not emanate from TEC.

With regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, the issue of sanction does not arise in view of the above facts.

In fact, the document circulated was a draft – a draft meant for consultation with stakeholders. The very purpose of the workshop was to change, amend and correct any inclusion in the draft which stakeholders do not agree with and this is precisely what has been done.

I would like to inform the House that I have requested TEC to consult the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), more particularly Sir John Daniel, President and CEO of COL, who was in Mauritius recently and with whom we have established a strong relationship to assist in finalising the ODL Policy. The Commonwealth of Learning will also be requested to review the existing ODL Policies in the region and advise us on the best practices to prepare our own ODL policy. The use of ODL will form part of the strategy for the country to emerge as a knowledge hub.

LUPUS - CASES

(No. B/852) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to lupus, he will state the number of cases thereof diagnosed, since January 2008 to September 2011, indicating the -

- (a) average age of the patients thereof, and
- (b) number of patients under 25 years old.

Reply: I am informed that during period January 2008 to September 2011, the number of Lupus cases diagnosed is as follows -

<i>Year</i>	<i>No of cases</i>
	Total/Year
2008	40
2009	29
2010	52
2011 to September	32
Total	153

The average age of the patients is 40 years and 34 patients are under the age of 25 years.

CEB - MR B. NARROO - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/853) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to Mr B. N., Chairperson of the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to –

- (a) the terms and conditions of his appointment, and
- (b) if he was a former employee of the CEB and, if so, indicate -
 - (i) the position he occupied when he left, and
 - (ii) if he has been paid his lump sum on retirement and, if so, indicate the amount thereof.

Reply: Mr Balraj Narroo has been appointed as Chairman of the Central Electricity Board (CEB) in accordance with section 5 of the Central Electricity Board Act for a period of three (3) years with effect from 05 October 2011.

He is entitled to the same terms and conditions as his predecessor, namely a monthly fee of Rs80,000, a petrol allowance of Rs12,000 monthly and a chauffeur driven car.

As regards part (b), I am informed that Mr Narroo has served for 33 years at CEB and the last position he occupied was that of Senior Audit Officer at the Central Electricity Board. On 28 September 2011, the Board approved his retirement, which took effect from 05 October 2011.

The Central Electricity Board approved the payment of retirement benefits amounting to Rs1.2 m to him as per the prevailing pension rules.

CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD - CHAIRPERSON & MEMBERS - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/854) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Central Procurement Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the names and age of the Chairperson and of the Members thereof, indicating their respective date of first appointment.

Reply: In accordance with section 8 of the Public Procurement Act, the Chairperson and other members of the Central Procurement Board are appointed by the President of the Republic upon the advice of the Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

I am informed that the members of the current Board are -

- Mr Prem Coomar Beeharry as Chairperson, aged 62;
- Mr Michel Wan Bok Nale, Vice Chairperson, aged 60;
- Mr Devarajoo Rajah Gopal, Member, aged 78;
- Mr Harold Lucien Rosemond, Member, aged 66, and
- Mrs Lalita Suteeram, Member, aged 73.

With the exception of the Chairperson, who was recently appointed on 27 October 2011, the remaining Members were first appointed on 05 November 2007.

NEOTOWN PROJECT - FOREIGN INVESTORS - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/855) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Neotown Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the number and type of applications for permit submitted by the foreign investors therein or the technical staff thereof, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed that 4 applications were submitted to the Board of Investment for an occupation permit under the category of professional by Les Salines Development Ltd, the promoter of the Neotown project. All the applications have been determined and occupation permits issued by the Passport and Immigration Office.

With regard to the issue of Work permits, these are being dealt with at the level of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment.

POVERTY - STUDIES

(No. B/856) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to poverty, he will state the number of studies conducted by his Ministry since May 2010 to-date indicating the -

- (a) outcome in each case, and
- (b) number of pockets of absolute poverty identified, indicating the priority areas identified, if any, and progress achieved as at to date in the provision of housing units to the individuals/families found in this category.

Reply: As a caring Government, addressing poverty alleviation is one of our main priorities. Indeed, the need to improve the plight of the vulnerable population of Mauritius is emphasized in our Government Programme 2010-2015.

No country in this world has been able to tackle the problem of poverty successfully. Even in the United States a recent study has confirmed that pockets of poverty has increased over the years instead of going down despite economic prosperity. The battle against the scourge of absolute poverty is a long driven process and therefore, can only be won if a sustainable holistic approach is adopted in view of its extreme complexity.

The House, will take note that the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment that was created some 17 months ago had to undergo some teething problem.

I am informed that the NESC (National Economic and Social Council) had released a report in May 2010 on the social economic challenges and policy implications for Mauritius. The report does contain relevant statistics on pockets of poverty in Mauritius. It has also made a number of recommendations which are is still valid pertaining to the provision of support to be extended to the vulnerable groups of our society, particularly, in the wake of the International Food Crisis. The report was tabled in the House in July 2010.

In addition, I am informed that the National Economic and Social Council is in process of finalising a report on the social integration of stigmatized vulnerable groups and the report will be released shortly. I understand that this report will focus on four major stigmatized groups, namely, the ex-prisoners, injecting drug users, sex workers and HIV/AIDS patients and it contains measures to be taken for the integration of these groups in the mainstream of the society.

On the other hand, I am informed that the National Empowerment Foundation has, as from May 2010, conducted a series of in-house studies in the deprived regions of Mauritius to address specific issues of concern.

I am further informed that a survey was carried out by the NEF between October 2010 and March 2011 following the recommendation of the World Bank to the effect that NEF should adopt a case management instead of a project-based approach. Following the survey 29 regions have now been established which includes the 229 pockets of poverty already identified in the past.

The priority areas identified during survey are as follows -

- (i) housing conditions;
- (ii) welfare of vulnerable children and family development;
- (iii) unemployment through training and placement;
- (iv) upgrading of the living conditions of the vulnerable group through the implementation of Government Empowerment Project;
- (v) access to potable water;
- (vi) access to electricity, and
- (vii) provision of sanitary facilities.

As regards the last part of the question between May 2010 and October 2011, 1696 corrugated iron sheets housing units and 30 concrete houses with CIS roof have been constructed by the NEF. 36 additional concrete houses with CIS roof are presently under construction.

HOSPITALS - BEDS

(No. B/857) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the hospitals, he will state if there is a lack of beds thereat and if so, indicate the remedial steps that will be taken.

Reply: I wish to thank the Hon. Member for the question on this issue which is equally my concern as Minister responsible for Health. I wish to inform the House that in our public hospitals there are 3430 beds to cater for a population of around 1.2M which means there is 1 bed for every 362 inhabitants.

The average bed occupancy rate in our hospitals as at December 2010 is 73.5% which is comparable to that of Singapore which is 82%. However in bigger hospitals like Victoria Hospital and Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital which cater for larger catchment areas and provide more specialised services, admissions are substantially higher, so that the bed occupancy rate in these hospitals ranges from 78% to 87%.

I wish to point out that there has been a significant increase in the number of admissions in our hospitals from January 2011 to date, as the monthly average of admissions in 2010 was 15,912, whereas in 2011 to date it is 17,463. This represents an increase of 9.4%.

It is expected that this problem would be solved soon with -

- a) the opening of the Block C at Flacq Hospital by December 2011 whereby 116 additional beds would be available;
- b) the construction at Victoria Hospital of four additional wards with a capacity of 134 beds, and
- c) the coming into operation of the new Jeetoo Hospital with 100 additional beds by mid- 2012.

ROSE HILL & CAMP LEVIEUX NHDC – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/858) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water in the Constituency No.19, Stanley and Rose Hill, he will state if he has been informed of an irregular supply thereof at Plaisance, Rose Hill, and at the National Housing Development Company Ltd. Housing Estate at Camp Levieux and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken, indicating if the water pumps at the NHDC Housing Estate at Camp Levieux are presently operational.

Reply: I am informed that the region of Plaisance in Rose Hill is supplied from the Stanley service reservoir, which in turn receives an aggregate volume of 10 000 cubic meters daily from two boreholes. The region is also supplemented by the La Marie Treatment Plant with a volume of 6,000 cubic meters daily through the Candos service reservoir.

Owing to low water storage at Mare aux Vacoas reservoir, and the gradual decrease of water level in boreholes, water is being supplied once daily from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. with valve operations to supply households located on the high elevation, supplemented by water tanker services where necessary.

With regard to the NHDC Housing estate at Camp Levieux, the hon. Member may refer to the reply I gave to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/581 on 09 November 2010 wherein I informed the House that, in the absence of syndics, the pump, which was initially under lock and key, had disappeared, the float valves in the roof tanks were not operational and the reticulation network needed rehabilitation.

I wish to inform the House that, following several site meetings by the CWA and NHDC, the CWA has advised NHDC on remedial works required including internal plumbing and roof tanks in order to resolve the water problems permanently.

The hon. Minister of Finance has announced in the Budget Speech measures to support the operation of syndics in NHDC estates. This would address more effectively the problems in the housing estates, including water supply.

**PLAISANCE, ROCHES BRUNES & CAMP LEVIEUX - SEWERAGE WORKS –
ROAD RESURFACING**

(No. B/859) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage works carried out at Plaisance, Roches Brunes and Camp Levieux in Constituency No.19, Stanley and Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, a list of the roads which have been completely resurfaced after completion of the works, indicating when the resurfacing of the other roads will be completed.

Reply: I am tabling a list of 33 roads which have been resurfaced following completion of sewerage works in the regions of Plaisance, Roches Brunes and Camp Levieux.

I am advised by the Wastewater Management Authority that the final reinstatement of all the remaining roads in the regions referred to by the hon. Member is expected to be completed by April 2012.

**POLICE INFORMATION & OPERATIONS ROOM – PABX EMERGENCY
TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

(No. A/307) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Information and Operations Room, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand in relation to the introduction of a new PABX emergency telephone system, for increased efficiency of the service, and
- (b) the number of Police Officers posted thereat, indicating –
 - (i) the number thereof working at any one shift, and
 - (ii) if consideration will be given for an increase in the number thereof.

(Reply not available)

POLICE TRANSPORT BRANCH - MINI-BUSES

(No. A/308) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Police Officers who reside in remote areas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of mini-buses used from the Police Transport Branch for the conveyance thereof to and from the place of work early morning and at night, indicating if –

- (a) same is cost effective, and
- (b) these Police Officers concurrently receive monthly traveling allowance.

(Reply not available)

MBC – RECRUITMENT – JULY 2005 NOV. 2011

(No. A/309) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, the list of the persons recruited thereat, since July 2005 to-date, indicating their respective address and remuneration.

(Reply not available)

POUDRE D'OR POLICE STATION

(No. A/310) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Poudre d'Or Police Station, he will state if he has been informed of the derelict state thereof and of a lack of space thereat and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the advisability of putting up a new and modern Police Station.

(Reply not available)

PITON POLICE STATION - NORTHERN DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS

(No. A/311) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Northern Divisional Headquarters, located at the Piton Police Station, he will state if he has been informed of the bad state thereof and of a lack of space thereat and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) when the building was constructed, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for the advisability of putting up a new and modern office therefor.

(Reply not available)

CENT GAULETTES - NEW POLICE STATION - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/312) 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 the project for the construction of a new Police Station at Cent Gaulettes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if land has already been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) location and extent thereof, and
- (b) start and completion dates of the works therefor.

(Reply not available)

MS M. S. S. T. - ANONYMOUS THREATS

(No. A/313) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to one Ms M. S. S. T., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the latter has reported a case of receiving anonymous threats over the telephone for serious bodily harm and death, made since April 2011, and if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof, indicating if an application has been lodged in Court for an authorisation to inquire in these alleged anonymous calls.

(Reply not available)

PORT LOUIS & GRAND BAY - CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. A/314) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television Surveillance system installed in Port Louis and Grand Bay, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he is aware that some images cannot be properly captured due to the presence of trees and insufficient street lighting, and, if so, indicate if remedial steps will be taken in relation thereto.

(Reply not available)

POLICE EXECUTIVE SERVICES - BUILDING

(No. A/315) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the building housing the Police Executive Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the name of the owner thereof;
- (b) the number of floors and extent thereof, indicating the monthly rent payable therefor, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the –
 - (i) relocation thereof in a Government-owned building within the precincts of the Line Barracks, and
 - (ii) extension of their telephone lines to the Police Exchange telephone system.

(Reply not available)

DISTRICT AND INTERMEDIATE COURTS - WARRANTS OF ARREST

(No. A/316) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the warrants of arrest issued by the District and Intermediate Courts and which have not yet been executed, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) present number thereof which were issued more than six months ago, at each Police Station, and
- (b) additional steps that will be taken for the timely executive thereof.

(Reply not available)

PORT LOUIS - CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION STREET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. A/317) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television Street Surveillance System installed in

Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if all the –

- (a) streets in the commercial area of Port Louis are adequately covered and, if not, if remedial steps will be taken, and
- (b) cameras are operational and, if not, why not.

(Reply not available)

POLICE QUARTERS – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. A/318) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Quarters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof which need to be pulled down, indicating –
 - (i) the location thereof, and
 - (ii) where matters stand as to the pulling down thereof, and
- (b) if any project for the construction of new ones is being envisaged.

(Reply not available)

POLICE OFFICERS - NEW DIGITAL RADIO COMMUNICATION

(No. A/319) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the New Digital Radio Communication of the make ZTE, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof issued to the Police Officers as at to-date, indicating –

- (a) when the system will be fully operational, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for the issuing thereof to the Police Officers posted at the Police Transport Branch, for use whilst on duty outside office.

(Reply not available)

PLAINES WILHEMS, PORT LOUIS & GRAND' BAIE - SEWERAGE NETWORK

(No. A/320) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the house connections to the sewerage network for the regions of Plaines Wilhems Lots 1 and 2, Port Louis and Grand Baie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if the process of appointing contractors has been completed and, if so -

- (a) indicate when, and
- (b) table the list of the contractors who have been appointed.

Reply: I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/320 and B/321 together.

House Connections - New Projects in Unsewered Regions

The Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project is being implemented in three lots, namely -

- (i) Lot 1A covering Stanley, Hugnin, Trefles, Old Quatre Bornes, Bassin;
- (ii) Lot IB covering Mont Roches, Roches Brunes and Plaisance, and
- (iii) Lot 2 covering Belle Rose, Quatre Bornes and Sodnac. These projects consist of the construction of sewer and house connections.

The number of house connections under each lot, the number of connections completed as at October 2011 and the contractors for each lot are as follows –

Lot	No of house connections to be carried out	No of house connections completed as at October 2011	Contractor	Date of award of contract	Contract value Rs (M)
1 A	13,000	3,700	Sotravic Ltd/ C.F Thymian	19 October 2009	2, 842, 498, 362
1B	4,000	3,700	Sotravic Ltd/ Beijing Construction Engineering Group China	3 November 2008	846, 527, 032

2	13,000	7,752	Sotravic Ltd/ Beijing Construction Engineering Group China	17 December 2007	2, 340, 187, 095
TOTAL	28,800	15,152			

As regards Grand’Baie, two new projects to achieve about 15,000 house connections are presently at initial stages of design and hiring consultancy services.

House Connections in Sewered Regions

As regards the house connections in sewerred regions of Plaines Wilhems, Port Louis, and Grand’Baie, the works are divided in two lots -

- (i) one covering the sewerred areas of Port Louis, Baie du Tombeau, Grand’Baie and neighbouring sewerred regions, and
- (ii) the other lot covering sewerred areas of Plaines Wilhems.

Every year an amount is voted in the budget for such works. Since 2003, 5490 house connections have been carried out.

For the period 2010/2011, provision of Rs200 m. was made in the budget for 800 connections as well as for maintenance works.

The contractors appointed for these works in 2010/2011 were –

Region	Contractor	Amount
Plaines Wilhems	Sotravic Ltd	100,000,000
Port Louis, Grand’Baie, Baie du Tombeau	PAD&Co Ltd	100,000,000

As at October 2011, Rs157.9 m. had been utilised for 843 house connections and Rs37.4 m. for construction of street sewers. The funds under the vote item are exhausted.

I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that, as at 30 September 2011, 538 applications for house connections had been received.

The cost of house connections is borne by Government up to a ceiling of Rs175,000 per house connection. It has been noted that the house connections cost has been rising significantly. In this context, the overall management of the house connection project as well as the mode of contracting is currently being reviewed, in order to satisfy higher number applications for house connections. Thereafter, the Wastewater Management Authority will initiate fresh tender procedures for the appointment of contractors.

SEWERAGE NETWORK - HOUSE CONNECTIONS - APPLICATIONS

(No. A/321) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the house connections to the sewerage network, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the number of applications therefor which are pending, indicating the number thereof where the houses have already been completed;
- (b) if the Authority has already approved the appointment of contractors therefor, and
- (c) if funds are available and, if so, the amount thereof and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ No. A/320)

TAMARIN - FIRE STATION – SETTING UP

(No. A/322) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the setting up of a new Fire Station in Tamarin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Government Fire Services that the contract for the construction of a new fire station at Tamarin has already been awarded to the successful bidder and the site will be handed over to the latter by the end of this month.

PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT

(No.A/323) 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 public sector debt, he will state the total amount and percentage rate of Gross Domestic Product as at end of September 2011 compared to September 2010, giving an estimate of the amount and rate thereof as at the end of the year, classified in –

- (a) local debts;
- (b) foreign debts;
- (c) short term debts, and
- (d) long term debts, indicating the reasons for the change thereof and measures taken for re-profiling, if any.

Reply: The Public sector debt, which includes the debt of Government and public enterprises stood at around Rs171.4 billion as at end of September 2010, representing 58.6% of GDP. At end September 2011, public sector debt amounted to Rs176.2 billion, representing about 55.4% of GDP. By the end of the year 2011, it is estimated to reach around 57.2% of GDP, partly on account of the measures I have announced in the Budget speech for further stimulating growth and building up a buffer for rainy days.

It is worth mentioning that between September 2010 and December 2011, public enterprise debt as a percentage of GDP is expected to decrease from 8.3% to 6.6%. On the other hand, Government debt as a percentage of GDP is expected to increase slightly from 50.3% to 50.5% during the same period. The main reasons for the expected increase in Government debt include -

- (i) during 2011, Government has on-lent significant amounts to a number of public enterprises. This is one of the reasons why public enterprises debt is decreasing while Government debt is showing an increasing trend. Government lending to public enterprises is expected to amount Rs3.3 billion during 2011, out of which around Rs2.4 billion has been disbursed to the Central Electricity Board to finance the Extension of the Fort Victoria Power Station and Pointe Monnier Power Station, and
- (ii) the level of project implementation: It is expected that Government capital expenditure would reach around Rs8.4 billion during 2011, compared to Rs8 billion during 2010.

In terms of composition, as at end September 2010 public sector debt comprised 17.1% of external debt and 82.9% of domestic debt. Following disbursements from project and budget support external loans during 2011, the share of foreign public sector debt is expected to increase to 20.7 % and that of domestic debt to decline to 79.3% by the end of the year. With regard to Government debt at end September 2010, foreign debt as a percentage of total Government debt was 13.4% while domestic debt stood at 86.6%. By December 2011, the share of foreign debt in the overall Government debt is estimated at 16.4%.

With a view to further lengthening the maturity profile of public debt, the issue of medium and long term domestic debt of Government has been increased. From September 2010 to December 2011, the medium and long term domestic debt of Government has increased by nearly Rs8.5 billion, representing an increase of around 9.1%.

As a result of the measures taken, the maturity profile of public sector debt has improved during 2011. In terms of structure of public sector debt, as at end September 2010 the share of short term debt was 21.8% while the share of medium and long term debt was about 78.2%. By the end of this year, the share of short term debt is estimated to decline to 20.3% while that of medium and long term debt would increase to 79.7%. During the same period the share of short term debt in the debt portfolio of Government has declined from 23.7% to 22.1% while the share of long term debt has increased from 76.3% to 77.9%. This shows the positive effects of the measures taken for re-profiling of public and public sector debt.

FOREIGN GRANTS, CONSOLIDATED FUND & ADDITIONAL REMUNERATION

(No. A/324) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the public finances, he will, for the year 2011, state the amount of –

- (a) foreign grants received as at date and estimated for the year;
- (b) funds transferred from the Special Funds to the Consolidated Fund;
- (c) increase in the domestic tax on goods and services estimated during the year,
and

- (d) increase in the compensation of employees and old age pensions due to the payment of the Additional Remuneration, indicating the impact thereof on income growth and distribution.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question, foreign grants received during the period January to October 2011 amounted to Rs97 m. and is estimated at around Rs2.5 billion for the year as a whole.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, during this financial year, as of now, no fund has been transferred from the Special Funds to the Consolidated Fund. However, as indicated in the 2012 Programme-Based Budget, an amount of Rs1.2 billion will be transferred this year before end of December which includes Rs0.6 billion from *Maurice Ile Durable* (MID) Fund and Rs0.6 billion from Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development (HRKAD) Fund.

With regard to part (c) of the question, receipt from taxes on goods and services is estimated at around Rs38.5 billion this year compared to Rs34.6 billion in 2010 which represents an increase of around 11.1%.

Regarding part (d) of the question, the increase in compensation of employees and pensions due to additional remuneration in 2011 is estimated at around Rs1.3 billion, of which Rs0.7 billion is for the private sector and Rs0.6 billion is for the public sector – which includes old age pensions of Rs0.3 billion. The increase in compensation and pensions after payment of additional remuneration is estimated to result in an increase in average household income by around 1.3%.

This has led to a slight improvement in the income distribution. In fact, the share of income given to the lowest 20% of the households has improved from 5.00% to 5.06% while the income going to the highest 20% of households has gone down from 49.22% to 48.98%.

PLAINE VERTE GARDEN – OPEN FAIRS

(No. A/325) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the open fairs which are held in the Plaine Verte Garden during the week-ends, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, a list thereof, held since 2006 to date, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) names of the organisers thereof;
- (b) dates thereof, and
- (c) total amount of fees collected.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being placed in the Library.

WORKERS (FOREIGN) - RECRUITMENT

(No. A/326) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the foreign workers, he will give a list of the private agencies which have, since May 2010 to-date, been issued with a permit for the recruitment thereof to work in Mauritius, indicating in each case, the date on which same was issued.

Reply: The standing practice for the recruitment of foreign workers to work in Mauritius is that employers in Mauritius recruit directly from the source country or they do so through recruitment agencies existing in the source country.

Since May 2010 to date, no local/international recruitment agencies have been licensed by my Ministry to recruit foreign workers to work in Mauritius. However, my attention has been drawn to the fact that there are a few unscrupulous people and so-called "Recruitment Agents" who are illegally indulging in the recruitment of foreign workers for the local market.

In such cases, those illegal recruiting agents are referred to the Police immediately for appropriate action. My Ministry also does not grant work permits to foreign workers who have been so recruited.

To combat the problem of illegal agents, my Ministry has initiated the following actions -

- (i) approach source countries to have a list of licensed recruiting agencies i.e. registered with the appropriate Authorities in those countries;
- (ii) drawing a Memorandum of Understanding with Authorities of the source countries in respect of migrant workers;
- (iii) working with the SLO to amend the existing legislations to provide an appropriate legal framework to catch and increase the penalty for these illegal operators, and

- (iv) initiate action to put up a legal framework to protect the Migrant Worker from exploitation.

My Ministry, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, is already involved in improving conditions of work and stay of foreign workers in the meantime.

CLUB MAURICE COMPANY – MONEY COLLECTED

(No. A/327) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Club Maurice Company, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the amount of money collected by each contributor thereto, since its setting-up to date, indicating the amount thereof allocated to each federation engaged in the last Indian Ocean Islands Games and table copy of a statement of the income and expenditure in relation thereto.

Reply: The total amount of money collected by Club Maurice is Rs15,015,000. The details and statement of income and expenditure are attached.

FLOREAL SSS – FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. A/328) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the football ground at the Floreal State Secondary School, he will state the local groups/clubs which have been authorized to make use thereof as at to date.

Reply: I am informed that, as at date, no Group/Association has access to the football ground of Floreal State Secondary School.

In fact, my Ministry is in the presence of a request from the Municipality of Curepipe to put at the disposal of inhabitants of the region the sports infrastructure not only at Floreal SSS but also at Forest Side SSS (Boys), Forest Side SSS (Girls), and Dunputh Lallah SSS after school hours on weekdays and during weekends.

The above request is under consideration.

I wish to inform the hon. Member that my Ministry is working on a general policy to optimize the use of school infrastructure island-wide for the benefit of registered clubs or organisations.

In this context, my Ministry has already held a first meeting with the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the Ministry of Youth and Sports to establish the *modus operandi*.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

(No. A/329) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Enhancement Programme, he will state -

- (a) when it has been implemented at the different levels of primary schooling;
- (b) the objectives thereof ;
- (c) the number of schools and students involved in the public and non-fee paying private education sector;
- (d) the number of teachers involved, indicating the allowances paid thereto, and
- (e) the number of hours put in, on a daily and weekly basis.

Reply: As regards part (a), the Enhancement Programme was implemented for -

- pupils of Standard IV as from February 2010 and during year 2011
- pupils of Standard III as from February 2011
- pupils of Asian/Arabic Languages of Stds III and IV as from 17 August 2011

As regards part (b), main objective - this innovative programme uses an alternative pedagogy and a diversity of strategies to suit the learning needs of pupils with varied levels of ability and covers co & extra-curricular activities. It aims primarily at the reinforcement of work in the five core subjects and is supplemented by a variety of pedagogical practices and audio-visual support. It also aims at providing more equity in learning opportunities and rendering the learning experiences of pupils more enriching and rewarding.

As regards part (c), the total number of schools involved in the public and non-fee paying private schools is 277 comprising -

- 261 for the Island of Mauritius;
- 14 for Rodrigues, and
- 2 for Agalega.

Participation level of pupils is as follows -

- An average of about 70% of students for both Standard III and Standard IV
- Above 80% of students for Asian/Arabic Languages at Standards III and IV level

As regards part (d), the number of teachers and resource persons for Standards III and IV are

-

- 982 Educators
- 582 Resource Persons
- 170 Educators for Asian Languages and Arabic Language

The teachers are paid an allowance of Rs200 per session per day.

As regards part (e), the Enhancement Programme is carried out -

- Standard III on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
1 hour daily or 3 hours weekly.
- Standard IV on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
1 hr 15 mins daily or 3 hours 45 minutes weekly.
- AL/Arabic Languages (Stds III and IV) on Wednesdays, 30 minutes.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

- FORMER STUDENTS - TRACER STUDY

(No. A/330) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the former students of the University of Mauritius, he will state if a tracer study thereof has recently been carried out and, if so, table copy of the findings thereof.

Reply: Yes, the necessary information is being compiled and the final report will be available within the first quarter of 2012.

NATIONAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR COUNCIL - ACTIVITIES

(No. A/331) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the National Women Entrepreneur Council, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list of the activities carried out by the Council, since January 2010 to-date, indicating the number of women entrepreneurs having participated in the -

- (a) training programmes;
- (b) programmes aimed at motivating women entrepreneurs;
- (c) organisation of events and fairs and exhibitions;
- (d) women entrepreneurship development programmes;
- (e) collaboration with private and public entities, including projects under the Corporate Social Responsibility, and
- (f) international events.

Reply: As regards parts (a) and (b), 1139 participants attended the training programmes organised by the National Women Entrepreneur Council from January 2010 to date, aimed at motivating and empowering existing and potential women entrepreneurs.

In addition to the training programmes, the Council provided, mentoring services to 25 emerging women entrepreneurs.

The objectives were to -

- (a) provide practical business related knowledge and skills to women entrepreneurs;
- (b) increase the success of existing women entrepreneurs;
- (c) improve the strategic capability of women entrepreneurs, and
- (d) support them to enhance the competitiveness of their enterprises.

During the year 2010, this project was funded by the Support to Small & Medium Enterprises Committee (SSMEC) operating under the aegis of the then Ministry of Business, Enterprises, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection. Since January 2011, another scheme namely the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS) has been set up under the aegis of the same Ministry. Women entrepreneurs can now apply directly to the MBGS for mentoring services.

Concerning part (c), 469 women entrepreneurs participated in the 16 fairs and exhibitions organised by the National Women Entrepreneur Council from January 2010 to date.

Moreover, in the context of the International Women's Day 2011, the National Women Entrepreneur Council organized a "Women Entrepreneurs Week" at the National Women Development Centre, Royal Road, Phoenix from 14 to 18 March 2011. During the week, 2000 existing and potential women entrepreneurs were sensitised and trained.

The key objectives were, amongst others, to -

- (a) share information on schemes and facilities for both potential and existing women entrepreneurs;
- (b) sensitise potential women entrepreneurs to set up enterprises;
- (c) involve successful women entrepreneurs as role models with a view to creating an awareness on women entrepreneurship;
- (d) facilitate and boost the growth of women- owned enterprises;
- (e) provide an opportunity to women entrepreneurs to sell their products;
- (f) improve networking between suppliers and women entrepreneurs, and
- (g) promote women entrepreneurs *via* open discussions.

The National Women Entrepreneur Council also organised a Buyer-Seller Meeting in collaboration with Barclays Bank PLC Mauritius on 17 October 2011 at the Link Hotel, Ebene from 1000 hrs to 1700 hrs with a view to giving small and medium enterprises the opportunity to showcase market and thus increase sales of their products. **77** Women Entrepreneurs and 80 potential buyers were present during the meeting. Exhibits comprised products in the following sectors -

- Food and Agro Industry
- Textiles
- Handicraft, and
- Services

Regarding Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes, same are organised on a regional basis with a view to developing managerial skills and providing support to potential women entrepreneurs to launch new enterprises, accelerating start-ups as well as enhancing

competitiveness of existing enterprises. During the year 2010, funds for the mounting of these programmes were tapped from the SSMEC. As at date, 570 women entrepreneurs across the island have benefitted from Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes.

As regard the “collaboration with private and public entities, including projects under CSR”, the details are as follows -

(i) Partnership with British American Insurance Co (Mauritius) Ltd

On 17 February 2011, the National Women Entrepreneur Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the British American Insurance (BAI) Ltd for a period of one year. Under this MOU, BAI has provided funds to meet the costs of capacity building programmes for women entrepreneurs. The topics of training include, amongst others, Export Marketing, Customer Care, Design and Labelling, Finance and Costing, Market Surveys and Quality Management.

(ii) Partnership with Barclays Bank PLC, Mauritius

On 27 June 2011, the National Women Entrepreneur Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Barclays Bank PLC with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of women-owned enterprises. Under this MOU, Barclays Bank is providing funds over a period of one year, to meet the cost of training and support to women entrepreneurs through four projects namely -

- A Buyer-Seller Meeting to showcase products and increase sales of women-owned Small and Medium Enterprises.
- A Trade Fair to boost sales of products manufactured by women entrepreneurs.
- Production of a Guide for Women Entrepreneurs to disseminate information on schemes and facilities available to women entrepreneurs, provide useful tips and guidelines to women entrepreneurs and assist in growth of women owned enterprises.
- Basic Course in Financial Management for 100 women entrepreneurs.

The training in Financial Management was organised in September 2011 while the Buyer Seller Meeting was held on 17 October 2011. The two other projects are in the pipeline.

As regards participation to international events, the details are as follows -

SN	Event	Date	Place	Number of Participants (Women Entrepreneurs)
1	SADC Fair	09 – 18 Aug 2010	Windhoek, Namibia	3
2	Windhoek Show	24 Sep – 02 Oct 2010	Windhoek, Namibia	3

In the context of the Femmes Chefs D'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM) World Committee held in Mauritius from 25 to 28 May 2011, the Council organised a Business-to-Business Meeting on Saturday 28 May 2011 with the main objective to encourage interaction between local and international women entrepreneurs. 40 well established local women entrepreneurs, including 4 from Rodrigues, and 25 delegates from FCEM participated in the meeting.

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - DRAINS

(No. A/332) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to drainage, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Black River District Council, information as to the projects which are being proposed for implementation in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, giving details thereof.

Reply: It is difficult at this stage to provide the information requested by the hon. Member as the Budget for fiscal year 2012 has not yet been approved by the House.

SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRES - MANAGING COMMITTEES

(No. A/333) **Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Social Welfare Centres, she will give the list thereof, indicating the composition of their respective appointed Managing Committees.

Reply: The list is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

HIGHLANDS ROAD - DRAINS

(No. A/334) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Highlands Road, at the level of the Mosque and the Tupsees Shop, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of drains thereat, taking into consideration the inconveniences caused by the absence thereof.

Reply: There already exists a roadside drainage system at the level of the Mosque and the Tupsee's Shop at Highlands to cater for surface run-off water.

However, the Road Development Authority will be carrying out further investigations to determine any additional works required.

CINQ ARPENTS MAHA KALI MANDALI

- ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMER

(No. A/335) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he will state if he has received representations from the Cinq Arpents Maha Kali Mandali to the effect that the high voltage electrical transformer located at about one foot therefrom represents a constant threat to the public and if so, indicate the remedial steps taken in relation thereto, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board (CEB) that there is a high voltage transformer located on the other side of the road some 15 metres away from the Cinq Arpents Maha Kali Mandali and does not constitute a threat.

However, there is a low voltage pole adjacent to the building and CEB is giving due consideration for its relocation.

HIGHLANDS SUGAR ESTATE

- VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT SCHEME 2

(No. A/336) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the plot of land earmarked at Hermitage to be granted to the beneficiaries of the Highlands Sugar Estate, under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme 2, in 2007, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority (MSA), that the Voluntary Retirement Scheme 2 was implemented by the State Land Development Company Ltd (SLDC Ltd) in 2007, and not by the Highlands Sugar Estate.

On 28 September, 2001, 3035 arpents 19 perches (1281 hectare 1042 m²) of sugar cane land (former ILLOVO land) was sold by Mon Trésor Mon Desert to Business Park of Mauritius Ltd (BPML).

Thereafter, on 07 March, 2002, the said plot of land was sold to the State Land Development Company Ltd (SLDC), a public company having Government as the major shareholder. In the same deal some 750 employees of Mon Tresor/Mon Desert were transferred to BPML and subsequently to SLDC. Out of these employees 389 opted for VRS 1 in 2003 while some 269 employees opted for the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS 2) in December 2007.

The VRS Scheme provides that all the beneficiaries are entitled to cash compensation and a plot of land of 7 perches. Total cash compensation, amounting to Rs108,304,942 was paid to the beneficiaries.

In addition, the SLDC has to provide a plot of land to each of these employees of an extent of seven perches with all necessary infrastructures. The development of the plot of land includes all the infrastructural works -

- (1) water and drainage network;
- (2) Electricity supply;
- (3) Social Amenities, and
- (4) Road Infrastructure.

Two plots of land, one at Cote D'or of an approximate area 1A69P (7,133.25 m²) and the other one at Hermitage of an approximate area 24A8.5P (10 ha 1666 m²), have been identified for the development of two residential morcellements for the VRS 2 beneficiaries.

The contract for the consultancy services required for the design and construction supervision of the infrastructure works at the VRS 2 sites at Cote D'or and Hermitage has been awarded after an open tender exercise to Scene-Ries Consult Ltd on 2 November 2009. It has been specified in the Terms of Reference of the consultancy contract that both VRS 2 sites would have to be implemented concurrently.

The first Letter of Intent from the Morcellement Board for both VRS 2 sites was obtained on:

- (a) 18 August 2010 for the Cote D'or site (14 lots), and
- (b) 08 December 2010 for the Hermitage site (255 lots).

The following conditions were specified in the first Letter of Intent for the Hermitage site -

- (a) The realignment of the Cote D'or Road (B 48) to eliminate dangerous bends.
- (b) The relocation of the main access Road to the Hermitage VRS 2 site from the Cote D'or Road (B48) to take into account land being developed by the SIT, and
- (c) The combination of all the green spaces into a central single lot to be transformed into a leisure park.

These major conditionalities meant that the Letter of Intent in respect of the Hermitage site was not final. It was a conditional letter of Intent.

The SLDC had several meetings with the Road Development Authority (RDA), the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU), the Sugar Investment Trust (SIT), the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix and a first amended layout for the Hermitage site was prepared.

In the meantime, Government, through the Ministry of Housing and Lands, acquired part of the plot of land earmarked for the site at Cote D'or for the construction of the Ebene/Verdun link road. As a consequence, the Morcellement layout for same site had to be revised completely by the SLDC .

The revised Morcellement layout for both VRS 2 sites at Hermitage and Cote D'or could only be submitted for approval to the Morcellement Board on 22 and 23 August 2011 respectively. As at 8 November 2011, the SLDC was still awaiting the approval of the layout from the Morcellement Board for both sites to be able to proceed first, with the drawing of lots exercise as per the requirement of the Mauritius Sugar Authority and thereafter initiate procurement procedures for the construction of the necessary infrastructural works.

LA CHAUMIÈRE - COMPOSTING PLANT

(No. A/337) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a composting plant at La Chaumière, he will state if tenders have been launched for the –

- (a) construction thereof and, if so, indicate the -
 - (i) names of the bidders, indicating the respective bid value, and
 - (ii) name of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded and
- (b) operation thereof and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) names of the bidders, indicating the respective bid value, and
 - (ii) name of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded

Reply: I am informed that, in 2006, a private promoter, namely Solid Waste Recycling Co. Ltd had obtained the approval of Government to construct and operate a composting plant at La Chaumière, with a capacity of 90,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste annually. No bid exercise was carried out as the project was a private initiative with no cost to Government. The only commitment of Government was to supply the specified volume of waste to the operator as per a Waste Supply Agreement and to cart away rejects from the composting plant.

I am informed that the plant is operational since September 2011.

GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES – HEAD OFFICE - RENT

(No. A/338) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Government Fire Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to the monthly rental payable for the space rented to house the Head Office thereof, indicating –

- (a) the extent thereof;
- (b) since when it is being rented;
- (c) the lease period, and
- (d) if consideration will be given for the construction of a building to house same.

Reply: I am informed by the Government Fire Services that the current monthly rental payable in respect of the space rented to house its Head Office situated at 14

Deschartres Street, Port Louis is Rs207,041.40 (inclusive of VAT) together with a current parking fee (6 slots) of Rs6,900/- (inclusive of VAT).

With regard to part (a), (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that-

- (i) the total space rented is 10,800 sq ft;
- (ii) the building is rented since March 2002, and
- (iii) the building was first leased in March 2002 and the lease agreement was being renewed on regular intervals up to December 2011.

As regards part (d) of the question, a plot of State land of an extent of 2,400 m² located at Victoria Square, Port Louis has been identified to house the Head Office and also for the relocation of the Port Louis Fire Station. Being given that the site is located adjacent to the Bus Terminus, Victoria Square and it lies along a one-way street from Lord Kitchener, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has sought the views of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit in the matter and a reply is awaited.