



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2011**

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BILL (*Public*)

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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
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Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 32 of 2011

Sitting of 23 November 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.00 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

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

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, 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 BILL**THE APPROPRIATION (2012) BILL**

(No. XXVI of 2011)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2012) Bill (No. XXVI of 2011) was resumed.

The Chairperson: We are now with Programme Code 461!

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands

Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government was called.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, *Programme 461: Policy and Management of Local Government* achieve economic efficiency and effectiveness in the employment of public fund. We are made to understand that the Ministry has an Internal Audit Section. I would like to know whether that Unit is still alive and how many reports have been prepared during the past years. I would also like to know whether the hon. Minister is satisfied with these performances.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 448, the first major constraint is described as the worsening financial situation of local authorities in view of the imbalance between the revenue generated and expenditure. I would like to know where in terms of the provisions we are invited to approve the estimates under Programme Code 461, there is any effort to address, policy-wise, this issue of a constrained financial situation.

A second...

The Chairperson: One question, please! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On the Item No. 21210 - *Social Contributions*, there is a vote of Rs4.9 m.

Mr Aimée: On which page?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 454.

The Chairperson: We will take the three questions now. I will remind all the hon. Members that we have 20 minutes per vote. Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Aimée: For the first question, Mr Chairperson, the Internal Control Unit of my Ministry consists of two officers. Audit squads look only on cases of malpractices in local authorities.

The Chairperson: For the two other questions, hon. Minister! The questions are at page 448!

Mr Aimée: Discussions will be held shortly with all stakeholders to explore means and ways to improve revenue-raising by local authority and control expenditure.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the audits carried out, can I ask the hon. Minister - like he stated the audit squad intervenes in cases of malpractices – about the outcome of audits carried out at the northern District Councils and at the Municipality of Quatres Bornes?

The Chairperson: On the same issue, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can the hon. Minister kindly tell us how many cases of malpractice there have been for the last financial year and what action has been taken in each and every case?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 454, *Programme 461: Personal Emoluments*. There has been a considerable increase from Rs23 m. to Rs43 m., whereas on the staffing position there has been only an increase of Rs7 m. May I know the reason why there is such an increase, it almost doubled the amount?

Mr Aimée: The huge increase from Rs23.2 m. to Rs42.9 m. is mainly due to the fact that cash in lieu of sick leave paid previously under the Accountant General's votes is now paid under each Ministry's vote. Provisions have also been made for salary compensation for 2012.

The Chairperson: Yes, for the cases of malpractices, do you have the details now?

Mr Aimée: There are audit squads, Mr Chairperson. They will be strengthened to Local Authority Governance Unit. This will definitely improve the situation including the District Council...

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: We have 20 minutes per item and we have been very kind to put specific questions. Please, can we have specific answers? My question is simple: how many cases of malpractices there have been and what action has been taken?

Mr Aimée: I will circulate it, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the Northern District Council where officers have been suspended, the audit squad has carried out an audit and things are not working properly there. Can we know what the outcome of the enquiry is?

The Chairperson: Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House about the case in the Northern District Council? On the same issue, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: That same question was put last year.

Mr Aimée: One by one, please! Mr Chairperson, there are four questions; I would not be able to answer all at the same time.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! Order, please!

Mr Nagalingum: On the same item, the same question was put last year and we had the same answer from the hon. Minister. We cannot expect that each time when we put question, we get the same answer!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, no cross-talking! Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, the case is at ICAC and is *sub judice*. I cannot give any answer on that.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 454, *Programme 461: Policy and Management of Local Government, Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many members were elected on the Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill? How many remaining today in the party who won the election there, are on the Government side?

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order. I am sure that in particular cases, we will have many cases where we will have answers that the case has been referred to ICAC. There has

been a ruling by Mr Speaker that if they want to plead *sub judice* they will have to lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

The Chairperson: No!

Mr Baloomoody: There is a ruling

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: There has never been a ruling to that effect. Mr Speaker ruled that any investigation before ICAC; we have got a special procedure, there is a special Parliamentary Committee which oversees that ...

(Interruptions)

The question of *sub judice* is regarding cases in Courts. As regards the issues before the ICAC, we have got certain procedures under the legislation and there is a special Parliamentary Committee which oversees...

(Interruptions)

Please! I won't argue and I will ask the hon. Minister to give whatever explanation it is possible so far as he is concerned. Please! We are concerned now about *item 21: Personal Emoluments*. Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Aimée: The vacancies on the number of councillors are not relevant to the budget discussion, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister is evading the reply! He does not know how many vacancies are there as a Minister? I have been Minister of Local Government as well and I have replied questions. He is evading replies. *Quand pas coné, dire pas coné!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Aimée: I am not evading replies, but I must say vacancies exist in all the nine local authorities. I don't have the exact number to tell you how many.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, I will get back to the Northern District Council.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Lesjongard: The situation is that the Northern District Council is not functioning the way it is because officers have been suspended. People are queuing there. Waste is not being collected on a daily basis.

The Chairperson: No, it is not time to make speeches!

Mr Lesjongard: But I have asked a question where the inquiry is.

(Interruptions)

At least, he should tell us where the enquiry is.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Lesjongard!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Quirin! I urge all hon. Members! Hon. Lesjongard, I am calling you to order. Hon. Lesjongard, once again...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Henry, if you don't behave - and I am addressing myself to both sides of the House, we have got a very serious work to do and I want that it be done in the best atmosphere!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden! I am warning you, once and only once. If there is any Member who is going to stop this House from doing its duty, he will be brought to task and I am now asking hon. Lesjongard to cool down. You put your question, you address yourself to the Chair and you give the opportunity to the hon. Minister to respond.

Mr Lesjongard: I don't want to be disturbed when I am putting my question!

The Chairperson: I also don't want any disturbance, but I am urging you not to make long speeches. We are here to determine item by item. I want that we follow the procedure and we don't get lost. Here, we have got 20 minutes per item and I don't want any undue disturbance because at the end of 20 minutes, according to the Standing Order, I will have to take the vote. Please! Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is very simple. I want to know from the hon. Minister where are matters with regard to officers who have been suspended at the Northern District Council and I am saying that there is a lack of staff and the Council is not functioning properly.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, there are various suspensions at the Northern District Council and in particular, I think it is the Ag. Chief Executive who was suspended. The case is actually at the LGSC. From where I am, I cannot interfere in the matter.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the explanation on pages 448 and 449 are an essential premise for examination of the Budget. You will note that at page 449 under *Strategy Directions*, the second bullet, most importantly mentions: providing a proper legal framework to the local authorities. Last year, that is exactly what appeared in the budget document that was submitted to us. I would to ask the hon. Minister whether in terms of his major constraints, if not major failures, the first point should not have been the inability of the Ministry to come up since the election, but maybe since 2005, with a proper legal framework and to tell us what measures, as is done at page 448, have been taken to address this absence of a legal framework according to Government and to provide for elections in conformity with the democratic tradition of our country.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Jhugroo! We take the query from the hon. Jhugroo, then the Minister is going to answer.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 449, *Programme 461 Policy and Management*, can I know how many times Agalega Island Council meeting were held since July 2005 to date and where? My second question..

The Chairperson: No, one only! Yes, hon. Minister, can you respond to the question of hon. Obeegadoo as regards the legal framework.

Mr Aimée: The Local Government Bill is ready and it has passed the First Reading in Parliament. The hon. Member has to be patient, it does not depend on me. I think Cabinet will decide when to have it for Second and Third Reading or eventually, probably, for the election ...

The Chairperson: Please, address the Chair! Yes, as regards the Agalega Council!

Mr Aimée: The Agalega Island Council meets normally every month, but the fact that there is no proper communication to Agalega due to the airstrip, they meet periodically, that is, probably once every two months till the airstrip will be ready. Actually, in fact, Mauritius Pride left Mauritius on Saturday to Agalega, all the Agalega Island Council members are in board to hold the meeting on the island.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on the *item 21110 Personal Emoluments*, may I know from the hon. Minister with respect to Local Authorities, Local Councils, the number of cases that has been referred to the Police for inquiry, to ICAC for inquiry and the number of cases that have already been settled to date?

Mr Aimée: I will table the information, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, at page 454, *item 21 Personal Emoluments*, the Minister in his reply just said that the increase is due to refund of sick leave been included in that vote item. Is he willing to table the amount that is comprised in that vote item so that we can know what is the percentage of refund of sick leave in that increase?

Mr Aimée: This item includes basic salary of Rs19.6 m.; salary compensation 2010/2011: Rs8.1 m.; allowances RS1.4 m.; end-of-the- year bonus: Rs1.7 m.; cash in lieu of sick leave: Rs10.2 m., and an extra assistant adviser: Rs1.6 m.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Lesjongard then I will end with hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 459, I refer to *Programme 461 Policy and Management of Local Government*. I see two new posts, that is, the Lead analyst and the Analyst which appear for 2012, 2013 and 2014. Can we have some information with regard to these posts and the schemes of service and duties?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Jhugroo! Then the Minister is going to respond once for all.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 449, concerning *Strategic Direction 2012-14*, the Ministry aims to enforce good governance in the Local Authorities. Can I know why is the Mayor of the Vacoas/Phoenix had to *leve paké allé* last year?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! Hon. Nagalingum, last question! Order!

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, one post of Lead Analyst and one post of Analyst are being created for a coordination and implementation of long term planning and monitoring of the budget measures in line with Government Programme.

The Chairperson: Yes, last question hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: I come to the same question again that hon. Bhagwan put. How many councillors resigned from each Local Authorities? That question was put to the hon. Minister six months ago and the Minister did answer that he is going to lay information in the Library. But

the question is clear. Can he tell us in each and every municipality how many vacancies there are?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, there is a lot of councillors who have resigned or have lost their seat. I don't have the entire list now. I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Yes, the Minister can circulate the list. Last question, hon. Baloomoody as we got time and then we are going to put the vote.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I come back to that *item 21110 Personal Emoluments*. I refer to the human resources in the department Policy and Management. There is no one who is specialised in shaping of boundary or electoral boundaries. Can I ask the hon. Minister who is that officer at his Ministry who works on the new electoral boundaries which has been attached to the new Bill?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, electoral boundaries rest with the Electoral Supervisory Commission. We don't interfere. We propose the Supervisory Commission to work on it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No crosstalking! Let the hon. Minister answer! I put the question now.

Programme Code 461: Policy and Management of Local Government (Rs 57,614,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities was called.

Mr Ameer Meea: I refer to *item 21110 Personal Emoluments* page 455. Can I ask the hon. Minister there has been a considerable decrease if the provision, can we know the reason for such an actual decrease?

Mr Nagalingum: At page 455, *item 26312 Current Grant to Local Authorities*. Does this include fees for councillors and if so, are we paying for councillors who are not supposed to be in office?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister.

Mr Aimée: Normally, in the law...

The Chairperson: Address the Chair!

Mr Aimée: *La loi de 1989 et 2003 qui est en vigueur ne fait pas mention si on doit payer ou pas. C'est une question de la personne elle-même.*

The Chairperson: As regards the first query from hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Aimée: It is payment for connectivity fee in connection with the e-Government project. The number of funded posts is being reduced from 174 in 2011 to 149 as such vacancy will not be filled by the Ministry and scavenging service will be entrusted to Local Authorities.

Mr Bodha: Under *Item No. 26312 Current Grant to Local Authorities*, we had a budget of Rs1.9 billion we move to Rs2.1 billion and we have a new District Council, but then the year after there is a decrease. May I ask the hon. Minister how he can explain this tendency for the next year?

Mr Lesjongard: On page 455, *Item No. 26312099 New District Councils*, can we get an indication from the hon. Minister what are those new District Councils? Can he name them? Can we also get an apportionment of the Rs107 m.? Will these new District Councils have administrative officers and where will they be located?

Mr Bhagwan: On *Programme 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities*, under *items nos. 21110 Personal Emoluments; 26312 Current Grant to Local Authorities*, concerning allowances which are given to Municipal Councillors, was a decision taken by the Council or by Government? Can the hon. Minister inform us under which item they are paid the remuneration? Are they paid from grant-in-aid?

Mr Aimée: Concerning the first question, Mr Chairperson, the increase caters for salary compensation of 2011 – Rs40,3 m.; for revenue ongoing with the abolition of tenant tax – Rs170 m. and for the billboard Rs80 m. to be now collected by the MRA.

The Chairperson: As regards the new District Councils?

Mr Aimée: In the new Local Government Bill, there will be a split of twin District Councils, but the land has not yet been identified. They will be housed in rental building.

The Chairperson: Can you give the details as regards the questions of hon. Bhagwan? How are the Councillors paid? Do you have the information now? If you don't have the information, I'll pass over to Mrs Ribot, by which time the Minister will have the details.

Mrs Ribot: I come back to the reply of the hon. Minister to hon. Ameer Meea regarding the personal emoluments. It's clear on page 459 that the staffing.....

The Chairperson: Put your question straightaway.

Mrs Ribot: I have to explain why I am asking the question. It is a fact that the staffing has remained the same – 216, so we are not clear about the decrease in the personal emoluments.

Mr Aimée: Councillors are paid from grant-in-aid revenue of the local authorities.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister repeat the reply he just made concerning the remuneration?

Mr Aimée: Fees paid to Councillors is from grant-in-aid revenue of the local authorities.

Mr Ameer Meea: Is the hon. Minister aware that, out of principles, Councillors have refused to take their allowance for obvious reasons. May I know from the hon. Minister what has happened to the sum and where has this money been reallocated?

Mr Aimée: *Pour ceux qui ont refusé le* Councillor fees. I cannot pre-empt what was in their head to refuse the fees paid to them.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the Minister answer.

Mr Aimée: I don't have the information as to where the money will go.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, I understand from the answer of the Minister that, under *Item No. 26312 Current Grant to Local Authorities*, the allowances payable to Councillors are included. Now, since those Councillors for whom we will be voting allowances in 2012 do not hold the democratic mandate when elected back in 2005, I would like to move on the Standing Order 73, section 7, to have this vote, that is, the vote on the 26312, reduced by an amount corresponding to the allowances payable to Municipal Councillors in post.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, this is not the first time that Municipal Election has been postponed.

(Interruptions)

I don't think it is allowed to reduce....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I want to be enlightened from the hon. Member whether the allowances are fixed by statutes.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is not for me to answer that question with all due respect, Chair. My motion is simply that we are being asked to vote a grant and my motion is that the grant be reduced by the sum corresponding to allowances payable to these Councillors who do not hold a democratic mandate.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I don't agree.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The Minister has expressed his views; in that case, I will have to put the question. By which amount and under which item hon. Obeegadoo, you want to...

(Interruptions)

I want to know the specific item.

Mr Obeegadoo: Under *Item No. 26312*, the grants payable to the five Municipal Councils: *26312001, 26312002, 26312003, 26312004, 26312005*. I move that these amounts – for each Council – be reduced by the sum corresponding to allowances payable to unelected Councillors.

Mr Bhagwan: I am seconding the motion in that these local authorities members who have been elected, their length of service has elapsed; they are there illegally, immorally and following the reply made by the Minister when we asked from which fund, he stated that they are being paid through this grant-in-aid. I think it is unacceptable, immoral that they continue to earn this money.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister, do you have anything to respond on this motion?

Mr Aimée: *Je viens de mentionner M. le président, que je ne suis pas d'accord.* This is a decision to be taken by my Ministry after appropriate consultation and it is a policy decision of Government in accordance with law...

(Interruptions)

One belonging to the Assembly.

The Chairperson: I put the question. The question is that the vote *26312* of Programme 462 be reduced by the grant payable to local authorities, by one rupee....

(Interruptions)

All allowances, yes.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister clearly knows according to his file and his record - because he approved the sum at the Ministry - what is the amount paid to these people. He knows about it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We should have a specific motion. Hon. Obeegadoo, if you want a reduction, I should know the exact amount which you want to reduce. We have to put a specific question.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Hossen, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: In that case, I will move for a reduction of Rs1 m. under each Municipal Council Grant.

The Chairperson: The question is that the vote...

Dr. Bunwaree: On a point of order! Have you declared this motion receivable and, if yes, on the basis of which?

The Chairperson: Yes. I have asked clarification to the hon. Member for the amount to be reduced from that item and now things are clear. There is a motion to reduce the amount and the Minister is not agreeable. I have to put the question.

Dr. Bunwaree: There are three motions. One to reduce the amount by an amount equivalent to I do not know what. You said it is by Rs1, you mentioned it.

The Chairperson: No, I was not...

Dr. Bunwaree: But then you were confused.

The Chairperson: Yes, I was.

Dr. Bunwaree: Now it comes by an amount of Rs1 m. where does he get that figure from?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

(Interruptions)

Please, let me respond! Order! The Member made his point and he is making a motion for the items for municipalities to be reduced, that is, grants to municipalities be reduced by Rs1 m. I am going to put the question. The Minister is not agreeable and then the House will have to decide. I put the question again.

Question put on motion.

The Chairperson: The noes have it.

Motion defeated.

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now! Order! Hon. Henry, order! We have now to continue with our vote.

Mr Lesjongard: Chair, can I get confirmation from the hon. Minister that from now onwards, taxes will not be collected by local authorities, but by the MRA.

The Chairperson: No, this is not...

(Interruptions)

Which item? We are continuing with this item vote. Any more question? Yes, hon. Barbier?

Mr Barbier: On page 452 corresponding to indicators SS2: *Implementation of the new Grant- in- Aid Formula*. So, I can see from this paper that the implementation target is for July 2012. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this target period of July correspond to the municipal election or otherwise. Could we be informed accordingly?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Jhugroo and then I come to hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 455 under *item 26312 – Current Grant to Local Authorities*. I see that there has been an increase from Rs1.9 billion to R2.2 billion. So, can I ask the hon. Minister how much of that amount includes overseas travelling expenses of councilors and if we can have details for the past year from each municipal council?

Mr Nagalingum: Same item, Chair. Can I know what is the yearly contribution with regard to tenant tax for the five municipalities, what amount of arrears do we have for the five municipalities? The second question: how much money is collected by local authorities with regard to licences collected?

Mr Aimée: For the reviewing of grant-in-aid formula, since the New Local Government Bill proposed a media Local Government Reform whereby three district councils will be split and new village councils will be set up, the administrative jurisdiction of the local authorities will be changed. The new grant- in-aid formula will have to cater for the proposed changes. Travel overseas is paid from budget of each municipal council amounting to Rs600,000 per council.

The Chairperson: I am with hon. Uteem.

Mr Uteem: On page 454 under *item 26 – Grants*. The hon. Minister mentioned that there will be certain changes in the municipal council. May I know from the hon. Minister of Local Government whether as a result of the transfer of collection of licences to the MRA that will result in any reduction in employment of the municipal council?

Mr Aimée: I think it is the contrary; it will increase, because all the money collected by the MRA will revert back to the local authorities. It is only because the MRA has the legal infrastructure, that's why we have to choose to have a legal support.

The Chairperson: Is it going to increase? This was the question. Yes, hon. Seeruttun.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 455 under *item 22120 – Fees*. I can see that included in that amount is Rs1.7 m. for the purchase of licences for oracle technical support. Is the Minister willing to tell us the number of licences that is going to be purchased in that year and how much does it cost per licence?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Nagalingum wanted a clarification.

Mr Nagalingum: Yes, I put two questions and the two questions have not got a reply.

The Chairperson: We are short of time. I'll listen to hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee and hon. Ameer Meea.

Mr Aimée: Chair, I will table the information in a few minutes.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 455 on items regarding the municipal council from 26312001 to 26312005, can the hon. Minister say whether there has been any recruitment of attendants or general workers since the beginning of August, this year and, if so, how many *in toto*?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I just mentioned that recruitments, transfer, promotion fall under the LGSC, not from my Ministry.

Mrs Labelle: On page 455, *Programme 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities* under *item 22160 – Overseas Training*. There is a sum of...

The Chairperson: Be brief, because we are just outside the limit.

Mrs Labelle: You do not want me to mention the code number?

The Chairperson: No, no, I am just urging to be brief. No, you make your point.

Mrs Labelle: I think I have been interrupted. I was just mentioning the code, Mr Chair, with due respect. So, I have to repeat it now. At *item 22160 – Overseas Training*, there is a meagre sum of Rs100,000 and this sum has remained the same for years now. I should like to know to what training we are referring to overseas and how many staff will be sent for training with such a meagre amount and in which field?

Mr Aimée: For the overseas training, air ticket and subsistence allowance for officers attending workshop and seminar abroad in the context of local Government, our officers attended the PAN Commonwealth Executive Programme on Finance and Sub-National and Local Government.

Mr Baloomoody: We are not challenging the mission for officers. Don't push the blame! We are talking about councillors and mayors; how much they have travelled and spent.

The Chairperson: Does the hon. Minister have the information?

Mr Aimée: I don't have the amount separately. This includes officers and councillors. The number of licences purchased are: oracle 10g database licence, Rs513,663 plus VAT; 2 oracle 10g application server licence, Rs770,450 plus VAT, oracle 10g real application clusters, Rs128,408 plus VAT.

The Chairperson: We have to put the question now. Three additional minutes were given because of the question of voting.

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands - Programme Code 462: Facilitation to Local Authorities (Rs2,259,653,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands - Programme Code 463: Solid Waste, Landscaping and Beach Management was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 456, I have two questions, Sir, under *Items 22070003 Operation of Landfill Sites* and *22070004 Operation of Transfer Stations*. Can the hon. Minister circulate a list of transfer stations which are operational?

Secondly, can I know whether he has received representations concerning the St Martin Transfer Station?

Thirdly, can we know what action has been taken by the Ministry and his division concerning the recommendation for solid waste management as per the Director of Audit Report dated June 2011, efficiency and effectiveness of managing and operating solid waste, where clear recommendations have been given by the Director of Audit concerning expenditure amounting billions of rupees which are being spent for solid waste and he has made recommendations concerning the introduction of a Waste Management Bill. Can the Minister inform the House where are we? Concerning the penalty clauses on the contracts, can we know whether there have been penalty clauses which have been claimed and the amount thereof?

The Chairperson: Since there are three questions, I will ask the Minister to respond and then I will come to hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Aimée: There are five transfer stations, Sir. One is at Roche Bois, one at La Laura, one at La Chaumière, one at La Brasserie and one Poudre d'Or. As regards the amount paid, I need the information.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, on page 456, with regard to the Beach Authority, that is, *Item 26313003 - Beach Authority* and *Item 26323 - Capital Grant to Extra Budgetary Units*,

can I ask the hon. Minister whether an enquiry has been carried out concerning illegal construction on public beaches whereby a toilet was modified to accommodate a restaurant? Can we know the outcome, if ever there was an enquiry?

Secondly, is his Ministry still responsible with regard to the cleaning of public beaches when we have the Beach Authority?

Mrs Bholah: At page 456, under *Item 22900903 - Awareness Campaign*, it appears that no funds have been earmarked for awareness campaign in the years 2011, 2013 and 2014. But, in 2012, Rs1 m. has been earmarked. Can I know from the hon. Minister why? Can he give details of the type of awareness campaign?

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue, on page 456, *Item 220 70001 - Public Beaches*, I found that we are allocating Rs107,400,000 for public beaches, and at the same time we have *Item 26313003 - Beach Authority* where Rs15,350,000 have been earmarked. I repeat what my friend, hon. Lesjongard, has said. Under whose responsibility do the beaches fall? Is it Local Government or the Beach Authority again, as we had last year?

Mr Nagalingum: It's Rs25 m. that the Tourism Authority is paying, and we are asking the local authorities to spend Rs107 m.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I am well aware. In fact, I contacted my colleague to look at the Beach Authority Act because actually we are managing the Beach Authority, but part of the land around the coast is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing. I am well aware that there was one toilet transformed in a restaurant. Immediately, I informed the Ministry of Housing, and we have given a stop order. It's still the case until I get clearance from the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Don't interrupt, please! The hon. Minister should address the Chair, please!

Mr Aimée: The hon. Member clearly knows that it was question of a toilet transformed into a restaurant, but he wants to joke.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Aimée: Coming to the question of hon. Mrs Bholah regarding awareness campaign, Mr Chairperson, the rapid pace of development accompanying changes in consumption pattern

over the past two decades have contributed greatly towards increasing the volume of waste generated from industries, business and households. Unfortunately, up to now, efforts to sensitise stakeholders and the general public on the problem associated with waste generation have been somewhat timid and uncertain.

Accordingly, it is proposed to place a larger focus on sensitisation, awareness and involvement of all stakeholders in waste prevention and reduction - each and every entity - but it is the producer, retail business, Government bodies, local authorities, schools, hospitals, households and the general public who will have to be sensitised on the importance to handle waste generated by their organisation themselves responsibly, and ensure that it does not add up to financial, social and environmental cost of solid waste management.

It is to be noted that the achievement of expected outcome under the strategic area will depend to a large extent on action to be taken at both Central Government and local authority level.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: This was about the awareness campaign.

Mr Aimée: I am going to table the reply.

Mr Bhagwan: I had a question concerning the report of the Director of Audit. Secondly, on the same issue, at page 456, can the hon. Minister inform the House on hazardous waste?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please hon. Bhagwan. You wanted a clarification on a question you asked.

Mr Bhagwan: It's on the same issue.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I will allow the hon. Minister to respond on that issue, because there is a long list of persons who want to put questions.

Mr Bhagwan: He has not replied to my query. I am just informing that there is hazardous waste in that report also.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, the PAC will deal with it.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, please let it be informed that my mic is not working, if you could get someone to fix it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

It is no joke! The hon. Member informed the House. Order!

(Interruptions)

We are losing the time of this House. Hon. Ameer Meea, you have got a mic next to you. We can hear you even from a sitting position; I hear you very often.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, I have the right to tell you that my mic is not working. Genuinely it is not working...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let me remind Members that we have a time limit.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 455...

Mrs Ribot: On a point of order, I heard the Minister of Tertiary Education, hon. Dr. Jeetah, twice repeating the word 'bouffon'. I would like him to withdraw that word.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I am putting the question to the hon. Minister. Hon. Minister Sayed-Hossen, please! Hon. Minister Jeetah, I did not hear anything. You are a hon. Member and Minister; I want to have your response on it, whether these words were uttered.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, I did, Mr Chairperson. But, if it is considered that the word 'bouffon' ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! This is all I asked! And now, I am asking you, since you admitted having used those words from a sitting position, I will ask you to be kind enough to withdraw these words.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, if it is so considered, I withdraw.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, you withdraw these words!

Dr. Jeetah: I do withdraw.

The Chairperson: You withdraw, that is the spirit.

(Interruptions)

Order now, please! No interruptions! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 455, *Programme 463, Item No. 21111 - Other Staff Costs*, there is an amount of Rs15 m. May I have the details of the breakdown of this sum?

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, *Item No. 22070 - Cleaning Services*. May I ask the Minister whether he can submit a list of all the contractors responsible for the cleaning services? I would also like to know whether there has been any tender exercise for the selection.

A second question...

The Chairperson: One question, please!

Mr Nagalingum: On page 456, under *Item No. 31113409 – Upgrading of Solid Waste Disposal*. We know that local authorities contribute with lorries and all. With regard to the money collected, may we know whether it is the Government which is going to have the money or the local authorities?

Mr Aimée: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, the third question of hon. Bhagwan ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Aimée: On the New Solid Waste Management Strategy, we are focusing on the recovery of compost plants. One compost plant has already started its operation at La Chaumière. Actually, we are delivering 90,000 tonnes of waste and the capacity will double now because they have applied to have some more. With the capacity of the compost plant at La Chaumière, we will drive half of our waste there for compost.

Mr Nagalingum: I ask about the revenue that is going to be collected. Is it the Government which is going to collect the money or the local authorities?

Mr Aimée: We had two questions before that which I wanted to reply, Mr Chairperson. Regarding *Other staff costs*, for overtime it is Rs2.6 m.; travelling and transport: Rs8.4 m.; wages: Rs4 m.; staff welfare: Rs90,000, an increase due to increment of salary compensation.

Hon. Gungah put a question with regard to contract and the company. I have the list...

The Chairperson: Yes, you may circulate the list if you have it.

Mr Aimée: I want to reply. For Mon Choisy, La Cuvette, Pereybere and Grand' Baie it is Maxiclean, Rs1.4m. The contractor ...

The Chairperson: May I request the hon. Minister to table the details?

Mr Aimée: The fees collected are taken by the Local Authorities. It means all the nine local authorities comprising the four District Councils and five Municipalities, not the central government.

Mrs. Hanoomanjee: On page 456, *Item No. 26313003 – Beach Authority*, Mr Chairperson, we see that there is an invasion of *transats* on public beaches. Can the hon. Minister say how many permits have been given by the Beach Authority and also what are the criteria used to give those permits?

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to the compost plant we understand that there is going to be an increase, can we know from the hon. Minister what arrangements have been made for the collection of those green waste?

Mr Bodha: Same page, *Item No. 28222 - Transfer to Households and Mare Chicose*, we had a budget of Rs14 m. this year and a budget of Rs 24.5 m. for next year. I presume it is for the transfer of the inhabitants of Mare Chicose. May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten the House as to the state of progress for this project?

Mr Seeruttun: On the same issue, if you'll allow me, Mr Chairperson, I would like to know whether the amount earmarked for 2012 - Rs 24.5 m. - includes also a compensation for moral damages for relocating the inhabitants of Mare Chicose to Rose Belle?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell, please!

(Interruptions)

No cross-talking - this is how everything starts!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: In relation to the grant to the Beach Authority, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of licences issued by the Beach Authority to hawkers working on beaches?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! We have a long list and we have only three minutes.

Mr Aimée: Mare Chicose - land of an extent of 12.86 *arpents* at Marie Jeanne, Rose Belle has been purchased by Government in July 2007 at the cost of Rs30,095,400. The contract for infrastructural work at the relocation site called Marie Jeanne was awarded in May 2008 at the cost of Rs27,730,387. A total budgetary provision of Rs76.5 m. was provided for payment of compensation to residential owners, including Rs5 m. as a disturbance allowance to pay for the

cost of water connection and other utilities for each family at the relocation site. The inhabitants of Mare Chicose have been exempted from payment of registration duty and their deed exchange for the land-swapping with an additional fund to the tune of Rs3.1 m. have been provided to the Ministry for payment of registration of duty on behalf of the inhabitants.

Due to the rise in construction costs, the Evaluation Department has revised the compensation cost from Rs71.4 m. to Rs80.2 m. Thus, an additional amount of the sum of Rs8.8 m. has been provided to this Ministry for that purpose. According to information received from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, 45 families have signed their acceptance to the offer of Government for land-swapping and payment of compensation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Bholah! We have got only one minute left. Hon. Minister, I am told that certain details about the Beach Authority hasn't been forthcoming, and also on hazardous waste from hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

Mr Aimée: I am waiting for the information.

The Chairperson: Yes.

(Interruptions)

On hazardous waste, I understand that hon. Bhagwan also asked certain questions.

(Interruptions)

The answer is forthcoming? I will have to take the vote.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I have very often mentioned ...

The Chairperson: Be brief, please!

Mr Aimée: ... about the big problem of hazardous waste in our country, particularly the obsolete chemical products from industry. An inventory of hazardous waste is currently being undertaken in Mauritius to provide details on the types, quantities and characteristics of hazardous waste generated in Mauritius. A study is being conducted by the University of Mauritius and it is expected to be completed by mid-December 2011.

Accordingly, the project for construction of an interim storage facility for hazardous waste at La Chaumière, which was expected to be completed in year 2012, is being revisited to ascertain the appropriateness of the sizing and to optimise existing infrastructure. The inventory result will allow the size and the requirement of an interim storage facility to be defined.

In January 2008, Government has entered into a loan agreement with BADEA for the setting up of an interim hazardous waste ...

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Minister if the answer is lengthy, you have to circulate it. I'll urge the hon. Minister, once again, to be brief in his replies.

As regards the question of the Beach Authority, if it is not available, you will circulate it.

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands - Programme Code 463: Solid Waste, Landscaping and Beach Management (Rs766,132,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands - Programme Code 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Soodhun and then hon. Obeedagoo.

Mr Soodhun: On page 457, under *Item No. 31112424, Upgrading of Fire Stations*, I see an amount of Rs4 m.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Soodhun: It has been reduced by half. Can the hon. Minister clarify this? Secondly, under the same item ...

The Chairperson: No, one question!

Mr Soodhun: But on the same item.

The Chairperson: Yes, all right, continue!

Mr Soodhun: Under the same item, can I know from the hon. Minister whether Port Louis Fire Station will be upgraded?

Mr Obeegadoo: I have the same concern, Sir, on page 450, *Priority Objectives - Prompt response to fire fighting and rescue operations*. I would draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the very detailed and specific targets, on page 453, that provide for responses, talks, inspections and so on and then, strangely enough, at the bottom of page 457, the amount budgeted for acquisition of fire fighting equipment, is reduced by some Rs8 m. And at page 461, the number of additional personnel is around 30, whereas the hon. Minister himself, in response to a recent PQ, stated the lack of fire fighters to amount to several 100. I think, he said something like 400. So, how do we reconcile all this, and how do we avert a major disaster in year 2012?

The Chairperson: I'll, once again, remind hon. Members to be very brief in putting questions, please. Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, still on the fire fighting equipment, we voted a sum of Rs94 m. last year. May I know from the hon. Minister the amount spent on equipment and the

type of equipment, which has been purchased, if any. Particularly, Mr Chairperson, with the more high-rise buildings, have we purchased appropriate equipment for this type of buildings?

Mr Aimée: For the fire fighters equipment, I have got it in my memory straightaway.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I'll request the hon. Minister to address the Chair and also to be as concise as possible.

Mr Aimée: Yes. We bought five lorries to the cost of Rs60 m. and we have ordered a lorry ladder, I am also very much aware of the problem of building of high storeys. I think there is a team now for the pre-commissioning that has travelled to Germany to see the proper equipment, if it will be fit for the country. As every hon. Member would know, Government bought in a lorry about 10 years ago. It was there, it has never been used, it always has breakdowns; even to use it on our road, it is impossible. As regards the number of vacancies, I just answered to a PQ last week. I think we have 127 vacancies, 41 are being interviewed now at the Disciplined Forces Commission and they will be soon appointed before the end of this year. Next year, we proposed to have 23; that's what we have as provision in our Budget.

The Chairperson: Do you have the details about hon. Soodhun's question?

Mr Aimée: Yes, I will table it. The price for the new lorry ladder that we are ordering now is around Rs40 m.

Mr Bhagwan: I have a few questions for the hon. Minister on the same page 457, on fire services and personal emoluments. Can the hon. Minister give us an idea about how many fire hydrants are operational and how many are on maintenance, and whether these hydrants are being secured?

Secondly, how many officers have followed training overseas from the Fire Department?

And thirdly, can the hon. Minister tell us whether he is contemplating to buy practical vehicles to attend to car accidents?

Mr Aimée: Actually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a question of buying a mobile firefighting equipment, that is, we can move everywhere in almost our nine districts. Concerning hydrants, I am not sure that you want the answer for all hydrants that we have around the island or only in Port Louis. If it is in Port Louis, I can say we have about 35. There are about two or three which are not working properly actually, but I spoke to the officer at the Fire Services to remedy the situation.

Mr Bodha: At *Item No. 22900 - Other Goods and Services*, there is a sum of Rs3.6 m. May I ask the hon. Minister if he can enlighten the House as to what are the items under this budgetary provision?

Mr Aimée: It is for uniforms at the cost of Rs7.8 m.; miscellaneous expenses for purchase of materials and tools; provision required for the purchase and calculating and fax machines, computers ...

The Chairperson: If it is a long list the Minister can circulate it.

Mr Aimée: It is a long list.

The Chairperson: The Minister has it in his hands, I can't know. I will rule that you have to circulate if it is a long list.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to *item 21110 - Personal Emoluments*. We know that our firefighters work in a very difficult condition and the two main problems they face and they complain about is about equipment and their security at work. We found on a list of people employed there is no Occupational Health and Safety Officer. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can inform the House why is it that in such an important sector ...

The Chairperson: The question of the hon. Member is whether there is any Health and Safety Officer?

Mr Baloomoody: And if not, why not?

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to acquisition of vehicle, more specifically the vehicle with a turnable ladder, we have had problems in the past and the hon. Minister knows about that. Can I know from the hon. Minister with regard to the pre-commissioning of that vehicle, who were those officers from the Fire Services who have been sent abroad and the rank of those officers?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although I am answerable to Parliament on matters pertaining to Fire Services, the day-to-day management rests with the Chief Fire Officer. I am not prepared...

The Chairperson: No, if the Minister does not have the information, he should say so.

Mr Aimée: In fact, for ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Mr Aimée: In fact, as and when we need the Health and Safety Officer we get the concurrence of the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Chairperson, I come back on the item that hon. Labelle raised concerning the *acquisition of firefighting equipment*, the hon. Minister said that he spent Rs10 m. out of Rs94 m. Can we know what happens to the rest of the amount?

Mr Lesjongard: He has not given the name and the rank of the officers. We are buying a vehicle which is worth Rs60 m. We have bought one in the past and it is not functioning. Now, we want to know whether those who have been sent for the pre-commissioning of that vehicle are high rank officers at the level of the Fire Services Department.

The Chairperson: The name of the officers who went for Commissioning. This is what was asked.

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, as I have said before, tender procedure is under the Chief Fire Officer and his team. When they have to commission a vehicle for the Fire Services Department, we have one engineer from MPI. So, they decide who will be the team...

The Chairperson: No, the hon. Member asked for the names of the officers. Does the hon. Minister have it?

Mr Aimée: I don't have the names.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: One by one, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Concerning the Health and Safety Officer, the law is clear that whenever we have more than 100 ...

The Chairperson: Order, hon. Baloomoody, please! I can't see you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: The fire fighting sector is a parastatal body and the law is clear that whenever we have more than 100 employees, we must have a Health and Safety Officer. Can I ask the hon. Minister why is it that we don't have one on the list? The Minister said 'as and when'.

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. made his point. The issue is, according to law, there should be one Health and Safety Officer. This is what the hon. Member is putting forward.

Mr Aimée: I think the hon. Member wants me to say that we don't have one now, we will provide one, and I will talk to my colleague, the Minister of the Civil Service Affairs. That is what I can do up to now.

(Interruptions)

Then, as I have said, the day-to-day management remains with the Chief Fire Officer. I have never got any information that there is need for one Health and Safety Officer.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member raised a very important issue and the hon. Minister explained the actual situation. Another Member raised the issue that perhaps it is against the law and drew the attention of the hon. Minister. I take it that this is a reaction and he will have to consider the situation and he stated that, if need be, remedial measures will be taken.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I think it is a very serious issue. It is not a question of 'if need be'. The hon. Minister of Labour is present. I think most Members of this House are aware that, according to the law - we don't need to be a lawyer - when you have a certain number of employees we must have it. I think, Mr Chairperson ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please!

Mrs Labelle: I think what the House wants, Mr Chairperson, is to have the assurance from the hon. Minister that needful must be done to comply with the law.

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Minister explained that if need be he will take necessary action.

Mr Aimée: A Health and Safety Officer is posted on a part-time basis. If there is a need to have a full-time - now I learn that there is a need for a full-time ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: There is no provision in the law that you need a full-time Health and Safety Officer.

The Chairperson: No, I won't allow argument on a particular issue. Several hon. Members expressed their strong views on that issue and the hon. Minister responded to those queries. As far as this issue is concerned, it is closed now. I will take the question of the hon. Gungah.

Mr Gungah: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 457 ...

The Chairperson: No cross-talking now! Hon. Mohamed and hon. Baloomoody, if you have some very important issues to discuss you have got other avenues. We are not going to embark in deeply arguments now. Please!

Mr Gungah: Under *Item No. 22060 - Maintenance*, again I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether maintenance services are contracted out and, if they are, who are the contractors?

The Chairperson: There is no need for others to answer. Hon. Varma, please!

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, *Item No. 31112424 - Upgrading of Fire Stations*, I would like from the hon. Minister which are the Fire Stations that are concerned?

Mr Aimée: Before that, I got a reply for the officers for the pre-commissioning meeting; it is the Deputy Chief Fire Officer: Mr Seesahye, Workshop Manager: Mr Ratna, Mr Maunique and Mr Chunnoo from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 457, *Item No. 21, Compensation of Employees*, here we see that there is a reduction in the amount earmarked for 2012 with regard to 2011, but when we look at the number of staffing it has gone up. How does the hon. Minister reconcile that reduction in the amount earmarked for?

Mr Aimée: I would reply to the hon. Member who raised the point, before. Provision required for maintenance of vehicles and equipment is Rs400,000 and for IT equipment it is Rs200,000.

The Chairperson: Please, I see a long list!

Mr Aimée: No. It is not a long list. For the maintenance of rescue hydraulic tools, lift at the Head Office and generators. *Upgrading of Fire Stations* - provision required for one motorised roller shutter at Coromandel, Curepipe and St. Aubin Fire Stations.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: At last! At page 457.

The Chairperson: I don't want to hear such commentary, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: I am waiting since long.

The Chairperson: No. Please, I don't want to hear such commentary. You have to put your question, now!

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, *Personal Emoluments*, this item includes basic salary and salary compensation allowance and end-of-year bonus. The decrease is due to a 12 months' provision that was made for filling of vacancies in the department.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Dr. Hawoldar, please! Can you settle your problem outside! No. I don't want any! Hon. Dr. Hawoldar, I am adult and I know how to handle these issues and please, again. I don't want to take other drastic measures!

Mr Aimée: Also, a 60% provision has been made for filling of vacancies.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! No cross-talking!

Mr Aimée: *'Mais seulement Baloomoody, to pas pou arrêter même toi! Mo croire bizin faire kikchoz are toi!'* Only 60% provision has been made for the filling of vacancies of 25 fire-fighters, one Senior Financial Operation Officer, one Financial Operation Officer and for the year 2012, provision in respect of allowance has been reduced by an amount of Rs1,560,000 for...

The Chairperson: Please, circulate the answer! Last question from hon. Nagalingum! I thought that you had a new question! In that case, I have got a last question from hon. Jhugroo! A short question!

Mr Jhugroo: Yes; very short. At page 457, *Acquisition of Fire Fighting Equipment*. So, are the lorries recently purchased equipped to reach the most highest building of this country, as mentioned by the hon. Minister last year in this House?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I just answered that question. There are two ways to attend the high storey building; you have one, by the lorry ladder. But, now, provision is made when deliver license, there is a need to provide separate staircase.

The Chairperson: Please, I will ask the hon. Minister; you explained lengthily when the question was put...

(Interruptions)

During your speech also for the Budget you explained on this issue. This issue, I think, has been sufficiently canvassed. I will have now to put the question!

Programme Code 464: Fire Fighting and Rescue and Fire Prevention (Rs380,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 465: Outer Islands Development was called.

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Regarding Item No. 26323070, there is a provision of Rs137 m. but when you see the two projects, it does not tally with the Rs137 m. It

only tallies to Rs127 m. I would like to know from the hon. Minister where the Rs10 m. provision is for?

Mr Aimée: The purpose of this item, Mr Chairperson, is to fund the execution of infrastructural project and development of economic activity in Agalega and Outer Islands. The main projects are the airstrip rehabilitation to the tune of Rs120 m. and purchase of a fire fighting lorry: Rs7 m. and minor development project in Agalega: Rs10 m.

Mr Quirin: With regard to *Airstrip Rehabilitation*, at page 458, *Item No. 26323070*, can the hon. Minister give details on the project, how much has been spent up to now, and when will the project be completed? Also, who is the contractor and I would like also to know if the project is financed by a foreign loan and which type of aircraft can land on the airstrip?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, the design is for Dornier and ATR 72. The tender has already been launched, they have selected bidders but hon Members are well aware of the difficulties. It's only on emergency that Dornier would land there. So, actually I am facing quite a lot of problem for that.

Mrs Labelle: On the same item, we voted an amount of Rs60 m. for 2010 and an amount of Rs50 m. for 2011. May I know from the hon. Minister out of this amount - more than Rs100 m. - what amount has been spent on this particular project, if any?

Mr Aimée: Up to now, no.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Agalega Island Council is functioning? Can the hon. Minister circulate a list of the office bearers and how many times he has met and where he has met himself recently the person of the Agalega Island Council? With regard to St. Brandon, with regard to the budget we are asked to vote, what are the specific items of development especially concerning the landing of boats and so on? What is being earmarked for St. Brandon?

Mr Aimée: The access to St Brandon is very difficult. In fact, if you ask me my opinion, Mr Chairperson, I would choose to have a hydravion that can land on water instead of having a normal plane.

The Chairperson: Please, don't make long speech! Provide the information.

Mr Aimée: The members of the Agalega Island Council actually are Paul Gino Alfred, Marcel Robert Agatine, Desiré Henry, Marie Belanda Marie, Pyarelall Sharma Dwarka Dhawe, Lewis Chan Tan Cheung and Laval Supramanien.

The Chairperson: If it is a list you circulate, please. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the item Fire Fighting facilities; we voted Rs10 m. and we have only Rs 7m. for next year, and we are planning to have another airstrip. Can I ask the hon. Minister if can tell us – on the same page- what equipment do we have with regard to fire facilities. How many members from the Fire Brigade we have there? Are we still with the traditional *seau delo and seau di sable* for fire fighting there?

Mr Aimée: First of all, Mr Chairperson, there is no *seau delo labas*! In fact the new tender lorry is very sophisticated with hydraulic means. There is so many innovative equipment that the first time we have in Mauritius on the five tender loans. Rs 7m. is meant to improve safety during landing and takeoff of aircraft in Agalega and a provision of Rs17 m. for fire fighter equipment, and we are going to buy Fire Fighting Equipment Category 5. Tenders have been launched and it is expected that the vehicle would be delivered by the middle of next year!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the new airstrips will accommodate only Le Dornier and no other planes?

The Chairperson: No, you make the point!

Mr Jhugroo: Let me remind him of the previous tender document; there was a provision to accommodate a bigger plane like A319.

The Chairperson: What type of plane?

Mr Aimée: The hon. Member was the General Manager of O IDC, and I know what his interest is.

The Chairperson: Put the question!

Mr Aimée: But, as I said before, the airstrip will accommodate Le Dornier for patrols and safety, but also the airstrip is meant for the ATR72. The length of the airstrip there is just like in Rodrigues, 1300ms.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister when will it be possible for Members of the Constituency of Agalega to make a visit there and what are the facilities that will be available for us to visit Agalega?

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: I just mentioned that the access to Agalega is very difficult now. There is no communication because the airstrip is in a very bad condition. The only means to be in Agalega is on Mauritius Pride, and it takes 10 days.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 458, same *item Airstrip Rehabilitation*. Hon. Labelle and hon. Quirin put that question and the question was not answered.

So, can we have from the hon. Minister a full brief of the tender exercise, it there has been one, how much was spending and the plan? Can he circulate it? Because I know it is going to be a long answer.

Mr Aimée: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: You circulate it. Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Programme 465. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Tsunami disaster building is now completed, whether there were delays in the execution of the project and the cost of the project?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, the building dated back when I was the Chairman of the OIIC. We have finished with that building in 2010, that is, last year, and actually we have made provision once more. It is a twin island; on the North we have one, and now we are prepared to have one in the South.

Mr Bhagwan: I come back to St Brandon. Since we have a unit of the Meteorological Department there, we have a Coast Guard post and fishermen working there, can the hon. Minister inform the House – he has informed us about his dream of having hydravion. In real terms....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Bhagwan: ...what action Government intends to take to give landing facilities to our Coast Guard people, the people of the Meteorological Department and fishermen?

Mr Aimée: In fact, we have another means, now. We have a Department to prove that it would be in construction early next year!

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, communication being so important, can the hon. Minister enlighten the House as to the number of emergency trips of the Dornier to Agalega during the year and the number of boat trips by the Mauritius Pride during the year?

Mr Aimée: First of all, the cost of Mauritius Pride is about Rs 10m. for one trip. We have accommodated in Management to find ways and means how to do our job. So, we have got fishing vessels in between the two trips of Mauritius Pride to reduce cost. The hon. Member knows what I am talking about. He was Minister of Finance of the past year.

Mr Uteem: Relating to the last item Fire Fighting Facilities, may I know from the hon. Minister, the number of fire fighters and other staff that are based in Agalega?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, up to now, we don't have any proper fire fighting equipment in Agalega but, as I have mentioned, we have made provisions in the Budget. Then, we will ask probably from the Fire Department or from AML to have one experienced fire fighter there. But, now, there is no need to have any fire fighter.

Mr Barbier: With regard to *item 26323070 - Outer Islands Development Corporation*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, during the current year, there has been any study carried out on the Island of Agalega with any foreign partner and, if so, whether he will give us some details?

The Chairperson: On the same issue, yes!

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister regarding the increase of Rs 8m. for the Outer Islands Development Corporation the reason of this increase. Secondly, how much is spent on wages and salaries and how many staff were employed by that Corporation?

The Chairperson: If you don't have the details now.

Mr Aimée: I have the details here. First of all, Mr Chairperson, although some Members probably don't know Agalega...

The Chairperson: Please, straightaway to the answer!

Mr Aimée: ... any need or any services that we have in Mauritius under so many Ministries, Agalega needs to have the same opportunity. Let me tell you something. This money is earmarked for housing development there. We are constructing three duplex every year, so that the young ones that grow up get a house on their heads.

Furthermore, the financial allocation is to meet the running and administrative costs of the Corporation viz salaries of personnel, Agalega staff, charter vessel, port, stevedore, fuel and also chartering of the Dornier plane in case of emergency. There is an additional provision of Rs8 m. due to increase in the cost of chartering of Mauritius Pride.

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Minister saying earlier that, in his view, a *hydravion* would have been probably better. I presume the hon. Minister must have been saying that based on technical report and serious studies. Can I ask whether the hon. Minister, during consultations with the hon. Minister of Finance, has seriously canvassed this issue and, therefore, this option has not been retained?

Mr Aimée: From the very beginning...

The Chairperson: No, the question is whether this issue of hydra plane has been canvassed.

Mr Aimée: Yes, but not officially. Mr Chairperson, I talked on Agalega airstrip in my speech. Questions were asked about how many aggregates there is in one kilo. That is what they want from me. They asked me questions on five options to do one airstrip. So, today, how can I go for the *hydravion*? I know that will never happen. Never.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister when was the last time that Transall plane went to Agalega?

Mr Aimée: Transall plane went there because they were organising patrols on piracy.

The Chairperson: The question is when!

Mr Aimée: About three months ago. Because of piracy, it went there to train the SMF. The last time Transall plane has been there was to bring back the engine of the Dornier that had remained there for three weeks.

Mr Jhugroo: I know that Transall can land safely there. So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider having the assistance of the French Embassy, through our hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, to have the Transall plane, so that a visit can be organised for our hon. MPs of both sides of the House to Agalega?

Mr Aimée: Mr Chairperson, I personally had a chat with the new French Ambassador. I am still waiting.

Mr Barbier: Mr Chairperson, is the hon. Minister aware of any foreign partners presently or in the recent past having done any study on the island for a research project and, if so, he will give us some details?

Concerning the staff position of Agalega, there are no details in this document. There is only the figure of Rs1.439 m. in the Budget for the staffing position, without any details. Will the hon. Minister give us the details about that?

Mr Aimée: I don't have this information now, but I will submit it at a later stage.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Minister should be aware of the enormous difficulties for disembarkation from the Mauritius Pride. We know the hazardous difficulties we have when we disembark from the Mauritius Pride, and I think we use a *chaland* which is very

old. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any provision to upgrade those facilities for disembarkation?

Mr Aimée: In fact, there were various studies to have a proper jetty or harbour in Agalega. But, in Agalega, it's about 100 metres deep just after ten metres off the beach.

The Chairperson: No, the question was...

Mr Aimée: It is difficult up to now, and there are also financial constraints.

Mr François: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a firm request for upgrading health facilities in Agalega, so as to allow all Agalean mothers to give birth on their mother land? I don't see any forecast under the PPB for 2013 or 2014.

Mr Aimée: M. le président, en tant que *Chairman* et ministre, je fais tout mon possible pour qu'on ait quelque chose de bien en ce qui concerne la santé à Agalega. Mais il y a toujours ce problème de communication, et même l'ex- ministre en a parlé plusieurs fois. For the time being, we have only basic facilities concerning health. In fact, there are two health centres; one in the North and one the South.

Programme Code 465: Outer Islands Development (Rs198,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 12.58 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.17 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Arts and Culture - Programme Code 621: Policy and Management of Arts and Culture was called.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Chairperson, at page 470, under *Item 22120 – Fees of which: Capacity Building Programme*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister when the Capacity Building Programme is proposed to be implemented, the time period thereof, the population targeted, and if he could provide a breakdown of the fees in respect to the programme.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, concerning the capacity building programme, a sum of Rs1.4m. has been targeted. It is meant for the payment of fees to service providers under the Capacity Building Programme, which was previously under the centrally managed programme. It has now been transferred to the Ministry. It is meant for CELPAC - *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle*.

Mrs Radegonde: Under *Item 22160 - Overseas Training* at page 470, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the type of training and the number of beneficiaries. I would also like to have a detailed breakdown of the expenses allocated for this overseas training.

Mr Choonee: I can circulate the details later, Mr Chairperson, but those funds are provided for subsistence allowance...

(Interruptions)

Mr Choonee: Do you want me to do it again?

The Chairperson: No, no problem!

Mr Choonee: The number of beneficiaries and details will be circulated later, as I don't have it now.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions arising out of programme 621. The first is the strategic plan which is mentioned at page 468 has started for May this year. I would be grateful if the Minister could give us some idea what precisely the focus of this strategic plan will be. Maybe, out of courtesy, I will wait until the Minister find his page - not his feet, but his page. May I proceed hon. Minister?

(Interruptions)

Should I start again? I am speaking on the programme 621, which is the general programme on policy and management. I refer to your first performance target at page 468 - SS1 Strategic Plan. I would like to have some information as to the ambit, as to the focus of that strategic plan. Will it be presented in May and published or will it be circulated for consultation with artists and other stakeholders? I would like, therefore, some explanation as to that. If I may put a second, Chair? Would it be proper?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am very glad to note at page 465 that one of the priority strategic directions concerns inter-cultural dialogue. May we know where in the Budget, under Programme 621, are the initiatives that relate to inter-cultural dialogue or is it something I should take up on Programme 622? I seek the guidance of the Minister.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister. Can you respond now?

Mr Choonee: Yes, Mr Chair. To start with, the first question raised about SS1 PBB strategic plan, may I just confirm that we are working on it. It is a new plan, we're working on it.

We will try to make arts and culture an industry. Concerning the strategic plan again, we are having a White paper being produced in consultation with all the artists.

Mr Obeegadoo: On this very issue, I am very concerned by what I just heard. The Minister said the plan aims to make of arts and culture an industry. Did I hear right?

Mr Choonee: We want to make of Mauritius a hub, a centre for arts and culture. And we want, of course, to make of arts and culture what we call a creative arts industry. So, there, everything fits in. We want to make of Mauritius a hub.

Mr Obeegadoo: So, the Minister means this plan will be circulated for consultation?

Mr Choonee: Definitely! It is a White paper; we will ventilate it throughout.

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to overseas training, may I know what amount has already been spent during this financial year?

Mr Choonee: May I know the items and the page, please?

Mr Jugnauth: There's only one. We are talking about Programme 621.

The Chairperson: It is one before last. Page 470!

Mr Choonee: I replied to that. Funds were provided for subsistence allowance, air tickets and hotel accommodation.

Mr Jugnauth: For this financial year?

Mr Choonee: For this financial year. Once I get the information, I'll circulate it.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 470, *Item No. 22100 - Publications and Stationery*, the amount earmarked for 2012 has increased by Rs1.4 m. Would the hon. Minister kindly inform the House why and for what purpose?

Mr Choonee: Actually, I replied to this part of the question. Is it *Item No. 22100 - Publications and Stationery*?

Mr Seeruttun: Yes.

Mr Choonee: But the figures are the same.

Mr Seeruttun: Yes.

Mr Choonee: It's the same figure. It is for the purchase newspapers, books, etc. If you go to the fees, I just said that Rs1.4 m. is for *Capacity Building Programme*.

Mr Jhugroo: Chair, on page 470, under *Item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees*, can the hon. Minister explain to the House why there has been an increase of above Rs5 m. when, on page 475, we see that the number of employees has been increased only by two?

Mr Nagalingum: On page 470, *Item No. 21210 - Social Contributions*, we see that the estimates for 2012 is Rs1 m. Can we have a breakdown?

Mr Choonee: Let me start by the first question. The increase in the estimates for 2012 amounts to about Rs5 m. – it is for personal emoluments. The amount now includes the salary compensation and cash in lieu of leave, which were formerly shown under Programme 951 - Centrally Managed Expenses Programme. The Ministry is a new one. It's also meant for the salary of the Minister, the PS, the PAS and seven advisers.

If you'll allow me, Chair, social contribution is R1 m. It is for the contribution to the National Savings Fund which was formerly shown under *Programme 951 - Centrally Managed Expenses of Government*.

Mr Bodha: It is on the same page 470, as regards *Item No. 22120024 - Capacity Building Programme* where we have a provision of R1 m. May I ask the hon. Minister how these funds are going to be spent?

Mr Choonee: It's the same question coming again on the same item. I don't mind repeating.

The Chairperson: If the hon. Minister has given the explanation, he has to say so.

Mr Choonee: I have given, but if the hon. Member wants any additional information I can circulate; I'll do it. But, as I said, we have an item *CELPAC - Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle*. It is for two capacity building personnel of the Ministry; it's Mrs Chasle and Mr Soogally from CELPAC.

Mr Bhagwan: Replying to my colleague, hon. Obeegadoo, the Minister has mentioned the strategic plan. But who is preparing the plan? Are there consultants? Is it being prepared in-house? Are the Minister's advisers involved in that preparation? Can the Minister inform us?

Mr Choonee: Actually, it is being prepared in-house, at the Ministry. We are almost over with it. We will soon inform Cabinet and then put it open to the public for additional views.

Mr Gungah: Chair, can the Minister give some more details about *Item No. 22060 – Maintenance*.

Mr Choonee: Rs345,000 is for maintenance of buildings, IT equipment, fixtures and fittings, and vehicles of Minister and Permanent Secretary.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to *Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments*, the Minister just mentioned that it includes the salaries of seven advisers. Will the hon. Minister kindly communicate to us the names of the advisers, their qualifications and remuneration?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chair, I can give the names of the advisers, but the other details I can give later.

The Chairperson: You circulate it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a few questions on pages 471 and 472. May I take them together, Sir?

(Interruptions)

We are still on page 470. My apologies!

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, allow me to go back to *Item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees*. In his reply, the Minister just said that it includes refund of cash in lieu of leave. Does that mean that the leave being refunded is for the one year of leave not taken by those employees? Is that so? Because the amount of the increase is quite substantial and it looks unlikely that it would be for the leave only.

The Chairperson: No, it is only one of the various items, I think.

Mr Choonee: Is it Programme 621? The increase is about Rs5 m. This is what I replied to. Now, there is another one under Programme 621 again, *Compensation of Employees* where there has been a decrease from Rs52 m. to Rs50 m. Is it that?

Mr Seeruttun: On item 21, the increase is from Rs16.1 m. to Rs21.9 m. on Personal Emoluments and you said that one of the reasons for the increase is the refund of cash in your leave paid to employees. What I am asking is: is that leave not taken by employees for one year? The increase seems to be quite substantial, and it looks a bit awkward for that increase.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister must just confirm the details.

Mr Choonee: Yes, it is cash in lieu of sick leave.

The Chairperson: Rs1 m.

Mr Choonee: No, but the whole reply I gave was: it is an amount that includes salary compensation.

Mr Barbier: At page 470, *Programme Code 622 - Promotion of Arts and Culture*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether, concerning the White Paper which was to be

issued on the promotion of culture in general, this document has been settled, how much it has cost the Ministry and who are the persons who have worked on that document.

Mr Choonee: White Paper on Arts of Culture. As I said earlier, it is an exercise being done in-house. It is one of my advisers and the administrative cadre from the Ministry. The document is ready. I'll give you a copy.

Mr Jugnauth: At page 465, in regard to the future, I see that the hon. Minister would like to use the best available resources for the cultural centres and the speaking unions. May I know in what way they will be called upon to use those common facilities?

Mr Choonee: It is the *Major Constraints*, the constraints concerning the Speaking Unions and the Cultural Centres. Actually, there is a lot of duplication as well in the activities of the cultural centres and the speaking unions. So, what we want to do is to lump together, use the same services to be provided to both the cultural centres and the speaking unions. My Ministry has already started consultations with the speaking unions and cultural centres to ensure their collaboration in this respect.

Mr Jugnauth: It is a follow-up. Is it that you are going to bring them to one particular location, under one roof with sharing of this secretariat and so on?

The Chairperson: No, we should not take policy issues as you are aware.

Mr Choonee: Actually, it would be infrastructure, transport, secretariat and all, so that the costs come lower and we use the sum more for the promotion of the language and the culture.

Programme 621: Policy and Management for Arts and Culture (Rs24,751,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture was called.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Chairperson, at page 471 under *Item No. 22900904 – Festival Mauricien*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the activities proposed to be organised, date of period of activities.

Also under *Item No. 22900923 – International Film Festival*, I would like the hon. Minister to give a list of films, film producers who participated in this year's festival and a detailed breakdown of expenses incurred this year.

The Chairperson: Does the Minister have the details?

Mr Choonee: I have, yes.

The Chairperson: If it is not too long, you just ...

Mr Choonee: Mine are very short. Don't worry, Sir! So, for "*Festival Mauricien*", we have Rs3 m. This would be the third edition in 2012 of the "*Festival Mauricien*." In 2011, events were organised in March throughout the country in the context of the National Day Celebration. Usually, during the National Day Celebration, we have one week of "*Festival Mauricien*". So, that's why we enlist the support of local artists, emerging artists and even international artists.

Mrs Radegonde: I want to know the activities proposed to be organised.

Mr Choonee: 2012? The hon. Member has to be a bit patient. Once the programme is ready, we will get her to that.

The next one concerns the International Film Festival. Here, I would like just to bring some precision. We are organising an International Film Festival in 2013, which will coincide with our 45th Anniversary of Independence. We have set up a committee; a Government-owned company has been set up. This company is working on the modalities of how and who would be invited for the International Film Festival. It will be something organised prior to "*Festival de Cannes*" which will be similar to that, but with a Mauritian touch.

Mr Nagaligum: On page 471, under *Item No. 22120030 – Fees to Resource Persons for Promoting SLAM, Drama, Photography, Reading and Writing in Schools*, I see that a sum of Rs3 m. has been earmarked. Can I know how the selection is going to be made? The second question is on page 471, under *Item No. 22090 – Security*. Can I know when the firm has allocated this contract and the name of the firm?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must not slam from a sitting position! Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: On the same issue, that is, *22120030 – Fees to Resource Persons for Promoting SLAM, Drama, Photography, Reading and Writing in Schools*, may I ask the hon. Minister when, where, and how many resource persons are involved in the promotion of SLAM? I would like to know at what time we are having these activities and whether it is being done in all schools. Further, Mr Chairperson, under the same programme...

The Chairperson: No, we are still with the SLAM. I gave the hon. Member the floor because it was...

Mrs Labelle: All right.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, are you ready with these queries?

Mr Choonee: Coming to *Fees to Resource Persons for Promoting SLAM, Drama, Photography, Reading and Writing in Schools* - Rs3 m., the sum is distributed among the Chairman and members of the Film Classification Board, Drama Committees for 10 languages of National Drama Festival, instructors giving training at the *Centre de Formation Artistique et Culturelle* in three regions already: Paillotte, Plaine des Papayes, Pointe Canon and soon Goodlands.

The next one is *Security Services*; it is Rs1.2 m. We have security services at Pointe Canon Theatre, Open Air Theatre, Serge Constantin Theatre, Baden Powell Office, *Centre de Formation at Paillotte*, stores at Vacoas Building, and the company is Defence High-Tech Security Services.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 472, under *Item No. 26313106 - Current Grant – Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust*, we raised that issue last year. Can the Minister inform the House whether the Board has been appointed? Who are the Chairperson and members? How much money has been spent from the budget 2011? Will the Minister circulate a list of all the activities organised by the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust?

I have another question, Mr Chairperson, at page 471, *Item No. 22900904 - Festival Mauricien*, where an amount of Rs3 m. has been earmarked. Can we have some details? Under *Item No. 22900923 - International Film Festival*, an amount of Rs1 m. has been earmarked. May we have some details about these items? Are we promoting Mauritian singers? I have one last question, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: You are with your fourth question, hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC), we are being asked to vote Rs8.2 m. May I know whether the Ministry has a representative on the Board of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation and whether they have produced films? In fact, we have a Film Development Corporation and, instead of producing films, they are playing films themselves and there is mismanagement as well. I am not pinpointing one person. There is a big war between the Chairperson and the General Manager. Can the hon. Minister at least inform us whether he has received representations and if he is trying to put some order in that film business?

Mr Choonee: I will come to the Current Grant to the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust. The Board of the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust was revoked in July 2005, and the reconstitution of the Board is under consideration. Provision has been made partly for payment of salaries and benefits to two employees formerly recruited by the Mauritius Cultural Centre Trust. One attendant is posted at Aapravasi Ghat and another officer at CELPAC. What happens ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, I would just like to bring in some precisions. That is my feelings - when the Cultural Centre Trust was created, we had Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust which means four. We have had representations from a lot of people who claim that they are from northern India and they should also have their cultural trust. Until and unless we have a clear-cut definition of the North Indian – whatever name we give it; I am not playing on words for the appellation, but the majority of the people made complaints saying that they belong to States of Northern India, they need a Cultural Trust for them. Once we have done this we will come back with the Mauritian Cultural Trust.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Bodha: As regards *Item No. 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, we have two studies: (a) Development Framework for Film Industry and (b) a Study on the setting up of a Mauritius Symphony Orchestra. We had a budget of Rs2 m. for the first one and a budget of Rs2 m. as well for the second one. May I know what was done in the year 2011? May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Film Development Corporation which has been around for the last 20 years has not done anything as regards the development framework of a film industry in Mauritius? And why should we do a study now with the Rs2 m. and start the industry now?

Mrs Ribot: I would like to add to what my colleague has just asked concerning a study on the setting up of a Mauritius Symphony Orchestra. A sum of Rs2 m. has been earmarked in 2011 and an additional Rs2 m. for 2012. We would like to get a breakdown of the expenses attached to that study and know who carried out the study and which stage has it reached?

(Interruptions)

At page 471, under *Item No. 22130001 - Studies and preliminary project preparation*, can we have the justification of that expenditure?

Mrs Navarre-Marie: At page 471, under *Item No. 22900904 - Festival Mauricien*, I would like to have the name of the organisation that will be entrusted to organise the activities of the festival. And then, secondly, as regards studies and surveys, the same question as put by hon. Bodha, that is, who carried out the studies, the findings thereof and if the findings have been published. Thirdly, on page 472, *Item No. 28212 - Transfers to Households*, can we have more details as to the amount of Rs13 m.?

Mr Choonee: I think I have got a pool of questions and I will have to reply. Maybe, I will start by the last one.

The Chairperson: Yes, please! If we have too many questions, the Minister will be unable to answer.

Mr Choonee: I will give the replies. Concerning *Festival Mauricien*, the organiser is our Ministry. As I said earlier, it is the third edition. We have done it earlier and we are doing the same thing.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister made his point.

Mr Choonee: As far as the study on Symphony Orchestra is concerned, we have not spent money till now. The preliminary discussion was held with the experts of Scotland and we had other consultants from other countries. The *Conservatoire François Mitterand* has worked out a proposal. Consultations will be held with both local and foreign resource persons.

The third one concerns the Current Grant to the Mauritius Film Development Corporation. The MFDC has actually had activities in 2011: programme for capacity building in acting, script writing, film direction, sound and light techniques, stage settings, makeup and editing were held as a joint collaboration with the MGI. The Mauritius Film Festival was held in March 2011, the Marathi Film Festival was held in July 2011, permits to film producers - we get many crews coming to Mauritius - as at date we have 59 crews that came and this is where they facilitate in giving permits, venues for shooting.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson is Mr Christian Nayna, the Director is Mrs Ramyead. For future activities for 2012, we have a new project that has come, it's the film industry.

(Interruptions)

We will facilitate in the implementation of the scheme for the refund of 25% approved expenditure by film producers in Mauritius ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order!

Mr Choonee: We will continue having capacity building programmes. We will continue organising film festivals and facilitate film production. There is also a Film Production Scheme for local film producers as well. We are finalising a new Bill which will be the Film Commission Bill which will replace the MFDC.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 471, *Item No. 26313036 Current Grant – Mauritius Film Development Corporation*, can we know the qualification of the Director of the MFDC, her monthly salary and other benefits, and the number of the trips undergone since her appointment?

Mr Choonee: I will circulate that.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have three questions, Sir. The first is intercultural dialogue - strategic objective. Since we have heard Festival Mauricien is just Independence Day celebrations...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member should be as brief as possible, please.

Mr Obeegadoo: The Minister needs to know the page, Sir, I cannot be brief. On page 465 - *strategic direction*, second bullet, end of sentence ‘ *inter-cultural dialogue...*’.

I refer to pages 471 and 472. I would like the Minister to tell us how he is going to spend the money he is asking us to approve for inter-cultural dialogue being given that he has just told hon. Bhagwan that the *Festival Mauricien* is just the Independence Day celebrations and that the Mauritian Cultural Centre has no board and only Rs600,000. How does he propose to organise activities for intercultural dialogue?

The second point is on *Centre Conservatoire François Mitterand* at page 471. We note the grant is not being increased and, at page 472, the capital grant stays the same. The *Conservatoire* is doing a lot of good work; they are very constrained in terms of space at Quatre Bornes. What does the Minister propose to do to address this, since they are now handling the National Symphonic Orchestra as well?

Third and last point...

The Chairperson: Please, I will allow you two questions because there is a long list and we have only two minutes left.

Mr Obeegadoo: My third point is very short, on the film industry. There are a number of different ‘confettis’ measures, all sorts of items on film, including the MFDC. How is this going to be coordinated?

The Chairperson: Can you respond now or I take another one? Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, just to request additional information for *Item No. 263133106 - the Mauritius Cultural Centre Trust*, I think I heard the hon. Minister stating that since we have not been fixed regarding a cultural centre for those from the North of India...

The Chairperson: Be brief, please!

Mrs Labelle: Yes, but it is very difficult, Mr Chairperson, because my question relates to what the hon. Minister has stated. We have not been fixed regarding the centre for the North of India, and we are keeping in abeyance the Mauritian Cultural Centre. Must I take it that we are having difficulty in the definition of Mauritian? Why can't we put that?

Secondly, Mr Chairperson, if we want to promote the intercultural dialogue, how are we putting aside only the Mauritian Cultural Centre? This is my first question.

The Chairperson: No, please! I allowed the hon. Member only one question. I am sorry but I have a long list. I told her to be very brief, but it is her style and I cannot have control on it. I try to be as fair as possible.

Mr Choonee: For the intercultural dialogue, we will do it along with all the cultural centres that exist, the speaking unions and activities will be organised with focus on common values that exist in all the different cultures that form part of the Mauritian culture. It will be joint activities and the schools will be definitely roped in.

As far as the grant to *Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand* is concerned, hon. Obeegadoo, we agree that we are having 2500 students there, the building is saturated. It is suffocating. As a first step, there is one centre in Paillotte which belongs to the Ministry and which is the *Centre de formation artistique*. We are handing over that building, vesting it with *Centre François Mitterrand*. Further, we have talked to the Minister of Education to allow us to use the classes after school hours for all the schools wherever possible to use the classes for *Centre François Mitterrand* courses.

Concerning the Mauritian Cultural Centre Trust, Mr Chairperson, this is very important, we cannot....

The Chairperson: Please be brief!

Mr Choonee: Yes, but it is a question...

The Chairperson: I know, but I urge the Minister to skip all adjectives and give the details.

Mr Choonee: Mauritius Cultural Centre Trust cannot be operational if all Mauritians are not included.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Last question for hon. Mrs Radegonde.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: We cannot have 20 minutes for a programme which has only 10 lines and 20 minutes for a programme where we have three pages, and we are talking about important issues....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The same principle is going to apply; an objective principle of 20 minutes per programme. No long replies, no potpourri of questions. I am sorry. It had been agreed since the very beginning. Hon. Members have the right to put questions, I am trying to be as fair as possible and I am bound by the Standing Orders and by the time. Now we have to take the question.

Programme Code 622: Promotion of Arts and Culture (Rs254,582,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage was called.

The Chairperson: One question per Member, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to page 473, *Item No. 22130001 – Studies and preliminary project preparation (a) Study on the setting up of a Virtual Museum on the History of Mauritius, (b) Master Plan for Museums* and on the next page 474...

The Chairperson: One question please!

Mr Obeegadoo: It is the same question.

The Chairperson: Please be brief.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is the same question and the same *Item. 474, National History Museum*. Can we have some enlightenment as to how all this relates with the statement made earlier that we are going to have the National Archives located in Réduit?

Mr Choonee: Virtual Museum will be an online museum on the history of Mauritius. About the Master Plan for the museum, preliminary consultations have been initiated with relevant stakeholders.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 474, *Item No.282111011 - archives*, we all know in what state our National Archives is. All the documents are in a state of *délabrement*, and our history is in great danger. Can the Minister inform the House what urgent action Government is taking as far as the protection of all our *patrimoines*, our archives and our documents are concerned?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, during my speech on the Budget, I mentioned about the archives and in what a bad state it is. As from 1983 - we are now 2011 - so many governments have gone through, nobody could ever take an action...

(Interruptions)

Mr Choonee: I am taking it...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, I do not want any provocation, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Minister, I ask you to calm down. Now I am calling hon. Dr. Boolell...

Dr. S. Boolell: In line again with the preservation and promotion of heritage ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I can't hear the question. Hon. Assirvaden, please!

Dr. S. Boolell: In line again with the preservation of the heritage, does the hon. Minister intend proceeding to the recruitment of a Director of Archives and within which time limit shall we have a Director?

Mr Choonee: For recruitment matters, Mr Chairperson, we proceed through the PSC. It is the PSC that carries out the exercise. Once the recruitment exercise is completed, we'll have a new Director.

As far as Archives is concerned, it is good that we inform our colleagues that we have started a digitisation process for the past two years and we are scanning all the papers that we have there; 30,000 folios have to be considered. We are going at the rate of 8,000 folios per year. I said it in my intervention on Budget. It is not an easy task.

Mr Nagalingum: On the same page, under *Item No. 22030 - Rent*, the amount is Rs3,550,000. Can we know which building it is?

The Chairperson: If the hon. Minister does not have the details, I'll call Mrs Radegonde in the meantime.

Mrs Radegonde: At page 474, under *Item No. 31112417*, I note that there is a reduction of the budgetary provision from Rs11,300,000 to Rs7,000,000. I would like to know ...

Mr Choonee: Which page?

Mrs Radegonde: Page 474, *Upgrading of Cultural Complex Buildings*. I would like to ask the hon. Minister to table, if he can, the status of the project implementation in respect of the projects concerned, namely the National History Museum, Restoration of La Tour Koenig Tower, Restoration & Conservation of Trianon Indentured Labourers.

Mr Choonee: For Mrs Radegonde, I will circulate the paper. As far as the rent is concerned, the rental is meant for the DBM building of Archives at Coromandel, rental of Ramkisson Building in Port Louis, which houses the record centre from Ministries and Departments. The figures have remained unchanged.

Mr Bodha: With regard to extra budgetary units, under capital ...

Mr Choonee: Which page?

Mr Bodha: Page 474, Capital grant to the *Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund*. This year there was no budget. Next year, we have a budget of Rs45 m. for the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund and Rs6 m. for the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there were no works done at the Aapravasi Ghat this year and what is forecast as regards projects for next year in the implementation of the World Heritage Site?

Mr Choonee: Mr Chairperson, there were works which were on this year as well. Usually the funding was from the Human Resource Knowledge and Art Development (HRKAD) Fund, and now that fund has come to our Ministry. What is happening at the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund is that we are having the Beeckrumsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre, which will be completed by early 2012. That is why the sum of Rs45 m. has been voted for next year.

We have also got other projects. In the Aapravasi Ghat buffer zone, Rs6 m. has been allocated for that. As far as the capital grant for the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund is concerned, again Rs6 m. has been earmarked and it doesn't mean that we didn't have funds previously. But, here, we have a few important projects. We are going ahead with the International Slave Route Monument, Biodiversity Conservation, Trails, Museums and Interpretation Centre, Monitoring of the World Heritage Site, Signage and Archaeological works that will be continuing at the site.

Mr Baloomoody: I will have to repeat the question asked by my friend, hon. Mrs Radegonde. What about the restoration of La Tour Koeing Tower? There was a provision of Rs3 m. last year. May we know what works have been done? We are providing Rs1.5 m. again. When will it be completed?

Mr Choonee: We are having Rs1.5 m. again because the work is not completed yet. Part of the work has been done.

Mr Seeruttun: Allow me to come back to the *Item No. 22130 - Studies and Surveys* on page 473. Rs1 m. was earmarked in 2010 for the carry out of a study on a virtual museum. May I know from the hon. Minister who conducted the surveys, whether a report was submitted and whether people who conducted the surveys have the competencies to do so?

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, I have one question at page 473, *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets, Item No. 31112038 - Construction of Galerie d'Art Nationale*. We are being asked to vote a sum of Rs40 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether work has started, who is monitoring that project, who is the consultant - because it is a very delicate project - whether responsibility rests with the advisers of the hon. Prime Minister of *Espoir Avenir* etc. - I don't know - whether he is monitoring that project and whether the Ministry is also following the project? If yes, I would like to know whether there is a monitoring committee and who is chairing that monitoring committee. Is it Mr X from the Prime Minister's Office?

Mr Choonee: Concerning the virtual museum, everything has been done in-house; officers from the Ministry and the personnel from the Mauritius Museum Council have completed the work. We are almost ready with the virtual museum. I am told that visitors can even search and browse through the various collections and study each period of our history through that.

Concerning the National Art Gallery, it is true that Government has ultimately earmarked a building near Aapravasi Ghat, which is the old Military Hospital. Wooden buildings have been earmarked, the hon. Prime Minister has visited the site, and it is true again that the Head of the Department *Culture et Avenir* of the PMO and my Ministry are together working on that project. We have progressed, but the building is in a state which is not easy and we have to abide by archaeological and other norms because we are very near the sea. Just imagine placing artefacts, paintings there, we need a dedicated building. So we are working together, but we have not completed the work yet.

Mr Uteem: *Item No. 2822 - Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Grant scheme for the Rehabilitation of Historical and Cultural Heritage Site.* May I know from the hon. Minister ...

Mr Choonee: Which page?

Mr Uteem: This is page 474, under *Item No. 28 - Other Expenses, Sub-Programme 28221, Grant for the Rehabilitation of Historical and Cultural Heritage Site.* May I know from the hon. Minister, out of the Rs10 m. that is budgeted, whether any provision is made for rehabilitation of historical private accommodation? Who are the beneficiaries? What are the criteria used for allocating these funds?

Mr Choonee: It is true that we have Rs10 m. earmarked for this project. We focus only on Government-owned buildings. For this year, we have five sites which have been restored and next year, 2012, ten sites will be rehabilitated.

As far as the private buildings are concerned, we have been advised not to get in blindly there. At one point in time, it was agreed that we do 50-50 - 50% Government puts in and 50% the private sector – but, then we thought that it was not a viable initiative. We focus on having those private projects being catered for by CSR.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 474, *Item No. 31112417 - Ugrading of Cultural Complex/Buildings.* Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the La Tour Koenig Tower is classified as a cultural building and whether it is located on Government land or private land?

Mr Choonee: The La Tour Koenig building is classified protected building.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 476, *Programme 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage, 055875 - Post of Deputy Director.* Can the hon. Minister inform the House why there is no provision to fill the post of Deputy Director of the National Heritage Building?

Mr Choonee: We are actually having the Chief Archives Officer who has been assigned the duty of Deputy Director since 11 November 2006. As I have said earlier, procedures have been initiated to amend the scheme of service.

Mr Obeegadoo: Just to clarify matters. I understand that right now we do not have in Mauritius somebody with the qualifications, according to the Act, to be in charge of the National Archives. How does the Minister propose to fill this vacancy? Will it be advertised internationally? How do we move forward?

Mr Choonee: The vacancy exists, and the PSC is proceeding with the exercise. Once they complete it, then only we can know where we are.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question was according to my understanding. No Mauritian possesses the qualifications, as stipulated under the law, at the present time. Am I wrong? If I am right, how do we fill the post?

Mr Choonee: In any case, if the Member's information is confirmed, namely that we don't have anybody in Mauritius, in that case we will have to re-advertise, carry on the exercise if need be internationally to get somebody to fill in the vacancy. We will amend the scheme of service.

Mr Jhugroo: Do you have the name of the Chief Archives Officer?

Mr Choonee: Mr Roland Chung.

Mr Seeruttun: Page 474, *Item No. 31132401 - E-Government Project: Digitisation of Archives*. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether that project is being connected in-house or outsourced? If it is outsourced, who is conducting that project?

Mr Uteem: As a follow-up to the answer of the hon. Minister, under the same *Item No. 28221*, just outside Parliament there is a beautiful building, *Poncini*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether Government provides any funding for the restoration of that beautiful building?

The Chairperson: No, this is not on any item. You asked the question if it forms part of the programme.

Mr Choonee: No, there is no scheme for that. *En ce qui concerne* digitisation, it is DCDM which is carrying the work.

Programme Code 623: Preservation and Promotion of Heritage (Rs155,037,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment

Programme Code 541: Policy Management for Labour and Employment was called.

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Minister to *Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments* on page 484? There is an increase for the next financial year of more than 100% in the estimates of *Personal Emoluments*, from Rs10 m. to Rs20 m. Can we have some more details? In fact, when we look at the staff increase, it does not reflect that much; it's from 48 to 54 officers.

On the same issue, may I refer the hon. Minister to the major achievement for 2011 on page 479? There is a list of court cases where money has been recovered in favour of workers. Can the hon. Minister give us the list of cases where there has been a judgment in favour of

workers but, unfortunately, money has not been recovered as the company or the defendant company or the person went bankrupt or into liquidation?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Item No. 221110 - Personal Emoluments*, it consists of basic salary, salary compensation, extra remuneration, etc. To explain the difference, the provision required for the payment of salaries to Minister, Permanent Secretary and other staff under programme 541, the substantial increase in the provision is due to reshuffling of administrative staff who are now being paid under the appropriate programme. Proportionate decrease in provisions will be noted by Members in this House in the other programme and sub programmes of this Ministry. In other words, it is a technical matter.

With regard to the amount of money, true it is that we have managed to recover quite a substantial amount of money through our intervention at the Ministry for workers. If I am not mistaken, with regard to this issue of money that has been recovered between January and October 2011, there have been 104 contraventions and approximately Rs6.4 m. has been recovered in favour of workers. That is money that has been recovered. So, whatever figures we have mentioned there is money that has been recovered. With regard to money that people have not paid in line with the judgment, those figures are not accounted for here. But I will have a list and I can give it to my hon. friend.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I want some clarification. The Minister had committed publicly, openly and forcefully to urgent review of the two main pieces of labour legislation. However, it neither appears under strategic direction nor under the performance targets. I would like to know, under programme 541, or if the hon. Minister prefers under page 488, where the posts are listed, who, when and how will this issue be addressed within the next financial year.

Mr Mohamed: Since I believe that it is a very important question, I will take this one right away. With regard to the amendments to the labour legislation, there are no financial implications. That is why it is logical that there is no mention of it here. With regard to when, how etc, let me make it clear that there have been a lot of consultations, precisely because when we come to Parliament, I don't want hon. Members to say that there has been no consultations. There have been widespread consultations - that explains the time that it has taken. The last time that I received the report from the ILO was some time in September. I visited them some time in September also to discuss the finalisation of the draft that has to be discussed at the level of the High-Powered Committee that Cabinet has set up. As I have said, after the Budget we are going

to have one final meeting of the High Powered Committee hopefully, and then go to Cabinet. *C'est en bonne voie* I must say. The reason it has taken time - I say it again - is because *ce sont d'importants changements*.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister said that there have been quite a lot of consultations. May we know the parties who have been consulted and the members of that High Powered Committee?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the parties that I have consulted, obviously, since it concerns amendments, we have had to have tripartite consultations. So, obviously, trade unions have sent in their views. We have discussed with them, we have met federations, we have met confederations, and we have had meetings with the Mauritius Employers' Federation and other parties, not necessarily trade unionists or employers, but members of the public also, because they heard that we were going through a review.

With regard to the High-Powered Committee - the seven confederations were there - it is presided by Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun, my good friend, hon. Dr. Bunwaree, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Minister of Finance, hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen, hon. Attorney General, hon. Minister Moutia and hon. Minister Sik Yuen as well.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same line, it's good that the hon. Minister has given us assurance concerning this new legislation - because of his precious time, so it is precious money for Government, for the public. We trust him when he is saying so. We are at Committee of Supply now. I think the trade unions need to be reassured of a statement he has made. So, will the hon. Minister, at least, make a statement concerning progress on these two important pieces of legislation, and that it be transmitted positively to the trade unions which have been waiting for such a long time?

Mr Mohamed: I can assure the hon. Member, Mr Chairperson, that basically I have done so. The hon. Member has got more experience than I have and he must know that, very often, when we do so, they are still not convinced. But then, again, I will keep on doing so, and I hope that I have reassured all hon. Members here.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, going back to page 480, on *Priority Objectives* under *Programme 541*, where it says: to promote decent work, support employers and workers to create a safe, conflict-free and productive workplace and facilitate access to gainful employment. Will the hon. Minister inform the House as to the concrete measures that are being taken to

ensure that this objective be met in the year 2012, knowing very well that what is happening at the MBC is not a very conducive environment?

Mr Mohamed: We are working together with the ILO and also, once again, tripartite with various stakeholders, the Ministry, the Government, the Mauritius Employers' Federation and the confederations with regard to a decent work country programme for Mauritius. Obviously, it is going to be finalised very soon. There are three priority areas under the decent work country programme, namely -

1. creation of decent and productive employment with the provision of adequate social protection, and
2. Strengthening social dialogue and elimination of all forms of discrimination.

As it stands right now, one workers' confederation has not signified, through letters from us, whether it wants to adhere to it. We are also waiting for the Mauritius Employers' Federation to basically sign up to it and we are having meetings in order to make sure that they do adhere to it because they have put in a lot of work in it - I mean the MEF as well as the other unions. When it is ready, obviously, this document will be made public and then you will see that all measures have been taken into account in order to make sure that we stick to what we have written down in this document.

(Interruptions)

Time frame? Well, we are waiting. It should be done early next year, hopefully. In fact, it should have been done last month with the Executive Director.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the major constraints, the hon. Minister rightly refers to data collection and processing as a major challenge for his Ministry. So, I am a little bit surprised, looking at the programme on page 484 with detailed expenditure and the staff details on page 488. There does not appear to be any dedicated staff member or project to establish a research and have a statistician on the establishment of the Ministry. So, how does the hon. Minister propose to respond to that constraint?

Mr Mohamed: What we have mentioned here as constraints is the dependence on other institutions for completion of actions undertaken: prosecution, collection and compilation of statistical data. There is one CSO who is posted in that Department. We are also going for computerisation of data - you have probably seen a lot of IT equipment that are being bought to make sure that the compilation of statistical data is done correctly. A concerted effort is being

made, as stipulated in the document with regard to streamlining procedures and our responsiveness and processors. That would help us with regard to statistical collection.

Programme Code 541: Policy and Management for Labour and Employment (Rs35,924,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 542: Labour and Employment Relations Management was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Minister to page 482 with regard to *Employment Relations* and S1: *Enforcement of minimum terms and conditions of employment*. Number of inspections of workplaces: 775 actual. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether any of his officers had an opportunity to go and find out whether the basic terms and conditions of employment are being respected at the MBC Head Office?

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister will answer I am sure; other hon. Members can remain quiet. We have one Minister of Labour, I am sure he will answer. On the same page, with regard to *Overseas Training*, we find that there has been no contribution. We know that this is very important with regard to industrial relations - if we want to improve on that issue.

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the first question about the MBC, the answer is yes, and if I may add some information comprehensively so.

With regard to the other issue *Programme 54201*, we have received fellowships by the ILO in 2001. I have a list which I will table and also by ARLAC in 2011. We have, on a technical point, put some order with regard to this overseas travelling and that's why it is not provided for. It is provided for under each specific programme and not as it was before. That is why the hon. friend does not see it there.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 485, *Personal Emoluments*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House - I think it is Prof. Torul, if I am not mistaken - of the composition of this Conciliation and Mediation Commission? It is a one-person Commission - how many cases have that Commission dealt with during the past financial year? For the sake of transparency, with regard to the report made by Prof. Torul - the enquiry - on the case of Mrs Rehana Ameer v/s the Director-General of the MBC, Mr Calikhan, I would like to know whether it's not time now - for the public interest - that this report be made public, and how much money ...

(Interruptions)

I have not finished ...

The Chairperson: We are on items of expenditure.

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, on items of expenditure. The Commission sat and the money was spent. So, we can't spend money for nothing. We are spending public money and asking questions here. Can the hon. Minister, at least, inform the House for the sake of transparency? There has been a cost for that Conciliation and Mediation Committee in the case of Mrs Rehana Ameer.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member wants to know the cost?

Mr Bhagwan: The cost and also have the report circulated to us.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, I have answered a PQ pertaining to the report of Professor Torul and I believe, humbly so, that the events are being taken care of and as it should in a very responsible manner. In other words, there is no such change in circumstances that would warrant a change in my stand and in the answer I gave to the PQ.

With regard to the people who are working at the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, let me take this opportunity to say that they are doing a fantastic job, and I would like also to say that, with regard to whom the members are, I will circulate the list.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue, since we need certainty in the law and there was a very public controversy as to whether the MBC had to appear before the Commission or not and the hon. Minister himself was publicly humiliated and we sympathised with him...

The Chairperson: No, is this not a question of policy, hon. Obeegadoo?

Mr Obeegadoo: Does he, within the provisions we are voting, propose to have the legislation amended so that this point can be clarified once and for all?

Mr Mohamed: True it is, Mr Chairperson that it concerns policy, but then again it would be fair, and for transparency I would like to answer that.

I also believe that there is no need to amend the law pertaining to the necessity of the statutory body to show up when the Permanent Secretary calls on to you to come to the Ministry. The learned Magistrate has already given a judgment to that effect. So, there is no need, therefore, to amend the law.

Mr Baloomoody: We have only 20 minutes on Programme Code 542?

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, coming to Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, on page 489, two new posts are proposed: Conciliation and Mediation Officer and Principal

Conciliation and Mediation Officer. Are the posts going to be implemented in the very near future?

Mr Mohamed: Yes, they have to. People are more and more understanding the need to go to the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation, and there is a lot of confidence in the said institution. That is why, because of the volume of work there, there is indeed a need to fill in those posts.

Mr Uteem: I refer to page 482, *Programme 542, S3 Sensitisation of workers and other stakeholders on their rights and obligations*. There is a list of the number of times the Ministry has intervened. May I know from the hon. Minister whether his Ministry provides any services where the terms of contract are explained to expatriates and foreign workers and whether he has a support of the translating team to get that across to them?

Mr Mohamed: Yes, my Ministry does provide those services. We have precisely the services of a translator whom I only recently met and talked about. Yes, we have also a migrant squad with two interpreters there, and they are doing exactly what the hon. Member said.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, in his reply to hon. Baloomoody, the hon. Minister confirmed that the Inspectorate of his Ministry went to visit the MBC. Is he prepared to lay on the Table of the Assembly a copy of the findings and the report of that visit?

Mr Mohamed: At the moment, the matter is before Court. So, that would tantamount to be *sub judice*.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I refer the hon. Minister to page 486 on the safety and health issue, on the same *Programme 54202*? I am sure the hon. Minister will agree with me that one of the main concerns actually in the industrial sector is the number of non-fatal and fatal accidents and the occupational health problems we are having. It is true that there is an increase and the hon. Minister has got on record the public saying that he has no sufficient people. He has come forward with regulations, but, unfortunately, he cannot enforce them because there are no sufficient people to do so. And we have found that there has been an increase. On the establishment, there are 80 Occupational Safety and Health Officers - may I refer the hon. Minister to page 489 - and it has been increased to 87, but actually we have very much less than 80 in post. I am sure the hon. Minister will agree. Can I ask the hon. Minister how he intends to handle that important issue, in fact, with that low number of officers?

Secondly, we know that many companies must have a Risk Impact Assessment Report. This also is very important, and I think they have to do that every two years. The hon. Minister himself has said recently that one company, where one young person lost his life, did not do that or did not communicate its report. Can we know whether his Ministry is equipped enough, first to ensure that regulations on Occupational Safety and Health are being enforced, and secondly that the Risk Impact Assessment Reports are followed at his Ministry? Because according to my information, some do...

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must put his question on a particular issue, one at a time; he knows quite well.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a question, Sir.

The Chairperson: Supplementary on the question.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the very same issue, Sir.

The Chairperson: No, it is a question of policy. You raise it on a question of labour force, I take it. Yes, please.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 482, the number of persons to be sensitised on safety and health norms - this is the performance target at the bottom of page 482 - will decrease from 2010 to 2012.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Mohamed: To answer hon. Obeegadoo, basically from 2010 to 2012, I see here that in the target there is a decrease; it does not mean that there will be a decrease. Basically, we cannot keep on continuing with the process, I have noted, where we kept on sensitising the same people. We have to change strategy and go more towards people who have not been sensitised.

With regard to the issue of fatal accidents, I would tend to humbly disagree with hon. Baloomoody that the number has not increased in terms of fatal accidents. In fact, the rate of fatal accidents...

Mr Baloomoody: But I didn't say that...

The Chairperson: No, the question is whether you are sufficiently staffed to deal with this issue of safety.

Mr Mohamed: Yes, simply enough funding for additional posts; seven names are being provided by the PSC today itself.

Mr Uteem: On the same issue, as a follow-up question, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of contraventions that have been taken this year for people who do not respect this Health and Safety regulations?

Mr Mohamed: I have the list here, and it is an exhaustive list that goes sectorwise. In the circumstances, for me not to take too much of the time of the House, I will circulate it.

Mr Seeruttun: By law, Mr Chairperson, an enterprise is not obliged to have a full-time Health and Safety Officer. This has been so because in the past we didn't have enough qualified Health and Safety Officers.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must put his question!

Mr Seeruttun: Is the hon. Minister prepared to consider reviewing the law so that big enterprises have full-time Health and Safety Officers appointed?

The Chairperson: This is a question of policy. You have to come specifically on an item of the vote! Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 489, I refer the hon. Minister to *salary code 18 25 52 - Labour and Industrial Relations Officer*. I have time and again drawn the hon. Minister's attention to the situation in labour offices such as the one in Curepipe, where regularly the public cannot have access to advice because there is nobody there to answer the phone or to attend to members of the public because they go on site visits. Will the hon. Minister give us the assurance that with the funds being provided for next year, importantly the offices like the one in Curepipe will be adequately staffed so that public complaints can be attended to?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to Curepipe, I must say it here that hon. Obeegadoo has spoken to me about this. In fact, the problem is simple. There is staff there. There are many officers, it is a new building. We have identified it and it is so simple. We need to have a PABX system placed in, so that when it is ringing an officer, even if he is in another office, can answer the phone. Basically, that is what we are going to do and, obviously, we are going to see to it that everyone who calls in at all time during working hours should have someone answering them. I totally agree with him.

Mr Baloomoody: I know that the list which my friend, hon. Uteem, has asked is long. Can the hon. Minister refer to that document and inform the House with regard to fatal injuries, how many cases of involuntary homicide by negligence by employers have we prosecuted at the Intermediate Court?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to involuntary homicide, that would concern the police which would institute proceedings. I do not have figures in regard to that. The only fact that they do know is that for the last two cases of death on workplace, people have been arrested for involuntary homicide and basically then, as the hon. Member would know, there will be a judiciary inquiry afterwards. On our side, people should realise that a violation of the Occupational Safety Health Act is a criminal offence and also they will have to be criminally prosecuted.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under the same code, could I ask the hon. Minister whether, with regard to companies carrying out risk assessment, they should be registered with his Ministry and whether they submit regular reports to his Ministry after an assessment has been carried out?

Mr Mohamed: As the law stands, there is no obligation for those companies to give us those documents with risk assessment. Let me say that we have had a campaign where we have identified all companies that have not carried out the risk assessment, and I have a list as well here. Out of 552 employers of above 50 employees, as at 31 May 2011 there were risk assessments for 493 and safety policy for 411, and there are 54 cases that we have lodged in court for prosecution precisely because of non-compliance with the need for risk assessment being carried out. But we are considering the possibility of amending the law in order to see to it that it is mandatory upon them to come and communicate it to us.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 485, *Item No. 26313092 - Trade Union Trust Fund*, can the hon. Minister inform us whether there is a Board Director and a Chairperson at the Trust Fund and whether it is operational? What have been its activities recently? Also concerning the EPZ Labour Welfare Fund, is it still the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry who chairs that Committee? Recently I have heard - he tells me in the press - about some misdoings, some problems in that Fund.

(Interruptions)

Yes, EPZ! Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has received representations from the unions concerning mismanagement? Can the hon. Minister give us some details?

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same point, EPZ Labour Welfare Fund, with the dwindling number of workers in the EPZ sector, how relevant is it that we provide again this year Rs4 m?

Concerning the point raised by hon. Bhagwan, we know that the long serving director had to leave recently. Who has now replaced him?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the EPZ Labour Welfare Fund, the General Manager was interdicted and later made to retire in the public interest. The Chairperson is a Permanent Secretary. With regard to the EPZ and why there is a need to keep on going with it, it is because, as you will recall, I had stated that Government has approved and the matter is already at the State Law Office...

The Chairperson: The Minister should be brief.

Mr Mohamed: ...for this to be extended to the Manufacturing Sector Labour Welfare Fund. We will extend it because the EPZ has disappeared. With regard to the TUTF, the General Manager is Mr Jean Daniel Auguste. He has been recruited and I believe the Board has gone through that. At the Trade Union Trust Fund, there have been certain problems there, but with the new building that we are going to have in Curepipe, we are going to have a *centre de documentation*, and we will operate there.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister himself came forward to say that he intends to amend the law with regard to the risk assessment and to ensure that it is communicated to his Ministry. The unions should be communicated the risk assessment because they are involved, and the workers are not aware of the risk environment where they are working. Can we on the same path amend the law so that, at least, this risk is communicated to the workers as well? They will know the risk environment in which they are working.

The Chairperson: The hon. member made his point. I take a very last question and then we will take the vote.

Mr Bhagwan: Is that Trade Union Trust Fund operating? How is it running? Secondly...

The Chairperson: No, one question only. Please!

Mr Bhagwan: It is in the public interest. The General Manager...

The Chairperson: We are doing the work for the public interest here.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, the General Manager of the EPZ Welfare Fund has been sacked. This is why I am asking the reason for it. Is it because of swindling, corruption? We do not know.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made his point.

Mr Mohamed: I believe hon. Bhagwan wants to know who the president of the Trade Union Trust Fund is. It is Mr Pierre Moonsamy Kally who is the president. With regard to the issue of the other person who has been made to retire in the public interest, I have heard that there was a problem. But I do not have the details. At least, he is no longer with us. That is good news.

As regards the law, yes, there have been requests made, and gross mismanagement was the cause. A Fact Finding Committee had been set up by Government. That is why he was made to retire.

With regard to the law, it is true that trade unionists have asked that they also be communicated the Risk Impact Assessment Report. We will explore all possibilities to see to it that it is also mandatory upon the employer to communicate them to the trade union or the group of workers.

Programme Code 542: Labour and Employment Relations Management (Rs 125,105,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 543: Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, this is one where from experience it is crucial that we have an e-Register, that the service be fully computerised. I don't see any provision being made therefor at page 486. Has that already been undertaken and completed?

The Chairperson: Whether there has been some computerisation!

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the need for an e-Register, I totally agree that there is a need to make sure that this is done. Most importantly, before we are to proceed to the other stage of e-Registration etc., we are going to come up very soon with the amendment to the Registrar of Association Act and it is already at the level of State Law Office. We have to amend the law firstly. We do not want basically to have a format already provided for under the old law which is going to be scrapped very soon. Since we are going to come very soon with the new legislation, which has been looked into and is a modern piece of legislation, it will work hand in hand with the modern piece of equipment as well.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, *Item No. 21 - Compensation.* Under the Superannuation Fund, may I know from the hon. Minister how many inspections have been made in 2011 about any Superannuation Fund and if any irregularity was found? If you look at page 483, Programme

543, you have the ability to supervise and to carry out inspections of Employees Superannuation Funds. I want to know how many inspections and investigations have been carried out apart from Employees Superannuation Funds.

Mr Mohamed: I'll come back with your permission, Mr Chair, to what hon. Obeegadoo had said concerning the computerisation of the Registry of Associations. Basically, there is a project of Rs5 m. and the duration of the project is one to 12 months.

Mr Obeegadoo: Not for next year?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the number of inspections, there are 1,616 and included in there are the inspections. I will try to decide which one is particular to the one the hon. Member is referring to and circulate it.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to that Registrar, I have found that there is a sum provided under *Item No. 22120 – Fees*. But from experience, one of the main concerns there has been on the Association is lack of legal advice and if ever they want legal advice, it takes time. Will they consider having on the establishment one or two legal advisers so that we can provide better and quicker services, because I don't see any of the list?

Mr Mohamed: We have already taken this year a pool of five lawyers and one of their schemes of duties will also precisely be what the hon. Member is saying. We have done that already.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same programme, that is, 543, at page 486, *Item No. 31132 - Acquisition of Intangible Fixed Assets*. There is a threefold increase from Rs500,000 to Rs1.5 m. in 2012 and it goes up to Rs3.5 m in 2013. Can we get some information from the hon. Minister please?

Mr Mohamed: That is with regard to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry. It is imperative to computerise the activities of the Ministry, amongst others, the Registry of Association will be computerised as from next year. If the hon. Member requires any information on this particular issue, I have a brief on it which I'll gladly give to him.

Mr Seeruttun: Chair, allow me to go back to page 479 on major achievements.

With regard to complaints registered, the Minister has stated that there are nearly 8000 complaints registered which go down to about 25 per day. Doesn't he feel that it is a bit too much in terms of number of complaints registered per day and what are the measures being taken to reduce that amount to a lower figure?

Mr Mohamed: On the contrary, I think that my staff is doing a fantastic job and it is because people have confidence in them that they can come and complain. So, I think that is very good news.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am utterly confused on an issue. If the Minister would consider the performance target on page 483; I note that the time to process applications will go down and the number of inspections will increase. However, when I try to reconcile this with the staff numbers on page 490, I find that it is the office care attendants that are being increased and, in fact, there will be a lesser number of inspectors.

Mr Mohamed: It is not the quantity of staff that basically is necessary to streamline processors and make things go faster. I can assure the hon. Member that we will achieve our target.

Programme Code 543: Registration of Associations, Trade Unions and Superannuation Funds (Rs18,951,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 544: Employment Facilitation was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Last item on page 487: *Labour Market Information System (LMIS)*. Of course, this system was set up many, many years ago; since last year we voted Rs2.7 m. for that purpose; this year again Rs2.35 m. could the Minister please indicate where things stand as regards the effectiveness of the LMIS?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the issue LMIS, I have a whole brief on this, on the effectiveness and all that it considers. Let me just say that, instead of going for this whole literature, if I may just be allowed to give this brief to the hon. Member and it will clarify issues.

Mr Bhagwan: I'll talk about this Employment Division. Can I have some clarifications from the Minister? We are all MPs. We all know what is the problem concerning stamp card. Can the Minister inform the House whether this has been *informatisé*, whether there is a policy of first come first serve, and people always complain: '*nou pe metter mem dix an, kinz an pe stamp carte, nou pe vinn vyie pa ena narien mem*'. So, this is what is being said. Can the Minister inform the House whether provision has been made? Dr. Bunwaree was there some time before ...

(Interruptions)

I have not yet finished. Is there some sort of audit that whenever Ministries request a list to be sent for employment, there is a clear and transparent policy as far as people who had their card

stamped for a long time would not be penalised? I would say people who do not deserve: the 50th would become the 2nd person on the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, this is a question of policy.

Mr Mohamed: Honestly, I don't mind. I think this is a good question which I would like to clarify.

Mr Baloomoody: Concerning vacancies in the public sector, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will liaise with the MBC so that we can make better use of a situation to have, at least, a programme on the TV?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 487, *Item No. 31132401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure e-Government Projects Review and Modernise Work Permit System*. Can I know how many work permits have been issued during the year since January till now and what are the structures that are being put into place to see to it that those foreigners who come to Mauritius to work are given effectively good working conditions?

Mr Mohamed: If I may take all three issues that have been raised. I'll start with hon. Hanoomanjee - ladies first. The number of valid work permits between January and October 2011 is 9471. In order to make sure that the workers are coming from abroad, have safe accommodation and have good working conditions, not only have we passed regulations pertaining to that accommodation, but also the officers of my Ministry are having regular visits to those workers and to the place of employment. There were 33,993 valid work permits at the end of October 2011.

To come to the issue of programmes at the MBC to make efficient use of that resource, there is a programme on MBC2 which is called '*chwazir u travay*'. With regard to the excellent points raised by hon. Bhagwan, it is important for me to clarify that - hon. Bunwaree had said it - it is already computerised and all the names are generated by computer.

There is no human intervention precisely because we want things to be transparent and clear. That is why it is computer generated.

With regard to the criteria...

(Interruptions)

No, no. Actually, there is a system...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, please! No interruption, please!

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the criteria requirements by employers on location of work and oversee the interview, I can assure the hon. Member that since it is computer-generated, there is no human intervention and that is the best way to do things.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 487 under *Item No. 31132104 - Upgrading of Labour Marketing Information System*. Will the Minister inform the House whether that upgrade will be connected in-house or by someone outside the Ministry? Because it is something which is very complex. Will the Minister look for people with the necessary competencies to do that upgrade?

Mr Mohamed: With regard to the upgrade, since I had promised that I would give a copy of that brief to hon. Obeegadoo, I shall obviously give you a copy as well and it will make things clear.

Programme Code 544: Employment and Facilitation (Rs67,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We take half an hour break.

At 4.02 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.34 p.m. with Mr Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Attorney General's Office

Programme 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Attorney General to page 492, *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. One of the concerns of this department is lack of staff with required competencies and experience. We know that in the Budget there is provision for the recruitment of new State Law Officers. Can I ask the hon. Attorney General how he intends to remedy this serious and very important constraint at the Attorney General's Office?

Secondly, I would like to know whether new space has been found and, if so, where.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, as far as recruitment is concerned, the House is well aware that a number of officers will be recruited.

As far as retention is concerned, Mr Chairperson, indeed representations have been made to the Pay Research Bureau. As we all know, it is a very complex matter, as many officers from the Attorney General's Office join the bench or others even preside tribunals, but the matter is being addressed, as representations have already been made to the Pay Research Bureau.

As far as the problem of space is concerned, Mr Chairperson, an amount of Rs3 m. has been provided in the Budget of the Ministry of Finance to carry out a feasibility study. Actually, there is a plot of land situated at Edith Cavell Street. We will be carrying out a feasibility study as regards the plot of land. We will see whether we can build the infrastructure to house the Attorney General's Office.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to refer to page 495 - strategic plan. This may well be the first time that the Attorney General's Office produces a strategic plan, according to the performance indicators. So, I am very interested to know from the Attorney General what will be the objective of the strategic plan and the general ambit.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually the guidelines have already been submitted and the strategic plan is in line with them.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, still on the same item of compensation of employees and major constraints and challenges on page 492. Being given the lack of staff and the difficulty to retain good staff, can I know from the hon. Attorney General the number of staff of the Solicitor General's Office which is allowed to take private practice and give advice?

Mr Varma: Well, I don't have this information. As far as I know, those who are employed at the Attorney General's Office are public officers. There might be those who are retained by parastatal organisations. If the hon. gentleman wants to have a list of them, I will have to compile the list first and then let him have a copy.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, may I refer to the strategic plan which has been mentioned by the Attorney General? I would like to know how this strategic plan will articulate with the Mackay Report recommendations.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, as we all know, the Attorney General's Office is a service Ministry and, of course, we are well aware of the reforms which have been recommended by the Mackay Report. I have been introducing a number of pieces of legislation, which go in the direction of the reforms that have been stated in the Mackay Report. Of course, we will continue with the reforms.

Mr Seeruttun: Going back to the major constraints, it says here: lack of staff with required competencies and experience. Training is one of the ways to get them to have the necessary competencies. But when we look at the amount that has been earmarked for training,

it is like nothing; Rs100,000 for the next four years. Does the Attorney General feel that this is the amount which is required to address that problem?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually this will come under a programme. I am prepared to answer, but let's come to the programme.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 497, *Programme 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services*. Can I know from the hon. Attorney General whether his Office was involved in the drafting of the new rules with regard to costs in civil matters, which the Supreme Court did?

Mr Varma: I do not see how it is linked with an item.

Mr Baloomoody: The Policy Management for Legal and Drafting Services; it is a service that the Attorney General Office provides. The hon. Attorney General himself just replied that he provides services. I want to know whether his Office was called upon to assist the Judiciary to draft that regulation where there is an increase of 700%.

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Member made his point.

Mr Varma: Before answering hon. Baloomoody, I will, for the sake of completion, answer hon. Seeruttun. Actually, around 23 officers have attended training courses abroad and we have also organised a number of training sessions in-house and, of course, I can circulate the workshops which we have organised in-house.

Coming to the question put by hon. Baloomoody, the answer is purely and simply no.

Mr Obeegadoo: I take it that it is under this vote that the salary and allowances of the Attorney General himself is included. As Attorney General, therefore, the legal adviser to Government and also the connection between Government and the Judiciary, will he agree, on the basis of the provisions we are making, to convey the concern of this House to Government and to the Judiciary concerning the legal costs which have been debated following the Budget here in the House?

Mr Varma: The hon. gentleman will be glad to know that I have already discussed the matter with the hon. Chief Justice, and he is fully aware of the reservations which we have.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 500, Programme 561, under *Item No. 12 00 97 – Solicitor General*. If I may, with due respect. We know that we have many commissions in each and every Ministry, and wherever there is a commission we find that the Solicitor General is a

member of the Board. May we know on how many Boards the Solicitor General sits and whether he is independently remunerated from whatever we are providing here?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I do not have the information at hand.

Mr Uteem: On the same page, can the hon. Attorney General confirm whether the staff of the Solicitor General's Office is required to elect to work full-time for the Solicitor General's Office or DPP and, if this is the case, how many people have had to move from one Office to the other this year?

Mr Varma: In fact, this is true, Mr Chairperson. The officers have to elect whether they will be at the Attorney General's Office or at the DPP's Office. As far as officers who have moved from one Office to the other, I do not really think that any officer has moved, but there have been promotions during the course of the year, and if the promotion of one officer is to the DPP's Office, then he will obviously move to the DPP's Office. This has happened I think in one case.

Mr Obeegadoo: Again, at page 500, under *Programme 561*, I note that there are two new positions of Assistant Solicitor General being created. May we know to what end? Does this mean that there is a reorganisation within the Department and how will things shape up?

Mr Varma: Indeed, there is a reorganisation, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: May I come back to the issue of Solicitor General? Can I ask the hon. Attorney General how does he reconcile the fact that on many Boards we have representatives, either the Solicitor General himself or representatives from his Office? For example, I can cite the fact that I was at the GRA Board and I found somebody from the Solicitor General's Office there. So, how does he reconcile the fact of having a member from the Solicitor General's Office on the Board and tomorrow he has to advise Government to take action against that Board? There might be a conflict.

The Chairperson: This is a question of policy! I will not allow a question on policy. This is another issue. If the hon. Member wants to come by way of a parliamentary question, that's another matter.

Mr Varma: For the sake of completion, Mr Chairperson, I have no problem to answer...

The Chairperson: No, please! We are at Committee of Supply and we are concerned with a specific exercise, we should not mix issues. If you have other queries, I am here to listen to you.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know from the hon. Attorney General whether he intends to review that practice of having people from the Solicitor General's Office to be represented on independent Boards of parastatal bodies?

The Chairperson: No, this is the same question phrased differently.

Mr Uteem: If I can reformulate what my friend is saying in a way which is not policy, may I know from the hon. Attorney General the number of cases where the State Law Office has advised an authority on which the Solicitor General was a Board member?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, we deal with so many cases and, as you can see from page 492, we have dealt with 3,812 requests for legal advice. I do not think that the hon. gentleman will expect me to have the details of all these cases for advice.

The Chairperson: No! Please, just answer that you do not have the information!

Mr Varma: I cannot communicate this information.

The Chairperson: Yes, this is a fairer answer.

Programme Code 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services (Rs32,550,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, at page 498, under *Item No. 22120 - Fees* for Privy Council cases, once again, can I ask the hon. Attorney General for some details about the Rs5 m. that we budgeted for this year? How much from this Rs5 m. has been used? We find that next year we are providing a sum of Rs20 m. over and above the Rs4 m for legal fees for Privy Council. May we know for which issues? Especially for the Privy Council, can I ask the hon. Attorney General who represents us there? Do we have the services of foreign lawyers or do we take our respectable senior most lawyers in our profession locally?

Secondly, the contribution to...

The Chairperson: No, please! We will take one by one, that is, the Privy Council. Hon. Bodha has got a small clarification on that issue.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Attorney General whether there is a special provision for the case we have regarding the Chagos Archipelago and thus the substantial amount for 2012?

Mr Varma: Actually, as far as the fees are concerned, it is divided into three; fees for training, which is payable to resource persons for training programmes conducted locally and

other related expenses. The actual expenditure as at 15 November is Rs48,000. I have got a list of the training programmes, which I can circulate.

As for the Privy Council cases, as the hon. gentleman made it clear, it is meant for Counsels and Solicitors in London, and the amount which was earmarked last year was Rs4 m. The actual expenditure has been Rs1,103,000. The details are as follows for the five cases: the NTA v Mauritius Secondary Industry, and the amount paid has been Rs64,000 and...

The Chairperson: Would you mind circulating it?

Mr Varma: The hon. Member wanted to know who the barrister who has appeared for us is.

Mr Baloomoody: You are taking foreign barristers.

Mr Varma: The Attorney General's Office is representing the State in many cases. We have also retained the services of foreign lawyers, namely Mr Philip Baker QC, Ms McCarthy, Mr Imran Afzal, and the solicitors are the Royds Solicitors.

Regarding the point raised by hon. Bodha, Mr Chairperson, the sum of Rs20 m. is precisely provision made for the payment of fees to Counsels in relation to the Chagos case.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 498, *Item No. 22100 - Publications and Stationery*. Can the Attorney General tell us why the provisions which have been made fluctuate so much? Because we have got Rs2,225,000 which was earmarked for 2011, and then it suddenly goes up for next year to Rs12,850,000 and it goes down again.

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually this is a special provision which is being made. As I stated during my speech on the Budget, provision, Mr Chairperson, is being made for the consolidation of the subsidiary legislation and development of the content of the database. There is a contract which is supposed to be for a period of six years, but we are still working on the details.

The first item, that is, the provision being made for the subsidiary legislation, will amount to around Rs11 m. And for printing and stationery, purchase of stationery, toners, etc., it will be Rs650,000, which will be done through a bidding exercise, of course, following the law. And, the third is Rs1.2 m., provision being made for the purchase of books and periodicals, namely law books, weekly law reports, periodicals and magazines from abroad and locally.

The purchase is normally effected from Sweet & Maxwell, LexisNexis, Editions Dalloz.

Mr Gungah: Under *Item No. 22040 - Office Equipment and Furniture* and *Item 22060 - Maintenance*, we find that there is an increase of Rs1.4 m. for both items between the estimates of 2011 and 2012. Can the hon. Attorney General explain why?

Mr Varma: As far as *Item 22040 – Office Equipment and Furniture* is concerned, Mr Chairperson, there is an increase of Rs1.4 m., that is, a provision of Rs2 m. has been made for the enhancement of the registry system, which will consist of a complete revamp of the IT system, including upgrading of the server and software and the training of the staff, and also the purchase of office equipment such as printers, fax machines, laptops, etc.

Provision has also been made for the purchase of office furniture to the tune of Rs200,000, of course, purchase of tables, chairs, etc. Maintenance...

The Chairperson: If it is a long list, it can be circulated.

Mr Varma: There is a second question put by the hon. Member. As regards maintenance, there is an increase of around Rs1.4 m. Provision has been made for the refurbishment of offices and reception areas at levels 2 and 3. Works are expected to start by March of next year. Of course, there is maintenance of buildings, maintenance of plants and equipment, maintenance of vehicles and maintenance of IT equipment.

Mr Baloomoody: Just a request probably to the hon. Attorney General. Do we have in UK - where our last Court of Appeal is the Privy Council - under the item Publications and Stationery, be it at the Privy Council Office or in our embassies, up-to-date legislation regarding Mauritius Report? Do we have a list of judgments there?

Mr Varma: I can't really say for the embassies, Mr Chairperson. What I can say is that the Attorney General's Office is very well equipped. We have got all the recent publications.

Mr Baloomoody: Our last Court of resort is the Privy Council; it is in UK. Do we make provision that the Privy Council Office have all our legal publications up-to-date? Be it practitioners, because we are retaining foreigners to appear for us, and they should at least be aware of our local law. They must have the facilities there.

The Chairperson: The question is about the facilities provided for.

Mr Varma: I don't know precisely whether this is the role of the Attorney General's Office or the Judiciary, because we have to draw a line. But, of course, it is a valid suggestion and the point is noted.

Mr Uteem: On page 499, *Item No. 22120 - Fees*, there are fees for Rs3.5 m. in 2011 and then it goes down to Rs1.6 m. May we know from the hon. Attorney General what do these fees relate to?

Mr Varma: Actually, Mr Chairperson, last year provision was made for Professor Krab to come to Mauritius to conduct legislative drafting courses. That explains the provision of around Rs3 m. Actually, he could not come over. This is what explains the reduction in the item fees.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, I apologise to come back to the legal fees. May I ask the hon. Attorney General who is representing us in the Chagos case in London? May I ask also whether there were some funds which were used for this year in the same case?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, I can't really say whether fees have been used for this year, but I can clearly inform the hon. gentleman, that Mr Philip Sands QC is assisted by a legal team and is representing Mauritius in the Chagos case.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I come back to the issue of publications. Can I ...

Mr Varma: Which page?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is at page 498, but it is a question of a general nature. Usually, it is said that ignorance of the law is no excuse. Can I ask the Attorney General whether he can consider putting in a simple language and publishing the legislation that goes through in Parliament, for the public to understand from time to time?

Mr Varma: As the saying goes, Mr Chairperson, '*Ignorantia juris non excusat*', that is, ignorance of law is no excuse. The hon. lady should be well aware that the Attorney General's Office has, this year, put all the laws of Mauritius online free. It is a valid suggestion, but we'll see according to the resources that we have whether this can be done.

The Chairperson: I put the question now.

Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs136,850,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, we voted Rs8.9 m. last year for the Commission and we are being invited to vote Rs11.5 m. for this year. So, I would like to ask the hon. Attorney General, having regard to 2011, whether he can remind us of the composition of the

Commission, the number of meetings that they have held, the fees paid to members of the Commission, the venue of their meetings and the number of reports produced.

The more so as at page 496, we are told that the number of reports will increase from 6 last year to 9, which I find quite surprising because I would have thought it is the quality rather than the quantity of reports that would matter in this case. So, why 9? Is it an arbitrary figure or are there 9 specific areas of the law that have been targeted?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, as regards the composition of the Board for this year, the Chairperson is Mr Guy Ollivry QC; he has been re-appointed on 01 May 2011. The members currently are -

- Mr N. Ohsan-Bellepeau, the Ag. Deputy Master and Registrar;
- Mrs Aruna Devi Narain, Parliamentary Counsel;
- Mr Satyajit Boolell, Director of Public Prosecutions;
- Mr Rishi Pursem, Senior Counsel;
- Mr Narain Appa Jala, Senior Attorney;
- Mr Nicholas Boullé, Notary;
- Mrs L. Seejore Biltoo, a full-time member of the Department of Law of the University of Mauritius;
- Mrs Daisy Rani Brigemohane, and
- Mr Navin Gunnasaya.

But for the financial year, I would like to inform the hon. Member that the following persons also serve as members -

Mr David Chan Kan Cheong who has now been appointed to the Bench;

Mrs Rita Teelock who is on the Bench;

Mr Prithviraj Fekna who is also now on the Bench;

Mr Reshad Daureeawoo;

Mr Pazani Rangasamy;

Mr Roland Constantin, and

Miss O. Lim Tung.

As far as the reports which have been produced by the Law Reform Commission is concerned, I refer the hon. Member to page 492. There is a draft issue paper on the Criminal

Code; a draft issue paper on the establishment of a Family Court and the conduct of family proceedings; the issue paper on Time Share, a draft issue paper on Road Traffic legislation and the Penalty Point System; report on *Crédit Bail*, that is, leasing; views on Court Ushers Amendment Bill; the opinion paper on Legal Aid Reform; opinion paper, views on conformity with the constitution of denial of the right of appeal; an order declaring a person as a vexatious litigant.

As for the reports which the Commission intends to come forward with during the course of 2012, they have already made a list of six and three others will come as we progress during the course of the year. There is the report on the Code Civil, Code de Commerce et Code de Procédure Civile on Public Law, Human Rights, Criminal Justice System and Criminal Law, the Civil Justice System and Business law.

Mr Chairperson, as regard the remuneration being paid to the members of the Board, the fees to Chairperson and members, that is, for the current year, have been Rs804,000 and for the coming year it will be Rs816,000.

Mr Baloomoody: What about the amendment to our Criminal Code? I did understand that this was one of the main reforms we were coming with. Professor Garon was here.

Mr Varma: It is the Civil Code.

Mr Uteem: May I ask the hon. Attorney General whether it is the Law Commission that comes up with the areas of reform and submit their paper on that or does the Government make request to them to review certain specific sector where they fear there is a need for reform?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member came with the same question last year. It works both ways. They come on their own and the Government or other departments can request them to commission reports. They are also receiving representations from members of the public.

Mr Baloomoody: Are all the posts published at page 501 with regard to the Law Reform Commission filled?

(Interruptions)

I understood that there are also some Research Officers. What is being done to make sure that they are properly equipped?

Mr Varma: Mr Chairperson, actually the current increase in the budget of the Law Reform Commission will cater for the recruitment of one additional Research staff and I have

been informed that the interview has been carried out. They are going to proceed to the appointment of Research staff within the shortest possible delay.

Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development (Rs11,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tourism & Leisure

Programme Code 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure was called.

Mr Ramano: *A la page 510, sous l'item 34122900014 - Hospitality and Ceremonies, pour 2011 il y a une somme de Rs110,000 qui est prévue et pour 2012 c'est une somme de Rs2,110,000. Peut-être que je pourrais avoir quelques explications du ministre en ce qui concerne cette augmentation sensible.*

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we are hosting a conference next year in March 2012. We will have the meetings for Ministers responsible for tourism in Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, we are contributing a sum of Rs3.1 m. to RETOSA. What are we earning from that organisation? I would like to know whether the Minister has attended any conference. Secondly, on the strategy sector, the objective is to implement the sector strategy on tourism. Is there a latest report on the Tourism strategy and, if so, can it be laid in the Library? Is there any strategy for leisure or *tape tapé alle la mer alle la boutique?*

(Interruptions)

I would like to know whether there is a plan for leisure and also how do you monitor the tourism industry. Are there guidelines? Is there any consultant working for the Ministry to monitor the performance of the tourism industry?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning leisure, we use it to promote the destination. Concerning RETOSA, we have an objective. It is, in fact, to increase the volume of inbound tourism to the region, to increase the awareness of the travel trade of the region, to develop and sustain mutually beneficial relationship with suppliers and service providers within the region, to motivate broader interregional product programming, to achieve sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment.

For the last question concerning monitoring of the industry, in fact, we have targets. We use the PBB.

(Interruptions)

I will submit it.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: *Item No. 22900002 - Accommodation Costs* goes from a provision of Rs75,000 in 2011 to Rs1,075,000 in 2012. The Minister just said that there will be a conference on Ministers. Are we providing accommodation to the Ministers who are coming to Mauritius for this conference?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: What I can see here is that it is provision for board and lodging.

The Chairperson: Is it linked with the conference that we are going to have.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is linked with the conference.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson if that is so, I think we would need more detailed information on the number of Ministers attending the conference, from which countries they are, the objective of the conference.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I don't mind to circulate the details on that.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same point, before we approve this sum we would like some clarification. It is not established practice - the Minister of Foreign Affairs will not deny what I am saying - for us to bear accommodation cost for Ministers. So, what is this?

Dr. Sorefan: At page 509, *Item No. 22030 - Rent*, may I know whether the hon. Minister can explain to us why the increase of about Rs500,000 and the location of the building for the rental?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we have asked for additional spaces on Level 12. It is at Air Mauritius Building.

The Chairperson: Do you have the other information?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I can see accommodation for VVIPs such as Executive Secretary of SADC and translators.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to Programme 341, branding, it was supposed to be meant for other Ministries to use the same branding. Can we know whether this is the case now?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The brand's strategy was devised as an umbrella exercise for a number of sectors other than tourism. At present, it is essentially being utilised in strategic locations and in promotional fairs like WTM.

The Chairperson: Other Ministries?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In the future!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on *item Rent*, still on Programme 341, may we know where these spaces are being rented and to whom is it being rented?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Air Mauritius Building, John Kennedy Street, Port Louis.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I refer the hon. Minister to page 504 - *Monitoring of the tourism industry*. My friend, hon. Bhagwan, has asked whether there is a report. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he monitors the working condition of the workers in the tourism industry and, if so, whether he calls upon the *propriétaires des grands hôtels* to ensure that the workers are paid their salary in time? Last week, while we were sitting here, trade unionists were jailed outside because workers were not paid their due. So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he looks at the industry *dans sa globalité* or he looks only at the financial interest of the owners?

The Chairperson: You made your point! Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we work in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, again on page 510, coming back on *Accommodation Costs, Item No. 22900002*, would the hon. Minister inform the House of the duration conference that will be held in Mauritius next year? How long will it be? He mentioned that the accommodation cost is for the VVIPs. Could he also inform the House how many VVIPs are expected to be participating in that conference?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It's going to be on three days. Concerning the list of VIPs, I will circulate it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure* at page 504, we understood that the democratisation process of our economy *si cher au gouvernement* would also involve the tourism sector. Can we have an example where exactly in the tourism sector this has started?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Pleasurecraft and boathouse.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 504, the same programme, concerning objectives and strategy, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is now the policy of the Ministry, as far as tourism promotion is concerned, to have snaps, photos with celebrities, actresses, personalities and so on? Is there a list of all these actresses, big stars? With whom has it been prepared and in which magazine did they appear? I have seen the hon. Minister with a few of these celebrities.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Put your question.

Mr Bhagwan: Is there any list of such celebrities which the hon. Minister has prepared? We all know that the MTPA has just recruited a Celebrity Officer. So, I will comment on that issue later on.

(Interruptions)

Without School Certificate! So, can the hon. Minister at least inform the House...

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Minister saying no? The hon. Minister can submit to the House a list of all these celebrities, actresses and actors, young actors, with whom the hon. Minister has...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell, as well!

The Chairperson: Is there a compilation of all these?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, there is no list, but normally I work on it myself.

(Interruptions)

Don't worry! Next time, I will ask my friend to come! '*Nous pou tire photos ensemble!*'

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *PMSD pas mo frequentation sa!*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

It's over, now! Hon. Henry, you are not answering! Hon. Henry! There is no need to get nervous!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, If I may be allowed to come back to this issue of *Accommodation Costs and Hospitality and Ceremonies* under *Item No. 22900*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any agreement between his Ministry or any hotel in particular for the housing and lodging of these VVIPs?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Not yet.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister how he can reconcile the fact that for *Personal Emoluments* there has been a decrease of approximately Rs1.5 m. and on the staffing position, in fact, the number of staff has increased by five?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, the provision for 2012 was made for staff in post only and the decrease was due to the salaries and allowances previously paid to the staff, such as Senior Advisors.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, we have always positioned Mauritius as a market for high-end tourists, *touristes haut de gamme*. Is the hon. Minister aware that now some five-star hotels are bringing down the price to four-star hotel rates and that is going to *brade les prix*?

The Chairperson: On what item?

Mr Seeruttun: On policy.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member cannot ask question on policy. On which item are you talking?

Mr Seeruttun: Programme 341: Policy and Management for Tourism and Leisure.

The Chairperson: At which page?

Mr Seeruttun: At page 509. Programme 341, which is on policy and management for tourism and leisure.

The Chairperson: You are looking at the summary.

(Interruptions)

The question is whether the hon. Minister is going to control the hotel.

Mr Seeruttun: How is the hon. Minister going to address that issue of cutting the price of five-star hotel into four-star hotel rates, which is contrary to what we have always positioned Mauritius as the high-end market for tourists?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister can you respond?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, it is difficult for a Ministry or a Government to control price of private sector.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I am sorry to come back to this conference. Government spends so much money for the promotion of tourism and the hotels benefit from it. Can I ask the hon. Minister as to why he has not been able to obtain sponsorship from the hotels where the conference will be held with regard to the accommodation of the VVIPs? Usually, this is done.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We always consider sponsorship for anything that we do in this Ministry. First of all, we have, at least, to earmark a sum just in case we don't get any sponsorship.

Programme Code 341: Policy Management for Tourism and Leisure (Rs35,142,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry was called.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, pour le *programme 342:22130*, toujours à la page 510, sous le titre *Studies and Surveys*. Pour l'année 2011, il y a une somme de R 1 million qui a été prévue. On a annoncé aussi la constitution d'un *Economic Intelligence Unit* au niveau du ministère. Je voudrais savoir s'il y a un rapport qui a été préparé. Quand est-ce que le rapport sera publié ? Est-ce que ce *unit* est toujours fonctionnel ? Je voudrais aussi savoir pourquoi pour l'année 2012 il n'y a rien qui est prévu sous l'item *Studies and Surveys*, parce que nous savons très bien que cet aspect de *screening of tourist* est très important pour le *marketing strategy*. Toujours sous l'item 342, avec votre permission, je peux prendre un deuxième item ?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Ramano: Il y a *Item No. 26313089 -Tourism Authority*. Il y a la question de *cleaning and embellishment programme*. M. le président, il y a une somme additionnelle de R 23 m. qui est prévue. Est-ce qu'on peut avoir un breakdown de ce budget en termes de programme d'activités, le nombre de *manual workers* concerné, et s'ils seront employés sur l'*establishment* ou sur un *contractual basis* ? Peut-on-savoir sur quelle base ces personnes seront éventuellement recrutées ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning the report, every two years normally there is a survey which is done at the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure. I have just got the report; it is for the year 2009. 2011 is still ongoing and if there is any need to do any survey for 2012, we will be able to use funds from the MTPA.

Concerning the Tourism Authority, we will recruit people for the cleaning unit. Of course, we will contact the Ministry of Labour to get these people who stamp cards like our hon. friend just said. They will be employed under contract.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 511, *Sub Programme 34202, Item No. 26313089 - Tourism Authority*. Can we know from the hon. Minister the number of applications processed in year

2010 and year 2011? Can we know the number of cases of fraud and corruption that have been referred to ICAC? Who is the Chairperson of the Tourism Authority?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning the Chairperson of the Tourism Authority, it is my Permanent Secretary. Concerning ICAC, I am informed that there are 28 cases. Your first question was on what?

Mr Jhugroo: Applications processed in year 2010 and 2011.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning permits?

Mr Jhugroo: Yes.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: From 28 October 2010 to 04 July 2011, under my predecessor, it was 1,112. Concerning licences - under my responsibility, if you want - 1,031.

Mr Seeruttun: The hon. Minister has mentioned that there have been 28 cases referred to ICAC on corruption. Will he inform the House when were the cases referred to ICAC?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have different dates: June 2010 and so on. For 2010: six cases.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same item, can the hon. Minister inform the House, with regard to licences delivered by the Tourism Authority, the amount of money collected on a yearly basis?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will circulate these details.

Mr Bhagwan: I have a few questions, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: One by one, please. I have got a long list. I am sorry.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: You are the Speaker?

The Chairperson: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, concerning the Tourism Authority, with what we have seen in the past years, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, for the embellishment programme - now that he has been given funds - clear criteria are being established where this Authority can operate? We have seen in the past cases he has mentioned to ICAC, '*muraille dimoune, la cour dimoune*'. Going even in the territory of the local authorities! If it is done in coordination, there is no problem. This where I want the hon. Minister to inform the House, and to circulate the number of vehicles attached to the authority. I am happy if it goes through the Ministry of Labour, but not here and there, even if it is public advertisement. Can the hon.

Minister reassure the House, the population, the tax payers that this Tourism Authority will not become - as previously - a sort of *caverne d'Ali Baba*?

The Chairperson: Let the hon. Minister respond first!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I will answer for ICAC first. I said 28 cases; they have asked for information. So far, right now there are eight cases still under investigation. Concerning the fees, we have received Rs71m. About the places where we will embellish and clean, we will do it, of course, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Environment. We have a list of touristic areas, for example, we have Trou aux Cerfs, Black River Gorges, La Citadelle, Ile aux Bénitiers, Rochester Falls, Jardin des Pamplemousses, Poudre d'Or, Port de Souillac and also a lot of touristic villages like Grand' Baie, Le Morne, Trou d'Eau Douce, Tamarin, Port Louis and so on.

Dr Sorefan: On page 510, *Item No. 31113016* regarding infrastructure, there is the Port Louis Heritage Trail. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us? Concerning the *village touristique* to be sold as mentioned in the Budget, what criteria have been used? What is the cost of that *village touristique* and will tender be launched?

The Chairperson: One, please!

Dr. Sorefan: A last one, Mr Chairperson, regarding cleaning, the question that has not been answered from hon.Ramano.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Some order on my right, please!

Dr. Sorefan: May we know when the list will be provided, as has been the case in the past, where cleaning and embellishment have been done, and if this time the walls could be painted or cleaned by the Ministry of Tourism as they did it last time in Quatre Bornes?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, I have answered hon. Bhagwan. I don't mind giving a monitoring list. Concerning the Port Louis Heritage Trail, we have contacted consultants from Singapore and they have proposed some sites. There are 13 sites, namely Blue Penny Museum, Observatory, Windmill, Granary, Civil Hospital, General Post Office, Military Hospital, Rice Store, Parc à Boulets, Aapravasi Ghatt, Central Market, Jumma Mosque and Chinatown.

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, concerning the embellishment programme, may I ask the hon. Minister to give some details and the status of the project of Grand' Baie?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Yes, of course, we will work on Grand' Baie.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bundhoo, please!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: It is not a joke. I am warning you!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We have great plans. Don't worry!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I am going back to this programme of cleaning and embellishment. May I ask the hon. Minister whether private properties too are being concerned? We are all aware that it has been the case in the past. Will the Ministry go on with the policy of embellishing and cleaning private properties and, if so, what are the criteria?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I don't think private properties. It will be public areas.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, on page 510, *Item 31113016 - Construction of Touristic and Leisure Infrastructure (a) Tourism Signage*, can we know from the hon. Minister what amount has been used from the provision made for 2011 and what is the project plan for the provisions which have been made for 2012?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we have just finished Route No.7; we have planned Route No. 8 for year 2012. We have two more routes coming after that, namely Routes No. 9 and 10, and the cost estimate is about Rs2 m.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can we know what does that mean? Route No. 8 or No. 9 does not mean anything to me.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: For Route No. 8, we have Pereybère, Grand' Baie, Grand Gaube, Trou aux Biches, Flic en Flac, Rivière Noire, Trou d'Eau Douce, Palmar and Belle Mare.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am going back to this item of cleaning and embellishment programme. I would like confirmation from the hon. Minister that this is a new distinct item which did not exist under any other vote last year. If the Ministry is to get Rs23 m., is he proposing, under this provision, to set up a new unit - I think the question was asked but not answered - with how many employees, how many vehicles, what equipment, to do what work which could not otherwise have been done by the NDU, the local authorities or the Ministry of Environment?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have the list somewhere and I don't mind circulating it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, under *sub-programme 34202 - Regulation and Control of Tourism Related Activities*, can the hon. Minister confirm whether the SMF museum at Vacoas still falls under the responsibility of the Tourism Authority and whether there is a written arrangement for that, and who are those responsible for security at the SMF museum?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is no more under our Ministry; it is under the Prime Minister's Office now.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 511, *Item 26313089 - Capital Grant - Tourism Authority: Cleaning and Embellishment Programme*. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether some confidential files of the Tourism Authority were found in a *quincaillerie* and, if so, can we know whether this case has been referred to ICAC?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Well, I heard that from the media like you. I heard that it is under investigation.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister knows very well that there were two satellite organisations, namely Event Mauritius and Discover Mauritius, which have done a lot of harm in terms of management, corruption and even subletting. The Ministry of Agriculture knows what I am saying. In the Director of Audit's Report...

The Chairperson: We are under which item?

Mr Bhagwan: *Sub-Programme 34201 – Improvement and Diversification of Tourism Product, Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments*. I won't go into the details. Lots of events have happened under Event Mauritius and Discover Mauritius. We discovered that Discover Mauritius had sublet land. Flat Island was given to a private owner. It's in the Director of Audit's Report. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, the population, the taxpayers what has happened to these two satellite organisations which were run like private business?

The Chairperson: Are these two organisations still active?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, we are still examining these two companies and in a couple of days we will take a decision.

Mr Bhagwan: Is there any Chairperson in both organisations? How much they are paid?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: These companies are dormant right now.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, *Sub-Programme 34204* is about regulation and control of tourism activities. But, under this programme, more than 45% is spent not on

regulating licensing and ensuring compliance of regulation but on cleaning and embellishment. So, there will be more scavengers than real inspectors under this programme. May I ask the hon. Minister, firstly, whether this should not come under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure?

Secondly, if it is under the remit of the Minister of Tourism, should it not be under the programme 'improvement of the tourism product' rather than in 'regulations and control'? What do embellishment, scavenging, cleaning have to do with regulation and control, which are very serious activities of a Ministry of Tourism?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, I can reassure the House and the hon. Member that we will clean touristic regions; this is number one. Number two, I am sure that the hon. Member agrees with me that Mauritius is dirty, especially...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, address the Chair! Hon. Minister please! Hon. Baloomoody, don't disturb please. Order! Hon. Sik Yuen please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Especially when we come back from abroad.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No cross-talking!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We can see there is a difference.

Mr Baloomoody: I go back again to the issue of *Cleaning and Embellishment Programme*. We understand that we are giving Rs23 m for that project. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will ensure that, as per the Director of Audit, there is no abusive expenditure...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Too much cross-talking! I cannot follow! Let me follow, please! We are losing the time of the House.

Mr Baloomoody: It is an important question. It is a remark made by the Director of Audit regarding abusive expenditure of vehicles. Where they could have bought a simple 4 X 4, instead a Mitsubishi Pajero was bought.

(Interruptions)

A Mitsubishi Pajero was bought to do the simple work of a 4 X 4! So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will ensure that this wastage of the past with regard to public funds - your money and my money - will not be repeated under this item?

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Member made his point.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Aimée, please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, I can assure the hon. Member that it will be done *comme il faut*.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Hon. Sayed Hossen, did you hear what I said? Hon. Minister, you can continue!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, the embellishment forms part of the Tourism Act 2006. I am answering the question of hon. Li Kwong Wing.

The Chairperson: You address the Chair, please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: We have to maintain the destination as a clean island up-market destination. I can assure the hon. Baloomoody, that it will be done *comme il faut, à la lettre*.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! The Minister has stated that he is going to circulate those details.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: These are millions of rupees of public money; we have a right to know.

The Chairperson: I repeat: the Minister stated that he is going to circulate. We have his word that he is going to circulate the details.

(Interruptions)

I am not responsible! Please!

(Interruptions)

Please! The hon. Member can ask for clarification.

(Interruptions)

Please! The hon. Member has got the right to ask for clarification. I am not the timekeeper. The Clerk here is maintaining the time and, according to what he told me, we are by one minute over the twenty minutes.

(Interruptions)

Please! I am going to take the vote now.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Chair, I don't have any objection to...

The Chairperson: I am going to take the vote now.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Sik Yuen!

Programme Code 342: Sustainable Tourism Industry (Rs19,639,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, we have got a watch here. Everything is done in full transparency. If you could please go according to what has been decided. We move to the next Code, please!

Programme Code 343: Destination Promotion was called.

Mr Ramano: Mr Chairperson, under *Programme 343: Destination Promotion*, at page 511, under *Item No. 26313047 Current Grant - Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority*.

M. le président, je voudrais savoir le budget fonctionnel du bureau de la *MTPA* à Londres, le nombre d'employés, leurs noms et leurs salaires respectifs. Je voudrais connaître le montant des honoraires et autres *fees* payés à la compagnie appartenant à M. Cader Hossenally. Ensuite ...

The Chairperson: One question, please!

(Interruptions)

Do you want some more time, Minister? We take hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 511, *Item No. 26313047 Current Grant - Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (i) Traditional Markets*, can we know what is being done to address the concept of inclusive packages - a concept which is becoming more and more common?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, Chairperson, the hotels are private sectors. There is no regulation to prevent them from selling inclusive packages. Of course, we are considering working on it, but, first of all, we will have to meet the stakeholders.

The Chairperson: Do you have any detail for the first question? We move to hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: I am having a look at my watch. Sir, under *Item No. 26313047 Current Grant - Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority*, we are asked to vote Rs390 m., nearly Rs400 m. The population, taxpayers are being asked to vote, we also. Is the Minister aware that the MTPA has recruited recently an Event & Celebrate Coordinator...

(Interruptions)

We have been asked to vote! An Event & Celebrate Coordinator with a salary Rs40,000 plus other benefits – qualification: SC failed. She was there before, went to another organisation, then came back recently. The problem is transparency. I don't have anything personal with that person. I don't even know her. I have given the information to the Minister yesterday. He had been given advance notice so that he may give us a reply.

Another big thing, Sir! Can the Minister inform the House - if it is not the case, I'll accept - whether for Divali Festival, the Board of MTPA contacted one famous artist, Sunidhi Chauhan, at a cost Rs2.9 m.? An advance payment of Rs1.2 m. was paid; two air tickets, Mauritius-Bombay-Mauritius were issued without any Board decision initially.

(Interruptions)

A first payment was paid: 30% Rs800,000. A second payment...

The Chairperson: You are asking a question?

Mr Bhagwan: This is what we are asked to vote. She has not been paid Sir. Rs1.375 m. was paid on 07 October....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No!

Mr Bhagwan: Listen! More, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, are you furnishing information or are you asking for details?

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking the Minister to check and let us know.

(Interruptions)

Let the country know! Sir, listen! A payment was made on 07 October, the Board approved on 14 October and that artist never came to Mauritius. Never!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: What I am saying....

The Chairperson: No, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I have not finished.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: This is my information, Sir.

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Bhagwan! Let us take the question you have asked.

Mr Bhagwan: You have not taken the conclusion.

The Chairperson: On the same issue?

Mr Bhagwan: Yes. Even the Board refused. Rs75,000 was paid as cancellation fee.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We are watching the time.

Mr Bhagwan: If my information is wrong, I accept. I ask the hon. Minister whether the Board and whether the Minister is agreeable to ask the Director of Audit, who is the official auditor of Government – I am talking to the Minister of Finance through the Minister - to look into that case and report to the House. If I am wrong I remove what I have said, Sir.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I don't mind to look into this matter. In fact, Sunidhi Chauhan was booked for Divali, but was not available for Divali. There was a problem of flights.

According to my information, the Board's approval was obtained for the project.

(Interruptions)

I need the dates.

The Chairperson: Please, let the Minister answer!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: But I will look into the matter. Don't worry! I can assure the House on the very first day when I took over the Ministry, I told to all the staff of the Ministry and parastatal bodies that they have to do their job *à la lettre, suivre les procédures*, because when there is something wrong, they will have to pay the consequences.

(Interruptions)

I will look into this matter.

The Chairperson: Address the Chair, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Can I, Mr Chairperson...

The Chairperson: On that issue?

Mr Bhagwan: No, on another issue.

The Chairperson: On another issue, no!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Seeruttun!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: On the question of the celebrity coordinator, the hon. Minister has not replied.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Yes, it was in my hand.

The Chairperson: Yes, please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Following the setting up of some 13 Technical Advisory Committees at the MPTA, I am informed that there was an urgent need to recruit a responsible person to assist the Chairman and the Director of the MTPA in coordinating the work of the Technical Advisory Committees. The MTPA Board, at a meeting held on 14 October, approved a recommendation of the HR Committee to recruit the Event and Celebrity Coordinator at the MTPA.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I have the name of that person and his qualifications? The Minister has not given the title “Event and Celebrity Coordinator” and whether that person once worked when the Chairman was there before and then went to the Empowerment Foundation and from the Empowerment Foundation back to MTPA.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: But the question is: Is the Minister...

Dr. A. Boolell: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, we have no problem that a question...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! May I, first of all, request the hon. Minister to resume his seat?

Dr. A. Boolell: Yes, all right.

The Chairperson: No, no, to go back to the seat allotted to him, first.

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

No, you have to...

(Interruptions)

No, please! Order, please! Order!

Dr. A. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. We have no problem that question be asked, but it has to be asked within the scope of the exercise. If the hon. Member wants to put a question, he can come with a PQ. We have no problem with the hon. Member coming with a PQ. Here, we are seeking information in respect of how money is being earmarked and to be spent for what purpose. But you cannot come with a question which is not related to the exercise. I am not saying that it is true or false. But come with a PQ within the relevant ...

(Interruptions)

Yes, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, please!

(Interruptions)

Please! Please! Let me...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bundhoo and hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Please! Please! Let me answer to the Minister first.

(Interruptions)

Please, hon. Bhagwan! The question was asked under item 26313047 at page 511 where we had to debate on the Rs390 m. approved for the MTPA. And the hon. Member raised an issue on that item about some problem which came to his knowledge and he wanted that the Minister clarifies that point and take whatever action is needed. And it is on this item that I allowed him to make whatever point he wanted to make and the Minister gave the assurance that everything was in order and the Minister stated that he is going to recheck and he gave the assurance to the House

that he has given clear directives when he took office that everything should be done – I don't know what words he used exactly...

(Interruptions)

...à la lettre and we have the assurance of the Minister on that issue and it is on that point that I allowed the question and the clarification. Thank you.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same point, the question has not been answered yet. The question is: In order for us to vote Rs390 m., we would like to know whether there is provision under that vote for the salaries of an Events and Celebrity Coordinator and, if so, we would like to know the name of the person and the qualifications for this position.

The Chairperson: No, if the Minister can provide the name or...

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, address the Chair and make your point.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: First of all, I have taken note of this matter. I will look into it...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard, please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: *Mone ecoute zot moi.*

I will look into it as from tomorrow morning, as from 9.00 a.m., and if there is decision to be taken, I will take a decision.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: For a name and qualifications! And the staff is here!

The Chairperson: I will circulate the details.

Mr Bhagwan: On the last two votes - you have rightly said - the Minister has confirmed that the MTPA has recruited by whatever procedure the said person. We are being asked to vote the salary of that person. Are we not entitled to know? We have been asked to vote. This is Rs400 m.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! The House will have to take its decision. In the light of the clarification given by the Minister and at a point in time, I will have to take the vote and then we will have to take a decision.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order, please!

Mr Varma: I am sorry, Mr Chairperson, but the hon. gentleman did not say that he is going to ask for a vote. It is the Chair who has ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, please! The exercise here is we are approving the different code numbers and we have to take a vote at a point in time. After 20 minutes, we will have to take the vote and the House would appreciate whatever clarification has been given, whatever point has been raised and certain information which is not readily available, the Minister said that he is going to circulate; we have his words for that.

(Interruptions)

Please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Usually, we have got staff of the Ministry who are here to provide necessary information which the Ministers do not have.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: So, can I ask the Chair whether the staff here...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order! Hon. Sayed-Hossen, please! I am calling you to remain silent. Let the hon. lady make her point.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: So, I was saying that usually we have the staff of the Ministry; they are here to provide the Ministers with information which the Ministers do not have in their possession right now. Can I understand that the staff of the Ministry also does not have this information?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Mohamed: May I intervene at this stage?

(Interruptions)

On this point, that has arisen. As a friend, I try to sort things out. True it is that the Opposition and any backbencher have the right to put questions, as the Chairperson stated. Fair enough! But here, to ask the name of someone and the qualifications was over and above the ambit of this exercise today. That is the point.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, I won't hear any more argument on that issue. I gave my ruling that the Minister was asked questions, he stated I am not going to...

(Interruptions)

Please, hon. Bhagwan!

On that issue, we have got four more minutes. If other Members have got clarifications, I have got a list here. I am going to go on the list.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, to complete the remaining four minutes before you take the vote, if you would allow me to make a motion under Standing Order 73(7) to reduce the vote of the MTPA.

(Interruptions)

I will come later on with the motion.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I would like to go back to the Strategic Note ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: If the hon. Member wants to give way, I have no objection.

Mr Seeruttun: Allow me to go back to page 503 on *Strategic Note* where the Major Achievements say –

“Organisation of aggressive marketing campaigns in traditional and emerging markets, especially China, India and Russia as well as new niche market segments such as the United Arab Emirates where an increase of 13.8% has been registered in tourist arrivals.”

On Major Constraints it says –

“With the current global economic and financial crisis, it is expected that the traditional markets will be subject to prolonged economic recession.”

It is true that we are going to face problems.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: What is the question, please?

Mr Seeruttun: If I go back to page 511, on *item 26313047 Current Grant – Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority*, the amount earmarked for the promotion is only Rs50 m. and we know that this is a market which is going to show progress...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I can't hear the question.

Mr Seeruttun: The question is why in an emerging market which shows potential for growth, we are only investing Rs50 m. as last year when we could have ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member made his point. Why is there no increase for an emerging market?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, in fact, this is one of the biggest errors that have been done lately because in emerging markets, in these countries, if you ask one person, for example, in China, whether he knows Mauritius, 99.99% won't know whether Mauritius exists. We have to work on visibility. This is why the MTPA is setting up an e-marketing department at the MTPA. We need more time for the emerging markets. The job is being done. We must not forget that 64% of our tourist arrivals come from Europe. We have to consolidate at least the traditional market. We are also interested in the emerging markets. We are doing the job.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The hon. Member must be patient.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je n'ai pas eu de réponse en ce qui concerne ma question relative au bureau de la MTPA à Londres et aussi les honoraires payés à Monsieur Cader Hossenally. Je laisse cela à l'appréciation du ministre.

Pour ma question, M. le président, le financement du *Festival Kréol* est assuré par la MTPA. Est-ce que je pourrais savoir le budget qui a été prévu pour l'édition de 2011, prenant en considération qu'une somme faramineuse a été payée, de R 21 millions et R 18 millions, relativement à la célébration du *Festival Kréol* en 2008 et 2009 ? Est-ce que je pourrais savoir la liste des *services providers* qui seront appelés à fournir leurs services et aussi ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Ramano, we are with a specific item.

Mr Ramano: C'est la MTPA qui finance le *Festival Kréol*.

The Chairperson: The hon. Member must put his question.

Mr Ramano : Donc, ma question est : est-ce que je pourrais savoir le budget qui a été prévu prenant en considération les sommes qui ont été dépensées, R 21 millions et R 18 millions

en 2008 et 2009, la liste des *services providers* qui seront appelés à fournir leurs services et aussi si un *tender procedure* sera lancé à cet effet ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Concerning the company, I can see it is for C. H. Vision Ltd, and the amount is Rs1,015,200. Concerning the *Festival International Kréol*, we will be finalising the programme by Monday.

Mr Bhagwan: I will make a motion.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, if you want to call the vote, then I will make a motion. How do we proceed?

The Chairperson: Yes, you will have to put the motion.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, after what I have stated, for me it is a great scandal at the MTPA with the recruitment of one Celebrity Event Coordinator with a *salaire princier* and other benefits. The person has been chosen in no transparency at all and where the qualifications are ...

The Chairperson: No, please! The hon. Member has made those points.

Mr Bhagwan: I am justifying my motion, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No.

Mr Bhagwan: It will be costing public funds around Rs1.2 m. in the whole Budget which we are being asked to vote. Under section 7 of the Standing Order 73, I move that the vote for the grant to the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority be reduced by Rs1.5 m. under *item 26313047 – Current Grant – Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority* from Rs390 m. to less by Rs1.5 m. I am saying this in the context of transparency, good governance which, I think, is also the priority of certain people in Government – I say certain people – and I hope, Sir, that the Minister will go and enquire further despite the motion that I am moving and accept positively my request for the Director of Audit to look specifically into the recruitment of this person at the MTPA *que je considère très scandaleux*.

Mr Obeegadoo: I wish to second this motion, Sir, for the very simple reason that...

The Chairperson: No, no, please!

(Interruptions)

The hon Member seconds it, it is all right.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: We have to say why we are seconding the motion because we find it as a matter of regret...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No. At Committee Stage, there is no need to go further than seconding. Yes, the hon. Member seconded the motion?

(Interruptions)

I am advised that at Committee Stage, the need for seconding also does not arise.

Mr Obeegadoo: Why is the Minister concealing essential information? It is very simple.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I put the question now.

Mr Mohamed: I am sorry, on a point of order. The hon. Member has just made a grave allegation against the hon. Minister. Concealing information! And I ask that he withdraws this.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Was there any allegation of concealment?

(Interruptions)

If the words were uttered, please!

(Interruptions)

Yes, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, the situation is very clear. There has been...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! Please!

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Minister has raised a point. Of course, I must answer out of courtesy to you and to all the Members of the House. The point is very clear. We are invited to vote a Budget; we have asked two very simple questions: the identity and the qualifications of a person whose salary is provided for under the Budget. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee has pointed out that the staff is here to help. The Minister tells us that he can provide the information, but later on. That is my point. Why not tell us all the truth now, and we all vote the Budget?

The Chairperson: No!

(Interruptions)

Please! No! The hon. Member has put in doubt the integrity of the Minister when he stated that he concealed, which means that the information was available and he did not disclose it. I want him to withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me state that it has never been my intention to put in doubt the ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...integrity of the hon. Minister. If the use of the term 'concealing' should have been so construed, I am very happy to remove it, but insist that he tells us....

The Chairperson: No! No!

(Interruptions)

Please! The hon. Member must withdraw it unconditionally. Yes, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Please! The hon. Member stated that he had no intention at all to put the integrity of the hon. Minister in doubt and he withdrew the word.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Chairperson, I totally understand your guidance and I bow to it. What we would like to know on this side of the House is that at least the withdrawal is made in an unequivocal fashion.

The Chairperson: Yes. Yes, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: My withdrawal is unconditional, unequivocal...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

(Interruptions)

Okay, Order now!

Mr Obeegadoo: But, in the name of the people that I represent here...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, please!

(Interruptions)

Let me now...

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order please! Hon. Minister, order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Now that this has been sorted out, but from a sitting position another Member is screaming ‘*capon to peur*’ to this Minister. Could hon. Jhugroo withdraw that as well?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! No, I did not hear, there was so much noise I am asking every Member to remain silent. I now put the question...

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, for future guidance probably, we are at Committee Stage and if we look at the Standing Orders it is clear what information should be given, what type of questions we are allowed to ask and what type of questions we are not allowed to ask. If we look at section 73 (3), and I read it loudly –

“When the Bill has been read a second time it shall stand committed to a committee of the whole Assembly to be called the committee of supply to which the estimates shall then also stand referred. Discussions at the committee shall be confined to the details of the expenditure contained in the programme, sub programme or item of expenditure and shall not refer to general principles of government policy and administration...”

So, it is a matter of regret that today...

The Chairperson: Please, what point of order are you taking?

Mr Baloomoody: We are working according to our Standing Orders...

The Chairperson: No, please take your seat. I am not going to enter into a lengthy discussion about the Standing Order. I rule that we are going now to take the vote on a motion made by hon. Bhagwan.

The question is that, under *Programme 343, Item No. 26313047 Current Grant - Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority* be reduced by an amount of R1.5 m.

On question put, the motion was defeated.

Programme Code 343: Destination Promotion (Rs390,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 344: Promotion of Leisure was called.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Sorry, Mr Chairperson, I have the name I just got it...

The Chairperson: No, we are over that code number. We are now under code No. 344 and I have asked hon. Baloomoody to ask whatever clarification he wants to.

(Interruptions)

I want complete silence now! Yes, Hon. Baloomoody...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order now!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, we are talking ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, are you following the query?

Mr Baloomoody: We are talking about promotion of leisure ...

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Item No. 21.

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Baloomoody: There is only one page for Promotion of Leisure, 511.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: *Compensation of Employees*, and if I may refer the hon. Minister to page 505, it says that the “*major services organizing and promoting of leisure activities/events for our citizens and visitors*”, it is clear that the Ministry is also addressing tourists. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee asked a question about the unfair competition that some hotels are practising...

The Chairperson: No, we are on programme 344.

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, I am on programme 344, the hotels do provide leisure, they sell...

The Chairperson: No, we are with a new programme code.

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, I am on the promotion of leisure for local people and also for tourists, and we know, as a matter of fact, that the hotels do sell leisure activities in their programme. But when hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee asked questions about some unfair competition with regard to certain hotels, the hon. Minister said that they are in the private sector and that he cannot enter in the private sector.

The Chairperson: What is the question?

Mr Baloomoody: My question is simple: whether the hon. Minister, who is responsible for tourism and who is here to supervise the tourism industry, does supervise the activities of the hotel. Although...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No interruptions please!

Mr Baloomoody: ... they are in the private sector, I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will inform the House about how many complaints he has had with regard to the activities of hotels.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, I will refer the matter to the Competition Commission, if need be.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Vice-Prime Minister Duval, there is no need to supplement, please!

(Interruptions)

No cross-talking!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Page 511, *Item No. 344*, we are being asked to vote for Rs8.3 m. under that programme to promote leisure. When we look at the staffing of that programme...

The Chairperson: No, you put your question, please!

Mr Seeruttun: Yes, there is no leisure organiser, there is no senior leisure...

The Chairperson: The question is whether there is a leisure organiser?

Mr Seeruttun: The question is: how are we going to promote leisure when we have staff comprising of one driver, one Office Care Attendant and one Word Processing Operator and no Leisure Organiser to provide and promote that programme?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, this department is a very small one and we are able to deal with the leisure activities; there is no problem.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the promotion of leisure, we see on page 508 that there is a projection for an increase of the activities and events and so on. Mr Chairperson, when I look at the Budget, there is a mere increase in the amount budgeted. So, I would like to ask the hon. Minister about this target and also if he can give us an indication of the activities

that are supposed to be organised under this item as well as the personnel attached to this department...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order please, order I cannot follow, there are so many grumbling around.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding the personnel attached to this department, there is no position funded for Leisure Organiser, Senior Leisure officer until 2014. So, we are just wondering about the seriousness of this department without particular funded positions for the next three years.

We have only, Mr Chairperson, two leisure officers, one Word Processing Operator, one Office Attendant, One Driver, and we have a sum of Rs8 m. What type of activities this particular department will be able to organise? Can the hon. Minister enlighten us?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister, how are you going to proceed?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, there is adequate number of staff at operational level. The one additional post in grade of leisure officer must be filled. On top of that, there is the whole Ministry that is supervising all the activities.

Concerning the list of events, I have the list of the 22 events and I will circulate it.

Mr Bhagwan: Under the same item, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, in his planning - we are now at the end of the year, we have the school holidays and you will be circulating the activities - Mauritius, as a whole, is taken into consideration? And whether senior citizens, children and even our handicapped brothers and sisters - in his plan of activities - can be included, especially the handicapped persons with the Ministry concerned? Those who cannot benefit from the sea.

The Chairperson: Yes, you made your point.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, I can assure the hon. Member that everybody is on board.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! You are disturbing your friend.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, in relation with organisation of leisure activities, I want to know whether these activities are free or there is any fee charged to people who attend these.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, it is 100% free.

Mr Quirin: On page 511, *Item No. 22900 - Other Goods and Services*, can the hon. Minister give a list of the goods and services that will be used to promote leisure and whether these purchases will be done by competitive tender?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Chairperson, of course, we will follow all procedures.

Programme Code 344: Promotion of Leisure (Rs8,303,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, under *Health Policy and Management, Item No. 28211014*, on page 527, can I know whether the sum which is being called upon to approve for the Medical Council of Mauritius will include a change in the functions of the Medical Council towards the registration of foreign doctors specialists, without having to produce evidence of their original certificates?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, in accordance to whatever has been said in the Budget, we are going to bring some amendments, which are presently being finalised - almost finalised. I can assure the hon. Member that there are two things that we are going to look at.

First of all, there is a time bar to reply to everyone who submits an application for medical practitioner in Mauritius.

Secondly, we will make sure that everybody who intends to practise in Mauritius their certificate is properly checked, re-checked, if need be. But essentially it is to make Mauritius in line with different medical councils in different countries whereby it is properly recognised.

Dr. S. Boolell: My question has not been answered. Will they have to produce their certificates as doctors from the institutions where they qualified?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the hon. Minister answer! No, it is for the Ministry of Health to answer.

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, Sir.

Dr. Sorefan: Under the same time, may we know from the hon. Minister how many Mauritian doctors are presently or will complete their specialist degree abroad this year or next year? It's with regard to human resource capacity building, where it has been mentioned that

there is a shortage of specialists. That's why probably they are coming with this amendment to recruit foreigners on specialist field and they are trying to amend the Medical Council.

Mr Bundhoo: I must assure that this is correct. What we are doing is to enable practitioners from overseas to work in Mauritius in a private capacity, whereas in Government whenever we require a specialist, we can always employ them on a contract basis, subject to a non-availability of this specialist in Mauritius to serve in the public sector.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a few questions, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: No, you go one by one and you let me know under what item, please.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on page 526, *Item No. 22130001 - Studies and Preliminary Project Preparation*; Mention is made of four such studies: *Institute of Women's Health, Paediatric Hospital, Mid Way Home and National Health Laboratory Services Centre*. Significant amount was voted last year and we are being asked to vote exactly the same sum again this year. So, my question is: are we to understand that the studies were not conducted last year? Because surely a study can't cost as much. Linked to that, there was the issue of the Geriatric Hospital. Was such a study undertaken? Can it be circulated? Has now Government shelved the project of a Geriatric Hospital or will it look for alternative premises to accommodate such a hospital?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the ENT Block at Vacoas, the list of consultants has already been finalised and bidding documents are now being prepared.

With regard to the Bharati Eye Hospital in Moka, the list of consultancy firms has been finalised and again bidding documents are being finalised requesting for proposal for a shortlist of consultants.

With regard to the State-of-the-Art National Health Laboratory, it is almost the same the reply as I have said before.

Again, construction of children Hospital, bidding documents are being prepared to invite request for proposal.

To what was listed before with regard to the Mid Way Home, expression of interest for consulting services have been unsuccessful and another exercise is being initiated, whereas consultancy services for the setting up of Women Institute, a call for expression of interest for consulting services has been unsuccessful and a second exercise has been initiated with closing

date on 14 December 2011. With regard to the Geriatric Hospital, it is not yet finalised and we know the reasons thereof.

Mr Obeegadoo: Was there a study such as for the others and can that study on the feasibility of the Geriatric Hospital be circulated?

Mr Bundhoo: I am not too much aware of the feasibility, but I will come back to the hon. Member in a minute.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, under *Item No. 28212007* at page 527, there is a heading *Other Current Transfers - Savings Culture Campaign*, which did not exist before and which is Rs3,600,000. I would like to have some clarifications on this culture campaign.

Mr Bundhoo: It is quite simple. In fact, it is all the Ministries which exist at the moment, whereby we initiate civil servants to develop what is called a saving culture, whereby we optimise the use of the resources, in order to ensure that each and every penny spent is done usefully and correctly.

Mr Uteem: On page 526, under *Item No. 22110 - Overseas Travel (overseas treatment & incoming medical teams)*, may I have more information about what these overseas treatments relate to?

Mr Bundhoo: Overseas treatment means accompanying parents to patients who have to undergo overseas treatment because they are inoperable in Mauritius.

Mr Uteem: Isn't that covered under *Item No. 27210008 - Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius?*

Mr Bundhoo: This is for patients. What I stated is the allowance given to parents accompanying the patient for overseas treatment.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 525, *Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments*, can I ask the hon. Minister why there has been such a huge increase? It's about Rs144 m.

Mr Bundhoo: It is for two simple reasons, Mr Chairperson. It is for salary compensation, which is a new item, and also for cash in lieu of leaves which used to be in the vote of the Accountant General, and which is now being transferred direct to the Ministry of Health and Quality of life.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, *Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments* on page 525. There is one main problem faced by people who are injured in accidents. Whenever they go to

hospital for treatment and subsequently they want to prosecute the insurance or the tort visa, some doctors do ask tremendous sums to give the medical certificate. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether Government will look into that matter? Some even ask big fees and a percentage on the damages the patients will get. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the practice and whether he will look into that matter?

Mr Bundhoo: As far as I know Mr Chairperson, for a patient who attends hospital, the service is free. He is totally entitled to have a report of the injury, and he cannot be charged for that. If any patient is charged, this, in my view, is illegal, and he can always report the case to the police or whatever institution we have for remedial action.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 527, *Item No. 27210008 - Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius*. From what I recall of the Budget Speech, the allowance is being increased from Rs200,000 to a maximum of Rs500,000. Yet, the increase in the amount budgeted does not seem to reflect the same quantum. I would like to know whether this matter is addressed elsewhere and also whether the modalities for the disbursement of the said funds will be exactly the same, or we are taking this opportunity also to make it more patient friendly, if I may so describe it.

Mr Lesjongard: On the same issue, Mr Chairperson, allow me to support what my colleague has just said.

The Chairperson: No, you have to ask for further clarification.

Mr Lesjongard: I'll ask for further clarification with regard to *Sub-Programme 58201: Hospital Services and High-Tech Medicine; SS4: Number of patients referred abroad for treatment* on page 522. We have the figures for 2010, that is, 228, and the amount of Rs200,000 budgeted was exactly to that number of patients who were referred abroad. But when we go to this year's budget, the target is 180, and the amount budgeted is Rs45 m. If you divide that amount, it refers to only 90 patients to be referred abroad for Rs500,000. We are looking for an additional sum of Rs45 m. for the 180 patients to benefit. Could we get some clarification?

Mr Bundhoo: I can assure the House, Mr Chairperson, that the amount will be reviewed accordingly. For those who are inoperable in Mauritius, the criteria used are normally the same. The case through a Board, whereby it is ascertained that the patient is inoperable in Mauritius, and then the patient go overseas for treatment. Therefore, the grant for Rs500,000 will be matched to the number of people who are going to be sent abroad.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister where will the funding come from? It has not been identified. Are you reviewing the performance targets?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there have been cases of patients inoperable in Mauritius who have benefited from an amount of more than Rs200,000, and how many such cases there have been for 2011?

Mr Bundhoo: I am not aware, but I can always find the information and table it at a later stage. There might have been cases where more money could have been supplied, but I don't have the information right now. I am going to check on it and table it.

Mr Seeruttun: Still on programme 581, if we turn to page 533, we can see that there is the post of *Director-General Health Services*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this post is on a permanent and pensionable establishment or whether it is on contract? If it is on contract, can we know the duration and terms of the contract of that Director General Health Services?

Mr Bundhoo: I understand that the CMO is on contract and renewable for a year. I don't have the terms with me right now, but I can always table the copy of the contract.

Dr. S. Boolell: Under *Item No. 28211009 - Other Current Transfers - Human Service Trust* on page 527, may I ask the hon. Minister why the estimate for the NGO appears alongside the Dental Council, the Nursing Council and the Medical Council? I have nothing against the Trust getting money, but I think it is the wrong place to be.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same *Item 28211009 - Other Current Transfers - Human Service Trust*, we are voting under the budget of the Ministry of Health a sum of Rs1,244,000 for the Human Service Trust. May I know what is specific with the Human Service Trust that it is the only Trust that is qualified under the budget of the Ministry of Health?

Mr Bundhoo: It is because the Human Service Trust provides one of the services for ayurvedic medicine.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Human Service Trust also provides spectacles to people? In fact, there is no qualified optician at the Trust, and this is causing more harm than good to certain people.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, the money allocated under the item mentioned by hon. Baloomoody is for ayurvedic. If the Human Service Trust is engaged in other activities, this is not being supported financially by my Ministry.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Under *Item 28212007 - Other Current Transfers - Savings Culture Campaign*, provision has been made for Rs3.6 m. Can I know from the hon. Minister how it is proposed to use this money?

Mr Bundhoo: This money is allocated to sensitise the 15,000 people employed in the Ministry to develop a culture, whereby each cent spent is wisely and judiciously spent. We give training to make people more responsible; whatever we do is the culture of value for money.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 527, under *Item No. 31132 - Intangible Fixed Assets*. May I know from the hon. Minister to what these intangible fixed assets relate to? Whether they are related to e-health plans?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, the hon. Member is right; they are related to the e-health plans.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 528, *Item No. 22140007 Renal Dialysis - Consumables and Fees*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether arrangements have been made for renal dialysis to be carried out at the Souillac Hospital for those patients who come from Bel Ombre, Le Morne, and have to go far for renal dialysis?

Mr Bundhoo: I am sure the hon. Member knows that; it is going to be in early January.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he could justify the huge increase in the *Cleaning of Hospital Premises* on page 528, *Item No. 22070006*.

The Chairperson: We are at *Programme 581*.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee was on *Item No. 28212007 Other Current Transfers - Savings Culture Campaign*.

Mr Obeegadoo: On *Programme 581* at page 526, *Item No. 22120007- Fees for Training*. There is a doubling of the amount budgeted with an increase in *Fees for Training*, but there is new item of *Capacity Building Programme*, apparently. Could we have some details? I would like, in particular, to know whether this relates to the constraints in certain specialist areas identified earlier on page 517.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, it is with regard to provision for fees payable to Chairman and members of Board, consultant of training sessions, increase in the provision under sub section *Fee for training* of new item *Capacity Building Programme*, which consists of future Chairman and members and so on. It's also with regard to Chairman and members of Board and Committees with regard to the Regional Health Advisory Boards, the Pesticides Control Board,

Medical Disciplinary Tribunal, Mental Health Board, Mental Health Care Accounts Committee, Mauritius Institute of Health Board. Also, to foreign teams; provision made to accommodation of foreign teams in connection with exchange in the field of health.

The Chairperson: If you have a small supplementary, because time is over!

Mr Obeegadoo: Are we doubling the fees because we are doubling the allowances for Board members? I did not get this.

Mr Bundhoo: I just said it. It is with regard to provision under sub item *Fees for Training* and new item *Capacity Building Programme*.

Programme Code 581: Health Policy and Management (Rs598,679,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 582: Curative Services was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: *Programme 582: Curative Services, under Item No. 22140002 - CT Scan and MRI Fees and Materials*, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could inform the House whether these fees are payable to any clinics in the private sector or are they local fees?

Mr Bundhoo: To a couple of clinics. I think it is for City Clinic at Port Louis, where some of the patients of Jeetoo Hospital are sent.

Dr. S. Boolell: Can we have a breakdown? I am sure it is not one clinic but many clinics.

Mr Bundhoo: The breakdown will be circulated, of course.

Dr. Sorefan: On the same issue, I would like to know whether the quotations were sought from all these clinics and if the lowest was considered?

Mr Bundhoo: I am pretty sure that whatever procedure had to be followed must have been followed.

Mr Nagalingum: At page 529, under *Item No. 31112403 - Upgrading of Hospitals*, where mention is made of Jeetoo Hospital, Flacq Hospital, J. Nehru Hospital, Victoria Hospital and Brown Sequard Hospital. Will the hon. Minister inform the House if provision has been made for upgrading of Dispensaries and Community Health Centres also?

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson. Provision is made for a list of dispensaries, Area Health Centres, and also for all Regional Hospitals. In fact, some of them are ongoing programmes like, for example, Jeetoo Hospital. The House is very much aware that it's three years on now that this is going on and on, and probably it would be the last year for the

implementation, whereas for Area Health Centres there is the programme of upgrading that is permanent. If required, I can always table the list.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, at page 528, under *Item No. 22070006 - Cleaning of Hospital Premises*, we see that the sum has tripled, going from Rs7 m. to Rs22 m. I would like to know the reason as to why it has tripled, the company that is responsible for the cleaning, if tender had been launched, and if a rodent control - *dératisation* - is included?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, the tender allocated was for the previous year. I am pretty sure that the criteria laid down must have been followed.

As to why the sum allocated has tripled, first, it is because new tender is going to be issued shortly, taking into consideration the cost for new tendering. Secondly, because of the NRB Report, now we insist that employer must satisfy certain criteria with regard to payment of all those employed, whereas previously it could take whatever persons and give them a minimum salary. But now, the Ministry of Health has been requested by the NRB to ensure that employees are paid accordingly. A mechanism will be set up to make sure that whoever obtains a contract, the employees are paid in accordance to recommendations of NRB. That is what explains the increase in the sum allocated for cleaning. You will also notice - before we come to any question - that this will also apply for security.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, at page 527, under *Item No. 22010 - Cost of Utilities*, the hon. Minister just talked about a culture of savings at the level of his Ministry. Can we know why the cost of utilities will go up by Rs30 m. for 2012?

Mr Bundhoo: Provisions for 2012 is to be in line with what was actually spent in 2011. The provisions are: electricity and gas charges: Rs77 m., whereas last year it was also Rs77 m.; telephone: Rs20 m.; water charges: Rs19.4 m., in view of the increases in the charges, and same apply for wastewater charges as well as for fuel and oil.

Mrs Bholah: Mr Chairperson, at page 527, *Item No. 21110010 - Allowance icw Internship (Pre-registration Training)*. It's a good sign that more funds have been earmarked for 2012 and thereafter. Can the hon. Minister tell us what provision is being made to recruit those trained doctors?

Mr Bundhoo: Interview is presently on at the Public Service Commission. I understand it would be finalised soon. As soon as the PSC sends the recommendation through whatever institution that they have to send it, they are going to be employed.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to page 529, *Item No. 31122801 - Acquisition of medical equipment*, the sum earmarked is Rs 200m. The hon. Minister is aware that in the cancer unit the three radiotherapy machines regularly break down. Is there any provision to purchase a new radiotherapy machine and, if so, whether the tender document is ready to be issued?

Mr Bundhoo: I can assure the hon. Member who actually raised the issue with me personally before. I am going to submit a list of all the equipment that we intend to purchase for the current year and I am sure he will appreciate what are those hi-tech equipment that are going to be used for the treatment of cancer patients.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I have got two questions on page 528. Can I put the two questions at one go?

The Chairperson: One question, please! We have got a long list here.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: One at a time, or can I put the two questions?

The Chairperson: One at a time, yes!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On *Item No. 31112003 - Construction/Extension of Hospitals*, it is very good, we have got several projects, but can I ask the hon. Minister what is being done to reduce the waiting time for elective surgeries?

Mr Bundhoo: What we normally do is we reduce the elective time; sometimes we give special allowance to doctors to work for certain hours in order to do that and we shall continue to do that. The appointment of new doctors and the creation of new Operating Theatres in Flacq Hospital, Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and in other places will also help to reduce the waiting time with regard to elective operation.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on page 528, *Item No. 22900021 - Clothing and Bedding*, we find that the sum has increased from Rs9.8 m. to Rs30 m. May we have some clarification from the hon. Minister? And since the hon. Minister has just talked about hi-tech equipment, may I know from him whether any provision for training to use this equipment has been made in this present Budget? Because very often, we face the problem of breakdown and we don't have skilled persons.

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you, hon. Mrs Labelle. With regard to clothing and bedding, Mr Chairperson, normally the tender is launched for a period of two years. 2012 would be the new period of two years. That is why the sum has been increased. Of course, it takes into consideration the usual increase in cost and everything. That is why the sum is being increased.

With regard to hi-tech equipment for training, maintenance and supervision, it is now an inclusive clause.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, under *Item No. 21110010 - Allowance in respect to Internship*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of interns which are on the waiting list to be given the training and whether there are sufficient doctors as at to date to provide and supervise the training programmes?

Mr Bundhoo: I can assure the hon. Member, Mr Chairperson, that, at present – from what I recall from memory - there are approximately 154. Letters have already been issued to all of them for induction on 08 and 09 December. They will all be joining the service as internship from 03 January and will be posted in our regional hospitals. On top of that, the team in my Ministry is presently reviewing the training programme for all the internship.

The Chairperson: On the same issue, we have got two questions. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: On item *Allowance on Internship*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether those who are going to be recruited next year are going to be paid the same amount as this year or will it be a reduced allowance?

Mr Bundhoo: In order to – I won't use the word 'employ'- enable all the 154 to go for internship and also for next year, we are going to have – it is not finalised - two intakes. I think it is in May and July.

The Chairperson: No, we should be brief, please! I know that the hon. Minister is hyperactive, but he must try to be...

Mr Bundhoo: All will be taken on board.

The Chairperson: No, the question is whether it is going to be reduced! Yes, hon. Nagalingum!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, I need an answer as to whether it will be reduced.

The Chairperson: Yes, the question is whether it is going to be reduced, hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

Please! If you have any problem, you address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bundhoo: I was just explaining that...

The Chairperson: I told the hon. Minister we have limited to 20 minutes per item.

Mr Bundhoo: I hope you apply the same principle to those who are putting the questions!

The Chairperson: To be kind enough, the question was whether the interns are going to be paid the same amount or whether it is going to be reduced.

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I thank hon. Dr. Sorefan for this question. We have discussed it lengthily before. In order to enable Government and to make sure that all those who are qualified as doctors be registered, we have been allocated Rs87 m. for next year and the allowance payable would be Rs18,000. On top of that, for all those who are qualified and come to the country next year, we are going to have two intakes: one in May and one in July. This is still under discussion and it will be finalised soon.

The Chairperson: The question is whether it is going to be reduced. It has to be finalised. All right! Now, we come to hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 528 under *Item Construction/Extension of Hospitals*, I have two questions there.

The Chairperson: One question, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same item.

The Chairperson: On the same item, all right.

Mr Obeegadoo: My first question is: there is manifestly right now a huge problem of lack of accommodation, hospital beds. I would like to know whether there has been assessment of the number of beds lacking. At the end of the year, if we vote the provision being asked for under this item. How many additional hospital beds we shall have? That is the first part of the question. The second part is: while these construction/extension works are being carried out, are we taking appropriate steps for the safety of visitors? If I may quote the example of the Cardiac ICU at Candos, to visit patients there is a health risk in itself because of the passage you need to take.

The Chairperson: Be brief, please!

Mr Bundhoo: I do share the views of hon. Obeegadoo. With regard to occupancy, I have got a list here, which I am going to table for you to be able to go through it. But from time to time, we do have some overload, and this is also being taken care of by transferring the patients or for temporary places where the patients are put during day care and then transferred in a permanent ward.

Mr Obeegadoo: If we vote this budget, how many additional beds will we have at the end of 2012?

Mr Bundhoo: I don't have the figures with me, but I can assure the hon. Member, for example, at Flacq Hospital, a couple of wards are already finalised and will be opened some time in December. For Victoria Hospital, two wards will soon be opened, whereas the same will be applied to the hospital in Montagne Longue and same will be applicable to SSRN Hospital. I am prepared to submit that to you. For example, in Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, which is under construction, upgrading of additional wards is ongoing till such time the work is completed.

The Chairperson: Please, I'll ask the hon. Minister and also the hon. Member not to put additional questions from a sitting position because other hon. Members have also got the opportunity to ask their queries. Yes, hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: On page 582, *Item No. 22090 – Security*, I see the sum has doubled. Surely, there must be a good reason. Can the hon. Minister tell us the name of the company?

Mr Bundhoo: I don't have the name of the company because the contract has not been allocated yet. I explained earlier that the exercise would soon be on. Why it is being doubled? It is because provision is being made to ensure that all security company employs people on a specific BMI, height, age and physical and also to ensure that the company abides to the rules and regulations with regard to pay as provided by the NRB.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 529, *Item No. 31121801 - Acquisition of Vehicles*, I think the hon. Prime Minister himself answered the question that provision is being made in the Budget for the purchase of motorcycles with basic equipment, especially when it comes to accident. May I know whether provision is made in that for medical staff in case of urgency and emergency to have motorcycles? On the same page, Mr Chairperson ...

The Chairperson: One question please! I have got some members waiting.

Mr Baloomoody: It is a question of acquisition of generators. Are we providing generators to the Regional Health Centre? There is one in Curepipe vis-à-vis my house. Because in case of urgency and there is blackout, it creates real problems. These are requests made to me by doctors as to whether the Regional Health Centres will have a generator, especially now we are approaching cyclonic season.

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to motorcycles and ambulances, I do not have the reply with me, but I will seek it and have it tabled. With regard to generators, in fact, it is a good idea. It is

a good point that the Member raised. He just gave me an idea of asking to have a check list of all places with regard to generators, especially that now we are approaching cyclone period. I am sure there must be.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, at page 529, *Item No. 31122811 - Acquisition of CCTV Cameras in Hospitals*. Can I know from the hon. Minister for which hospitals these Rs10 m. have been earmarked? A second question...

The Chairperson: No, one question!

Mr Bundhoo: I think it is already working at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and Flacq Hospital. With regard to Victoria, Rose Belle and another one, the tenders have already been launched. It has already been opened. I am not sure whether it has been allocated or no. But it is ongoing.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I am on page 528, *Item No. 22140 - Medical Supplies*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this item includes protective clothes for visitors to ICU? We are all aware that these protective clothes are in a very bad state - even the overcoat, the shoes that are given. May we know whether the hon. Minister is reviewing these protective clothes and whether these are included under this item?

Mr Bundhoo: As I said earlier, Mr Chairperson, we are about to launch tenders for all these materials with regard to bedding and pillow case. I am pretty sure that this also will form part because it is part of the clothing structures. About the shoes, I am not sure. I have to check it.

Mr Obeegadoo: Just a humble suggestion! Since this programme is so important, could we take 10 minutes from the next programme and have it on this programme?

The Chairperson: No, unfortunately, it is going to be very difficult for me to be able to change the rule now, because it is something subjective which item is more important than the other. It is going to be very difficult for me to control.

Programme Code 582: Curative Services (Rs 6,140,759) was, on question put, and agreed to.

Programme Code 583 - Primary Health care and Public Health was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Under *Item No. 58202 - Ayurvedic Medicine*, may I refer again to ...

The Chairperson: Can you direct me as to which page we are?

Mr Baloomoody: Page 529, *item 58202*. We have finished with this one.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Alright, I will come to Programme 583 *Primary Health Care and Public Health*.

Dr. Sorefan:We have approved the vote for Programme 582, but for Aryurvedic medicine we have not gone through.

The Chairperson: No, it forms part of the vote. This is what I understand.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 529, *Sub-Programme 58301 Service at Health Centres*, we know that there have been some security problems in certain Health Centers, especially where Methadone is being provided. May I know from the hon. Minister whether we have budgeted for security of the staff for these Health Centres?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, I don't know whether you would like to address the issue of Methadone and security right now or when we come to the vote.

The Chairperson: No, please! As regards the question of security...

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, we do have the security and the service is being reviewed. At a later stage, when we will come to the vote on Methadone and the rest, we will address further the issue.

Dr S. Boolell: At page 530, under *Item No. 31112404 - Upgrading of Area Health Centres*, this is applicable to many other health institutions which need upgrading. Are there provisions for central incinerators of high-tech incinerators in health institutions, including hospitals, especially in the residential areas with low air pollution and noise pollution?

Mr Bundhoo: I understand that one at the moment is under construction at the Nehru Hospital and the one in Candos Hospital is being reviewed.

Dr S. Boolell: Have you received complaint concerning..

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, I really have received complaints. I am going to surprise you. I had received complaints when I was Minister of Environment and now, as Minister Health, I am taking action in order to address the issues which I received when I was Minister of Environment.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am on page 530, *Sub-Programme 58302*, under *Item No. 22150 - Scientific and Laboratory Equipment Supplies*, where we voted a sum of Rs1.1 m. last year, and also regarding the acquisition of laboratory equipment, item 3111...

The Chairperson: Are we taking one item by one. Is it linked?

Mrs Labelle: I do think it is linked, Mr Chairperson, because we are talking about acquisition of laboratory equipment as well as scientific and laboratory equipment. This is why I have linked these two items together. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he could table a list of equipment that he has purchased during this current year under these two items or if he has the information, how much money has been spent for these two items of equipment.

Mr Bundhoo: Of course, a list is going to be circulated on the amount of money spent for the year 2011 and the proposed purchase for 2012 and sum earmarked for the purchases and list of items for 2012.

Dr. S. Boolell: Page 531, under *Sub-programme 58302, Item No. 28211 - Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria for the selection of some of those non-profit institutions. I note regretfully that some others who are performing excellent work at the level of some diseases where Government is not active like autism are not included.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, I am going to circulate a copy of the criteria, and I have to say in favour of my predecessors that they have already set up a committee to review the criteria of providing financial support to NGOs. We are still working on it. Hopefully, it will be finalised before the next proposal is made. I am sure we would be in a position by then to apply the new criteria also.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, on the same issue!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, on the same item, Mr Chair. I see under *Item No. 28211034 Other Current Transfers – Action Familiale*. The Minister is saying that there is a programme and we are to review all the NGOs, but it is the same amount for 2012, for 2013 and 2014.

Mr Bundhoo: I am sure the hon. Member will appreciate. This is for accounting purposes, but once it is reviewed, it is going to be adjusted accordingly.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 530, *Item No. 22140001 - Medicine, Drugs and Vaccine*, would the hon. Minister inform the House how much of medicine, drugs and vaccines have had to be disposed of due to the expiry date during the last financial year?

Mr Bundhoo: Unfortunately, I don't have this information with me, but I will table it later on for your benefit.

Mr Seeruttun: At page 529, under *Sub-Programme 58301: Services at Health Centres - 21 Compensation of Employees*, we can see a reduction in the amount earmarked for 2012 compared to 2011, but when we look at the number of personnel in the programme they have gone up. Would the Minister kindly inform the House how he managed to reduce the salaries while the number of employees has gone up?

Mr Bundhoo: The slight reduction is due to a net increase of Rs4.6 m. owing to trend of expenditure; the basic salary also is going to be reduced because of the vacancies which have not been filled; travelling by Rs1.5 m. is increased; allowances is decreased by Rs1.9 m. and extra remuneration is by Rs0.5 m. whereas personal emoluments net increase is Rs6.1 m.; basic salary decrease Rs4.7 m. I can supply you with a copy of this for you to have a better understanding of the situation.

Mr Baloomoody: I take the hon. Minister to page 531, *Item No. 28211 - Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. First of all, I must state my surprise, the Human Service Trust, at least, should have been under this one. I don't know why it has got a special chapter. Most of them are, of course, doing an excellent work. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been approached by any NGOs fighting against diabetes? Because we know it is one of the main non-communicable diseases affecting our nation. Has the Government been approached by any NGOs for any contribution from Government and, if so, has there been any provision to help these NGOs that are doing an excellent work we must say?

Mr Bundhoo: From what I understand, some of the NGOs are already being funded. With regard to NGOs dealing and supporting Government action on the whole for the fight against diabetes, any application would be considered positively subject to availability of funds.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister said some are already being funded. May I know under which item in the Budget they are and how much we are giving to each of the NGOs?

Mr Bundhoo: That would be supplied in a minute.

Dr. Sorefan: At page 530, under *Item No. 22140001 - Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*, will the Minister consider including fluoride tablets for preventive measures to the pre-primary and primary schools? As the Minister has mentioned, on page 531, under *Item No. 28211055 Other Current Transfers – Alzheimer Association*, I am sure the Minister as well as Mrs Bappoo will agree with me that there is an increase of Alzheimer cases and this is being diagnosed as

from 40 years plus. Will the Minister consider strongly if not treble, but double this amount in his next consultation?

Mr Bundhoo: Thank you again hon. Dr. Sorefan. With regard to fluoride tablets, I requested the CMO to have a look at it again despite the recommendations of the World Health Organisation and shortly a recommendation will be made to me in view of what is being said with regard to fluoride tablets.

With regard to Alzheimer, hon. Mrs Bappoo and I had the opportunity to meet Dr Pierre Catteau who visited Mauritius some couples of months ago and we are still and again looking at the whole issue of Alzheimer. As we agreed, it has to be a multilateral approach by different Ministries and we are going to address the issue especially when the number of Alzheimer patients is on the increase in Mauritius and other countries.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 529, *Sub-Programme 58301: Services at Health Centres*, would the hon. Minister inform the House about the opening hours of the Area Health Centres during weekdays and during the weekend?

Mr Bundhoo: There is a list of Area Health Centres that are dedicated to be open on weekdays. I am going to submit a list to the House of all those Area Health Centres that are open on Saturdays and Sundays and the hours of opening for the benefit of all Members.

The Chairperson: I remember hon. Members that we are on items for the Budget and not on policy issues.

Mr Uteem: Page 530, under *Item No. 31112006 - Construction of Mediclinics (a) Plaine Verte Mediclinic*, may I know from the hon. Minister when is construction expected to terminate and why has there been such delay for it to be completed?

Mr Bundhoo: I cannot tell you offhand why there is a delay, but I can assure the House that hon. Shakeel Mohamed, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Hossen and I had a visit there. It's almost completed. We are waiting to finalise the fixtures and furniture. If I am not mistaken, it should be operational as from 03 January and the opening will be done by the Prime Minister some time in December.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the Minister whether he is aware that there is a court case regarding the ownership of the land for this Mediclinic?

Mr Bundhoo: You mean at Plaine Verte. Honestly, I am not aware of that. I can always check it and inform the House later on.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 519, *Sub-Programme 58302: Public Health Services*. One of its objectives is: Monitoring of food premises and food control and safety. Would the Minister kindly inform the House what was the concrete measures being taken to ensure that the Food Act is being implemented and necessary hygienic measures are being taken in all these food premises?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, for the benefit of hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, I would like to inform that the court case with regard to the place where the Plaine Verte Mediclinic is located has been settled.

With regard to the food control, there is a list of things that we do and the number of premises that we have checked throughout the year - since January to October this year - is 28,000. An improvement notice served is 2886. I have answered a parliamentary question concerning this matter in the House. I have also informed of the House that the Food Control Act will be reviewed and strengthened in order to ensure that we are in line with other European countries with regard to food vendors and food control in Mauritius.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 529, *Item No. 22030 - Rent*, will the hon. Minister give us some more information concerning the rent of Rs8 m.?

Mr Bundhoo: I'll reply in a couple of minutes.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: There is something very unnatural happening here. Anyway! On page 519 there is mention of *Dedicated NCD clinics*. I would like to know where this appears on pages 529 and 530. Do we have Dedicated NCD clinics and where are they to be found in the country?

Mr Bundhoo: Concerning Dedicated NCD clinics, there is one in the Souillac Hospital with regard to diabetes and for the others I would inform you in a minute.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sorry! I think it should be decentralised.

Mr Bundhoo: You asked me whether there is a Dedicated NCD clinic. One of the Dedicated NCD clinics with regard to diabetes and testing and all the policies are at the Souillac, but the general services with regard to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and others are being offered in all regional hospitals and area health centres.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 530, I take it under *Personal Emoluments*. Recently, we had talked about cancer service, and there was an international seminar organised in Mauritius. Can I

know from the Minister what our action plan is, and whether he can circulate whatever document has been issued in that conference; the outcome? As Members of Parliament, it is important for us to be in presence of documents/recommendations. I still remember the Prime Minister made mention of palliative care. I did query last time about the number of consultants in palliative care we have in Mauritius and what are the scopes for the future. I would like to know whether there is any planning, because the problem of cancer, as you are aware, is becoming more and more serious and more and more acute.

Mr Bundhoo: Sir, with regard to the action plan on cancer, the international conference, the international register of cancer, it went to Cabinet last Friday and I can always circulate the outcome of this conference. With regard to the action plan, once it is finalised, whatever it is, it can already be put in place, but I can always submit a copy of the action plan for the benefit of the House.

With regard to palliative care, my predecessor, once she was at the World Health Organisation – I mean the Ministry did make a request for an expert from the World Health Organisation to support Mauritius and this expert will be in Mauritius shortly, in December.

Mr Bhagwan: Am I to understand that we do not have any Mauritian born here actually as consultant in palliative care?

Mr Bundhoo: I will reply to this in a few minutes.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue.

The Chairperson: Yes, on the same issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I have confirmation that, as regards oncologist, we have only one in the public service right now?

Mr Bundhoo: Recently, I was in Victoria hospital. I know there is one there, but I'll check it and come back to you.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 530 on Sub-Programme 58302: *Public Health Services – item 22020 – Fuel and Oil*. I can see for 2012 there are about Rs4 m. earmarked for that item; in 2010 there was a sum of Rs5 m., it goes down to Rs4 m. in 2012, then it goes back again to Rs5 m. for the rest of the years 2013/2014. Would the Minister kindly explain why the drop in that item, and then it goes back again in 2013 and 2014?

Mr Bundhoo: I come back in a minute.

Local Government Service - Programme Code 583: Primary Health Care and Public Health (Rs926,345,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 584: Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS was called.

The Chairperson: Mrs Labelle and then I'll come back to you.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chair, regarding this Programme 584: *Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS*, Mr Chair, when I go back to the objective of this programme on page 524, I see that the number of people of methadone therapy we are projecting to have is 6,000; from 3,000 this year, that is, we are doubling the number of people. It is the same thing regarding the number of patients on antiretroviral drugs, there is an increase. This year, we are putting number of people covered by Needle Exchange Programme. So, there is a lot of increase regarding the treatment. But when I go to the Budget, there is a meagre increase of Rs8 m. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is fund elsewhere. Regarding the staff attached to this department, here too, Mr Chair, there are many posts vacant and also I do not see any psychologists attached to this department. I would have thought that we can, at least, have one behavioral psychologist to help on this side. So, I would like to have some clarification from the hon. Minister regarding the treatment in this department.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, with regard to *Item No. 22900915 – Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*, we do cater in that programme for inmates who are found at the Beau Bassin prison?

Secondly, with regard to the issue raised by my learned colleague, hon. Mrs Labelle, we know that there are many vacancies, but at the same time, the union has expressed their concern regarding the lack of personnel and lack of security with regard to the treatment of methadone in hospital. So, can the hon. Minister enlighten us as to what action is taken?

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to the questions of hon. Mrs Labelle, psychologist services are being provided from NATReSA on a sessional basis with regard to HIV/AIDS. With regard to the questions asked by hon. Baloomoody concerning the problems of security and all the issues related to the distribution of methadone, we have initiated action so as to have handrail whereby you are able to canalise the users one after the other to prevent a group or a crowd of it.

Secondly, all area health centres or all places where there are more than 500 persons who come for methadone treatment, it is going to be under CCTV Camera Surveillance.

Thirdly, we are reinforcing the security at these points. Tenders have already been launched and opened for three of those areas whereby there are more than 500. Therefore, there is guardrail to challenge them one by one and there is a camera that takes on to ensure that the methadone is taken and there is also some kind of peer review which is being done.

With regard to supporting staff, we are also reviewing that and we are strengthening that. But as I said earlier, the first instance we are applying these CCTV camera and handrails to all places at the first instance, where there are 500 and above patients.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 531 under *Item No. 22900915 – Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*. First, a preliminary remark, Sir, I take strong objection to a programme bearing the appellation “*Treatment and Prevention of HIV/AIDS*” and then subsuming under that title “*Alcoholics and Drug Addicts*”. All alcoholics and drug addicts are not necessarily concerned with HIV/AIDS treatment, at least. Anyway! My first question was under the Multi sectoral Response. There has been much talk of a new study and strategy document. There is no mention of it here. There is no provision for studies or surveys. Is that document still being prepared? When will it be ready, when will it lay out a new strategy?

Mr Bundhoo: The document is still being prepared – I’ll tell you in a minute – but the whole issue has been addressed by the Prime Minister during his speech at Budget time.

With regard to HIV/AIDS and all the treatment and strategies, whatever can be done is being done, not only piecemeal, but in a phased manner.

(Interruptions)

As soon as it is ready I am going to table it.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 532, *Item No. 26313051- Current Grant - National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers*. Can I ask the Minister whether the Board of NATReSA has been reconstituted? We know that there has been a tug of war between the General Manager and the Chairman, which prevents the progress and the development of that organisation.

Mr Bundhoo: I thank the hon. Member for this question. As she rightly said, there is a tug of war. Whatever is happening there, I have sought approval for a full-fledged inquiry into the mismanagement of the NATReSA.

Mr Uteem: Actually, it is a follow-up on the question raised by hon. Hanoomanjee. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there are a number of positions that are vacant within NATReSA and, if so, when these positions will be filled?

Mr Bundhoo: As I said earlier, precisely because of the continuous problems happening at the NATReSA, we are setting up an inquiry to address all the issues, be it the issue of vacancies, filling of vacancies and how genuine they are. All these will be addressed by this inquiry.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will go back to my question which has not been answered. When will Government spell out its new strategy on drugs? Where is the provision for preparation and completion of that study? Pending the publication of that strategy, is it proposed, on the basis of provision being made for next year, to substitute Suboxone for Methadone to wean off drug addicts from drugs, as suggested by the MMM Commission?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Chairperson, an evaluation on the Human Reduction Programme, that is, Methadone Substitution Therapy and the Needle Exchange Programme was conducted by an independent foreign team. In this respect, a proposal has also been made for substitution of Methadone to be looked into. But, at the moment I am talking to you, the alternative to Methadone, namely Suboxone, is being looked into by a Technical Committee of my Ministry, with review of the recommendations made by the national team.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, still under this programme, when I go to page 519, the priority objective is to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and so on and so forth. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the testing of inmates when they get out of prison is included among the measures he is proposing to take to attain this priority objective? Because inmates are tested when they get into prisons, but I don't know whether it is so when they get out. So, may I know whether this is included in the measures taken to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS?

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to the question raised by hon. Obeegadoo, the National Drug Control Master Plan is presently being prepared and expected to be made public in January 2012.

As for the next question, I remember this question was raised in this House, and the Prime Minister has given a reply to that. I would liaise with the Office of the Prime Minister to see to it that there is nothing wrong. In fact, it is only fair that some kind of an exit test is being done to all inmates when they leave the system, to see the difference if any between the time they came in and when they are leaving.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 531, *Item No. 22900915 - Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*. Can the hon. Minister explain to the House why there has been a decrease in the budget estimates from Rs34 m. to Rs24 m.?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 532, *Item No. 28211 - Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. I am sure we all agree, including the Minister, that NGOs play a critical part in rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts. Why is it that the budgetary provision is not increasing at all? On the basis of what is being proposed, does the Ministry intend to provide a more effective consultation mechanism with the NGOs, since they always complain of lack of dialogue with the authorities?

Mr Bundhoo: I think I have addressed this issue earlier. We are, at the moment, reviewing the criteria for support to NGOs. At the same time, we want the money given to NGOs to be more effective with regard to the programmes that they are carrying out. We are under the impression that most of the time the money is being used for administrative purposes, and we want to see to it that it is being used maybe partly for administrative purposes, but more so with regard to addressing the issue of why the NGO was created in the first place. Once this is done, I am sure if there is need to increase that amount allocated to NGOs, who we are satisfied are playing, as the hon. Member said, an important role in society to combat all these non-communicable and communicable diseases, the allocation will be reviewed.

With regard to the question of HIV/AIDS raised by hon. Jhugroo, the difference is being funded, as was said by the Prime Minister - now I recollect - by the Global Fund.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have one last question on the *Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS programme* under *Item No. 22900915*. Can the hon. Minister say whether recently Methadone has been found to be on sale in the public and, if so, whether an enquiry has been opened?

Mr Bundhoo: I have already replied to that question. I said 'yes'. There was a case where a child had consumed Methadone and, subsequently to that, we convened a meeting. As I said earlier, we are having CCTV cameras in all the places where there are 500 or more patients; we are reviewing the manner in which Methadone is distributed; we are placing handrails, in order to make sure that there is a kind of a queuing system where they do not come in a crowd, and we are also restrengthening the personnel from the part of the Ministry in order to do the job in a better and clear manner. As to whether Methadone is being sold in private places, that is a

different matter. I am sure we will continue strengthening the law to ensure that this does not happen.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like to go to page 524 the performance targets. To have relevant and realistic targets is a cardinal principle of the programme-based budgeting. I would like some explanation as to the targets we have here, because there a number of people on Methadone substitution therapy, and even if it is cumulative, the figures are expected to keep rising. Why do we not have another target, which is the total number of Mauritians that have AIDS or are HIV positive, and then monitor the numbers, so that we know if we are being able to halt the progression of HIV/AIDS in Mauritius?

Mr Bundhoo: I do have the figure with me, and I am going to table it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I hope the Minister will answer my last question concerning targets. The other question I have concerns the AIDS Unit. I am sure on this one the Minister will agree that they have done a very good job over the last few years. And, yet, at page 543, we note that the AIDS Unit will have next year only 15 members of its personnel, all inclusive. Surely, that cannot be adequate to respond to the challenges. Why is it that, on the provision for next year, we cannot do better?

Mr Bundhoo: We will look at and if we have to increase it, we shall increase it. I thank the hon. Member for his appreciation with regard to the fight against AIDS, especially that this goes to the Prime Minister, as the whole unit of AIDS prevention rests within the Office of the Prime Minister.

Programme Code 584: Treatment and Prevention of HIV and AIDS (Rs100,457,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases was called.

Dr. S. Boolell: At page 532, under the *Item No. 22900903 – Mass Media Awareness Campaign*, to the tune of Rs50 m. earmarked for the next year and for the subsequent years. If the Minister could give me some details on this mass of awareness campaign - hopefully not relying on the MBC or ministerial broadcast - to promote the disease?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, it is the first time that such a massive allocation of Rs50 m. is being allocated for the sensitisation of Non-Communicable Diseases. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind the House that it is also the first time that the United

Nations Head Meeting in New York had one of the components to address the issue of Non-Communicable Diseases. It has been said very regularly that Non-Communicable Diseases might become a more important threat than climate change or equally as important to climate change. That is why the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has deemed it fit and necessary to allocate a sum of Rs50 m. to enable my Ministry to develop a strategy of sensitisation and, parallel to that, to establish what I would call a health literacy programme of sensitisation from 'Point zero to death' with regard to Non-Communicable Diseases. The communication strategy is going to be developed and, hopefully, I will be in a position to communicate to the House in the very near future.

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, on the same issue there is a paucity of studies on the social factors behind the spread of NCDs in Mauritius. I want to know whether we have made provision for studies on NCDs and where it is within the Rs50 m. and whether we envisage, again under that vote, to have a focused strategy document on prevention of NCDs.

Mr Bundhoo: I must say, Mr Chairperson, quite recently, I went to Rio with regard to the social determinants of health. As to whether the Rs50 m. are allocated for studies, I am not so sure but, at the moment in time, there are several studies that are ongoing, for example, for diabetes, Dr. Owens is presently in Mauritius. My colleague, when she was in Geneva - we did request for the support of an expert from the World Health Organisation for other issues.

With regard to cancer we had the major conference in Mauritius. If ever we feel there is a need to use some of the money allocated here to conduct any form of study that we think is fit and necessary, we shall do so with the approval of the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Obeegadoo: Since we have been asked...

The Chairperson: No, please! I will not allow supplementary on a particular issue. I will ask hon. Mrs Labelle to put her query.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, at page 520, under *Programme 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases*, I see as Objective, Major Services, among which there is the *Tobacco Control Action Plan including setting up of Tobacco Cessation Clinics*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister where these clinics are.

Mr Chairperson, at page 543, there are several positions which are not funded for the coming year but also up to 2014, namely the Director NCD, the Deputy Director NCD, Administrator Diabetic Cardiovascular and many other positions, even the Community Health

Development Motivator as well as the Education and Communication Officer whom I suppose are very important for this programme. We keep the same number of positions for the four coming years. So, how are we going to offer these services?

Mr Bundhoo: With regard to the Tobacco Cessation Clinics, this has started at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital on Thursdays since November 2011; Odette Leal CHC on Wednesdays in the afternoon since 2009; SSRN Hospital on Saturday mornings since November 2011; Flacq Hospital on Saturday mornings as from November 2011; Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital on Wednesday afternoons after 1.00 p.m as from November 2011; Victoria Hospital on Saturday mornings as from November 2011. In all, these clinics do counseling and necessary nicotine replacement therapy is provided. The staff manning these clinics has received training from WHO consultants.

With regard to the vacancies that have not been filled, I am sure that hon. Mrs Labelle will agree with me that, as the strategic formulation of the primary health care and others come into place, we will make the necessary arrangement for filling vacancies and those responsible for the different units within my Ministry.

Dr. Sorefan: I refer to the item *Mass Media Awareness Campaign*. I will just clarify a bit regarding prevention. We have a tendency to think that such campaigns go only to the adults, but the basic prevention, from my experience, and worldwide, starts at childhood. So, will the Minister consider having some money out of the Fund so as to provide awareness campaigns to primary schools, secondary schools and primary care?

Mr Bundhoo: I believe I have mentioned that. When I use the words 'from zero till death', this includes the pre-primary, primary, very early childhood to adulthood and old age. This is why the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. X. L. Duval, and the Government, have deemed it fit to allow us this sum in order to review it. I must also say to the House that this is not only a business pertaining to the Ministry of Health, it is going to be a multilateral approach which includes the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Social Security, the Ministry of Agro Industry and the more so, the Ministry of Education where all the basics and fundamental programmes from pre-primary, primary and secondary education will be addressed. But, the Ministry of Health would be - if I may use the word - 'championing' the cause with the collaboration of the different Ministries.

Mr Uteem: At page 532, *Item No. 28211016 - Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Grant to NGOs*, will the hon. Minister indicate to the House what are the NGOs which received these grants?

Mr Bundhoo: A list will be tabled. Let me inform hon. Dr. Sorefan, with regard to the health programme, that we already have a School Health Programme but, I am sure, we are going to reinforce, reengineer and relook at it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will go back to hon. Dr. Sorefan's question pertaining to the Mass Media Awareness Campaign. Since there are many ideas and there is no document that is being circulated, can I ask the hon. Minister to table, as soon as possible, a tentative budget giving us an idea how the Rs50 m. will be spent over the next financial year?

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, we will do that as soon as possible.

Programme Code 585: Promoting Quality of Life and Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (Rs116,778,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

At 7.49 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.09 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection

Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start by a very simple question. At page 555, under *Item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees* and *Item No. 21110 - Personal Emoluments* respectively, may I ask the hon. Minister how this tallies with the evolution in staffing - on page 561 - which shows only one additional staff?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in spite of the fact that there is only one additional staff in the budget item - *Compensation of Employees*, there are a few provisions which are included: Rs3.4 m. for salary compensation, cash in lieu of sick leave and social contributions, that is, contributions for employees to the National Savings Fund, which was formerly under the MOFED Programme 951.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, in relation to compensation to employees, may I know from the hon. ...

The Chairperson: Which item, please?

Mr Uteem: *Item 21* at page 555, may I know from the hon. Minister who, under this item, is responsible for the supervision of the work at the State Trading Corporation?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I have not understood the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Can the hon. Member repeat that, please?

Mr Uteem: In relation to compensation of employees, may I know from the hon. Minister, which members of staff are overseeing the activities at the State Trading Corporation.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: May I know, Mr Chairperson, Sir, what budget item the hon. Member is referring to concerning specifically the State Trading Corporation?

Mr Uteem: The programme is Policy relating to Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection. We are voting for payment of compensation to employees who have responsibilities of developing policies in matter of Commerce. So, I am asking from the hon. Minister, who at the Ministry is on the Board of the STC and responsible for overseeing of duties.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this programme, as it is written down here, is for policy and management and covers the Minister and the office of the Permanent Secretary.

Mr Uteem: Am I to take it from the hon. Minister that there is no one at his Ministry who has any responsibility with respect to the State Trading Corporation - no one sits on the Board of the State Trading Corporation?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, of course, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have officers from my Ministry, including the Permanent Secretary who sits on the Board of the State Trading Corporation, which, as an institution, is overviewed by the Commerce Division of my Ministry.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would like some clarifications concerning the PBB Strategic Plan ...

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 553, I am still on programme 601, the very first performance target SS1. We are informed that there is a Strategic Plan in line with guidelines submitted. I would be very grateful if the hon. Minister could provide us with some information as to the objectives of the Strategic Plan and also what consultations have we had before its eventual presentation, I presume, in May next year.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The Strategic Plan for 2012 to 2014 has already been established and has been submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Mr Obeegadoo: I asked about consultations, the date of presentation to the public. Will there be prior consultations before that, with whom and in what context?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Consultations will be carried out with stakeholders who have to do with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, that is, different Government Departments and other institutions concerned.

Mr Obeegadoo: My last question is: will these consultations include not only the captains of industry, but also representatives of consumers, NGOs and whatever trade unions might be concerned?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have, at the level of the Ministry, regular contacts with all the stakeholders, that is, Government Ministries, Government Departments, other agencies which are concerned, private sector institutions, private sector operators, consumer associations, including NGOs and other members of the public who are concerned directly or indirectly with the issue of industry, commerce and consumer protection.

Mr Uteem: Under the same item, as a follow-up to what the hon. Minister has said, how regular does the Minister have meetings with representatives who sit on the Board of the STC to be apprised about what the State Trading Corporation does?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! The hon. Member has made his point; the hon. Minister is going to answer. Yes, hon. Minister.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The State Trading Corporation is an institution and the Permanent Secretary and the Principal Assistant Secretary of my Ministry sit on the Board. They report to me, as Minister, about the proceedings at the State Trading Corporation. We have regular meetings. I have personally, together with the Permanent Secretary and the Commerce Division, especially the Principal Assistant Secretary, with the management of the STC, concerning strategic directions of the STC, not day-to-day management.

Mr Baloomoody: I appreciate the reply given by the hon. Minister. Can I know when was the last meeting his representative had with the STC? Can the hon. Minister kindly tell us what has been the report forwarded to his Ministry with regard to the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, that must have been just a few days ago, maybe at the end of last week.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, has the hon. Minister taken cognizance of the report on the workings of the STC? Has the Permanent Secretary and other members of STC apprised the hon. Minister of the contents and conclusions of this report?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed about that report and I have taken cognizance of the report.

Mr Obeegadoo: I note on page 548 that the first priority objective is that of improving service delivery under this programme, but turning to page 561, I am very concerned to note that the hon. Minister is very much on his own, *esseulé*. On this specific programme, apart from the Permanent Secretary, hopefully the hon. Minister might have an internal control officer in 2012, but otherwise, it has just two officers, a care attendant, a driver and two CSs.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't think there is any need structurally for the policy and management sections of the Ministry to house 5, 10 or 20 people for consultation and cooperation to take place between myself as Minister, the Permanent Secretary who is part of the policy and management office, and the other officers, PASs, ASs and Chief Executives or other Executives of the other institutions operating under this Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: I thank the hon. Minister for having informed us that he has taken cognizance of the insight report. Can I ask the hon. Minister what action he intends to take following the damning findings of the insight report?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We have started action, as the hon. Member has said, regarding the recommendations of the insight forensic report. Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I kindly suggest to the hon. Member to come with a PQ, to which I will very happily answer?

Mr Obeegadoo: With all due respect, quite apart from PQs, we need information today in order to vote the estimates that are being proposed to us.

But I leave that to my hon. colleague to come back to. If I could just come back to my point which was the objectives of this programme which are not only to improve service delivery, but also to provide business facilitation and, most importantly, to increase consumers awareness of their rights and responsibilities. While I am very impressed by the Minister's self-confidence in standing alone on this project, may I ask him whether his Permanent Secretary and his officers have come up with any plan for year 2012, as to how consumers awareness are to be increased by the Ministry of their rights and responsibilities?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, hopefully, as we go through the budget of my Ministry, we will come across the answers for the very short question, but demanding a very long answer from the hon. Member. I would just like to point out that this budget is divided into four programmes actually. We have one for Policy and Management, one for Industry, one for

Trade and Commerce. The Ministry actually contains different divisions, we have two main divisions, Industry and Commerce and within Commerce we have Trade, the Trade Division and the Consumer Protection Unit. The different Units operate according to their set mandate and plans, which are discussed together and which are implemented throughout the year. If I can conclude on that, it is not a matter of my sitting or standing alone there or just in a given programme with just two officers, one attendant and a messenger, but there is a whole organisation in that Ministry, as is the case, in any other Ministry, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bodha: As regards the forensic report, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will be agreeable to lay a copy of that report on the Table of the National Assembly? My other question is: if he has taken cognizance of the findings of the report, has he given advice of a general nature as regards the accountability and good governance at the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, the report to which the hon. Member is referring has been analysed right, left and centre by officers of my Ministry and myself, by STC and by the legal counsels. For the moment I am afraid to say that this report is an internal report within the STC, and I have stated a few minutes ago that we have started to implement action on that report. Again I would invite the hon. Member if he so wishes, to come with a PQ to that effect.

Mr Uteem: I will come with the PQ in due course. May I ask the hon. Minister as at now, whether the people who are now representing the Ministry and sitting on the Board are the same people representing the Ministry and sitting on the Board of STC when the subject matter considered by the forensic insight had taken place?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The Board of the State Trading Corporation is in the process of being changed.

Mr Baloomoody: I thank the hon. Minister again and I appreciate that he has gone through the report. May I know whether he has taken action to make sure that whatever evidence we have in that report, books, entries have been secured so that we can have a proper understanding, and if there is an inquiry we can have an unbiased inquiry with regard to what has happened at the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't see to exactly to what inquiry the hon. Member is referring. I am sorry. That report is supposed to be a report established after an inquiry which was carried out by insight forensic.

Mr Baloomoody: According to my information, it may lead to serious criminal offences, serious corruption offences, and serious abuse of power offences. Can I ask the hon. Minister, who, I am sure, has gone through the report, whether he has taken action to, at least, preserve the evidence which can be as evidence in another forum?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't know exactly to what sort of evidence the hon. Member is referring, but if this has to do with any sort of tampering with the report, certainly not. The report is there and the report is in its original form. As I have said thrice, at least this time, we have started implementing action on this particular report, and then we cannot be impetuous.

Mr Uteem: Has any element of this report been referred to Police or ICAC for inquiry?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: No, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: There are serious allegations in that report. Can we know why the hon. Minister - I am sure he must have gone through the report - why has he not referred these matters to independent institutions, at least to find out whether there has been criminal or other offence?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I don't want to comment further on that report because it is a report which has been *commandité*, commissioned to a private forensic organisation, and we have hired the services of one particular legal counsel who has submitted a first draft copy of his recommendations for action. I have not mentioned the name of the legal counsel, but I wish to assure the hon. Members that the process has started and in due time action will be taken wherever action needs to be taken.

Mr Bhagwan: I shall be very brief. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has given, as Minister, clear directives to the Chairperson or his representatives on the Board that henceforth the STC sticks to its main responsibilities, as per its chart? It should not go in things like sponsoring races in Mumbai, which has happened. We have obtained replies here. I give only one example. Can the hon. Minister reassure the whole population and the public at large that clear guidelines are given to the Board as far as recruitment and the general management of the STC and organisation are concerned?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: On a lighter note, Mr Chairperson, I don't personally think that sponsoring leisure activities for a commercial organisation is necessarily a negative thing, but I would not comment further on that. However, to respond more specifically to the main question of the hon. Member, I can assure him and the House that clear instructions and clear directives,

even more than what the hon. Member is suggesting, have been given not only to the State Trading Corporation, but to all the other agencies operating under my Ministry for respect of rules of good governance and especially of sticking to the mandate which is awarded to them.

Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs15,798,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 602: Industrial Development was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I was looking at page 556 noting the significant reduction in the budget and wondering whether this sub-programme would have fallen out of favour with the Ministry of finance. Would the Minister kindly explain?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: For once, I will have a longer answer, Mr Chairperson. Government approved the hosting of a three-year RECP programme - that means, Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production - by Enterprise Mauritius in 2009. That programme aims at promoting the greening of industry in Mauritius through the uptake of resource efficient and cleaner production concept, methods, practices and policies. The programme focuses on capacity building, implementation of cleaner production assessments at enterprise level, and raising national awareness on resource efficiency and cleaner production. It touches the following sectors -

- food processing;
- tourism - especially, in the operation of hotels;
- textiles, and
- chemicals.

The programme was originally estimated at 802,300 euros out, of which the *Agence Française de Développement*, AFD, had agreed to contribute 400,000 euros, and the programme did start. However, we have been informed that *l'AFD* would not be in a position to financially continue to support the project due to budgetary constraints. UNIDO had agreed - at a meeting between the former Minister of Industry and Commerce and Mr Dmitri Piskounov, UNIDO Managing Director - in November 2010 to finance 10% of the project value, that is, 80,250 US dollars.

The Chairperson: May I ask the hon. Minister, if the answer is long, to give the main idea and to file in a copy?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Another ten seconds, Mr Chairperson. However, due to financial constraints again, we were informed in September 2011 - that is, two months ago - that UNIDO

will not co-finance the project. The MID Fund had indicated in November 2010 that it will finance to the tune of Rs402,000. However, in the absence of donor funding, AFD and UNIDO having walked out, no funds have been provided by MOFED in the Budget of 2012.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 556, *Item No. 25110002 Subsidies - Enterprise Mauritius*, there is a Budget of Rs48 m. May I know from the hon. Minister whether an inquiry has been initiated with respect to Enterprise Mauritius because there was a lot of allegation of malversation made by the Chairman against the Chief Executive Officer? Now, that we have a New Chief Executive Officer, has there been any enquiry initiated to see whether there was any substance to this tug of war between these two?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, there has not been any police inquiry because there was no case for a police inquiry. There was what we understood to be a sort of a personal clash - if we can put it that way - between the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer. Well, this thing dissolved naturally when the Chief Executive Officer left and a new Chief Executive Officer has been recruited following due process of advertising, of selection, of interviews, reselection, and the New Chief Executive Officer has been appointed about two months ago.

Mr Baloomoody: Enterprise Mauritius is, of course, a very high lucrative business when it comes to advertising Mauritius. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has, personally - after having taken office and after having taken cognizance of the reasons between the conflict with the ex-Manager and the Chairman - ensured that there has not been, and we won't have, any conflict of interest with regard to the position of the Chairman? He is heading a very important private institution in the same sector.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Since I took office, Mr Chairperson, I caused an administrative inquiry to be carried out into allegations - sort of allegations that you mentioned - and we have not found any evidence of the Chairman in his dual position as Chairman of Enterprise Mauritius and proprietor and Manager of his own business having conflicting interests because of that dual position. We have not found any evidence to that effect.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

No! I have called hon. Bhagwan! No one can monopolise twenty minutes! I am sorry; I have to give a fair chance to all hon. Members! If the hon. Member gives way, I have no problem.

Mr Baloomoody: May I know who has enquired on the issue of conflict of interest and whether there has been an enquiry and whether he will inform the House and the nation? Because we are going to vote a budget for that. What has been the outcome of that enquiry?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I will not give names, but Senior Officers of my Ministry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I am intervening on the same item, and I hope our good friend will appreciate that what we are saying is in good faith. We have witnessed and not making it personal. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has given clear directives - I don't know who is your representative at Enterprise Mauritius - and that he has met both the Chief Executive and the new Chairperson, to whom I wish a long stay at Enterprise Mauritius, knowing his past performance...

The Chairperson: No. Make your point!

Mr Bhagwan: I have not finished Mr Chairperson. Is this unparliamentary?

The Chairperson: No. I am sure that hon. Bhagwan, with his experience, can make his point in some more elegant way.

Mr Bhagwan: I am very fair when I am using this term, Mr Chairperson. I know the guy for 40 years and not for one day.

The Chairperson: I won't argue but, you make your point!

Mr Bhagwan: Let me continue! The hon. Minister as well knows him. Can the Minister inform the House whether clear directives have been given as far as responsibilities are concerned? You have an organisation and it applies to every parastatal body or Government-owned company where you have a Chairperson; his responsibilities as Chairperson should be well-defined and let the Chief Executive have his own say in the day-to-day matters.

Secondly, instead of having an inside enquiry, the hon. Minister should let the Director of Audit carry out a full investigation. We have full faith in that institution. I won't talk of the personal problems, purchase of cars and so on. You know all these, but we have to see the future. If you want to see the future without looking, '*guète dan rétroviseur, nous pas pou capave!*' Believe me, hon. Minister, I think, in the interest of Mauritius, not only good governance, but clear directives should also be given in order that the new Chief Executive can stay there for years.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: First, Mr Chairperson, probably my answer will be shorter than the question of hon. Bhagwan. Second, I thank you for your sweetness, hon, Bhagwan. Third, we have not found any cause up to now to request the Director of Audit to carry out audit within Enterprise Mauritius specifically. I suppose the Director of Audit will instruct his services to carry out an audit wherever he thinks it fit. Fourth, I would like to reassure my good friend, the hon. Member, that a few days after assuming office, I had a meeting with all Chairpersons and CEOs of all the institutions under my Ministry, and it was a long meeting. I think it lasted two hours, and I made it very clear to them of what was the mandate of each of them, what were the prerogatives, what were the limitations of each of them and the differentiation between the mandate of Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer and, of course, the respect of the rules of good governance. I think that was done.

Mr Uteem: On the same item: *Subsidies to Enterprise Mauritius*. In his Budget speech, the hon. Minister mentioned that there should be concerted effort between Enterprise Mauritius and the Board of Investment. How does he reconcile this with the fact that there is no reduction in the subsidies given to Enterprise Mauritius, and in order to avoid any conflict of interest, would he see to it that the company of the Chairperson is not given any contact in relation to Enterprise Mauritius?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, it is when the going gets rough that you need to put more money into what we call marketing expenses, and we think that the going will be getting rough as from 2012 for our export business, that is, manufactured goods, ICT, tourism and other services. This is why the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Yeung Sik Yuen and I had a meeting with the different institutions which carry out the promotion of Mauritius, that is, the Board of Investment, Enterprise Mauritius and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority. Each agency will carry out its own specific job, but where we will also have concerted actions between the three agencies. In this particular context, there was no need to reduce the budget of any of the three.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned, Enterprise Mauritius is a private company. It is governed by, at the top, a Board which sits regularly, once a month, and the Board's duty is to make sure that there is rule of good governance and especially that there is no conflict of interest and no unnatural alliances.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 556, *Item No. 22120 - Fees*. I can see that in 2010 some Rs25m. were earmarked for different programmes and other things that were developed during that year. Will the hon. Minister kindly inform the House to whom the fees were paid and whether reports have been submitted? What has been the outcome of those reports? Is he willing to table the reports and what are the action plans following the reports which are to be implemented, if any?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I must confess that I don't know whether there have been reports actually. Some few minutes ago I explained, following a question from hon. Obeegadoo, about the RECP and AFD PRCC programmes having been terminated for reasons that I have mentioned. So, fees for 2010 were Rs 25m., 2011 and then, in 2012, it comes down to Rs150,000. The sum of Rs150,000 is a provision for training of staff and ISO inspections and Rs50,000 for ISO surveillance visit. There is no provision for any other activities because these have been stalled for reasons that I have mentioned.

The Chairperson: Please, I will urge the hon. Minister to be brief with his answer.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I am asked questions which require long answers!

The Chairperson: Please, I take it that the hon. Minister got my point. I have got 20 minutes per item and I want to give a fair chance to all hon. Members to be able to ask certain clarifications. But, of course, I can't have control on what the hon. Minister is going to answer, but I humbly urge the hon. Minister to understand the position of everybody, please.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I do, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I was referring to the year 2010, not 2011 where a sum of Rs 25m. has been spent.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Sure, sorry. I said 2010, didn't I? There were fees which were earmarked for the development of certain programmes. RECP and Development Framework; Development Framework was meant for the development of the *Observatoire de l'industrie* which is a portal meant for the industry and which is a very sophisticated, I must say a very helpful instrument to be used by all potential investors, any industrialist on figures and facts that would be needed for decisions of investment and development in business in Mauritius. That portal has been developed and will be launched next month, I think in December. It was developed internally at the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under the same item: RECP Programme; we have understood from the hon. Minister that the Programme has been stopped. But then, under that same programme training was supposed to be given I don't know to whom. Can we know whether the training was given and who benefitted from that training? Again, with regard to consultancy services, we understand that, in 2010, under the same programme, we voted an amount of money for consultancy services.

The Chairperson: You make your point, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Can we know from the hon. Minister whether the services were retained with regard to consultancy and whether the reports have been submitted?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't have that information, Mr Chairperson. I will seek the information and I will circulate it.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 557, I refer to Sub-Programme 60203: Assaying and Marking of Jewellery; there is a provision for the sum of Rs7.7 m. for compensation of employees for which I see that there are only 10 Technical Officers. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many licences have been issued to jewellers? Because we read in newspapers everyday that lots of agents are asking for the purchase of used jewellery and a lot of foreigners from Dubai, France and Italy also are around the streets, buying jewellery around the streets. Is it adequate to provide for only 10 Technical Officers to control the abuse of purchases of used jewellery?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I thank the hon. Member for that question because it gives me the opportunity to explain a few things. Currently, there are 570 jewellers who are registered and it is a mandatory registration with the Assay Office. The officers of the Assay Office carry out control, inspections at the different premises of the jewellers. The provision - just to answer that little part of the question - for 2012 includes also a provision to recruit one gemmologist, which is quite a specialist position, and two additional technical officers. Regarding the third part of the question or statement from the hon. Li Kwong Wing, we are aware of that particular fact that there are heaps of advertising in the newspapers every day. Actually the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that in Parliament. My Ministry is currently reviewing the legislation in the Jewellery Act and it is planned that the forthcoming Economic Financial Miscellaneous Measures Bill will contain an amendment to the main Jewellery Act to provide for the protection of consumers who own and want to sell jewellery to hopefully prevent theft and to have a better

control on the trade in gold, whether it is in exchange for new jewellery or simply selling for cash.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: There are a lot of illegal traders in used gold jewellery. What control is ...

Mr Sayed-Hossen: This is what I am referring to in the third part of my answer, namely that there is a new regulation which is coming up; the regulation is ready, it should go to Cabinet any time now. But there is a need to amend the main Act, and this is going to be done in the Economic and Financial (Miscellaneous) Measures Bill. Hopefully, by the end of December, that should be done.

Programme Code 603: Trade Development (Rs54,980,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, we have a very significant budget which goes to the Mauritius Standards Bureau at page 558, both in terms of the current grant and the capital grant, adding up to some Rs37 m. I just wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether it is considered to have an independent external audit of the work of the Standards Bureau in order to enhance its effectiveness.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't see, Mr Chairperson, what the hon. Member means by external audit. I don't really get the point of the hon. Member.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is a normal management practice to have once in a while an external review of the functioning of an organisation to assess both the cost efficiency of public spending - in this case - and also global effectiveness in terms of its outcomes. Next year might be the appropriate time to envisage such a review.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I don't understand the concern of the hon. Member, but this might be a little bit in contradiction with what we want to do, because we have certification which is done by institutions like the Standards Bureau. Above that, we have accreditation which is carried out by an institution like MAURITAS. MAURITAS itself can accredit, provided that it is itself accredited by international institutions like the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Corporation (ILAC). Once MAURITAS is fully accredited, it will be in a position to accredit in its turn institutions like the Mauritius Standards Bureau to carry out certification works and to provide necessary

certificates, for example, to the seafood hub. I would just like to mention that, Mr Chairperson. For example, the seafood hub needs certification works to be carried out by an external agency, because MSB is not yet accredited to carry out that sort of certification. I have been given to understand that this will be done by MSB probably within 12 to 15 months' time.

Mr Uteem: *Item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees, under Sub-Programme 60301: Frair Trading Practice.* Being given that we now have a Competition Commission, may I know from the hon. Minister what work this department does and how different it is from that of the Competition Commission?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Maybe there is confusion on terms, Mr Chairperson. The Competition Commission has been set up with the express mandate of ensuring that competition happens freely and fairly. This institution, which is part of the Trade Division of my Ministry, has borne that name for a number of years. Basically, its job is to enforce price control on those items on which there is price control and enforcement of the prices that have been set by the Price Control and Price Fixing Departments. These are two totally different roles.

Mr Uteem: I can't understand, because I know that the office of Fair Trading was the one which used to investigate unfair practices. Now, the hon. Minister is saying no, and that what they do is to enforce price control. But, how different is that from programme 525?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't think, Mr Chairperson, there is any need for me to expand any more on 603. The difference between this and programme 525 is that programme 525 has to do with consumer protection, with inspection in the marketplace, with handling complaints, with handling court cases if necessary, to protect the consumer against what we generally call unfair trade practices; that could be basically cheating, for example.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister just mentioned court cases. May we know how many cases have been taken to court with regard to unfair trade practices or malpractice and, if so, what has been the outcome?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Quite a few. I don't have the information, Mr Chairperson, but I will happily circulate the information. My understanding is that there are quite a few.

Mr Bhagwan: As regards the Mauritius Standards Bureau, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether, with the opening of big malls and the importation of new types of products, the MSB is sufficiently equipped to, at least, check the quality and standard? Recently, we have seen that washing liquid, washing powder and other types of sub-standard materials have been

imported. I think it is important that we equip the Mauritius Standard Bureau with up-to-date and modern equipment.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, I totally understand and share the concern of the hon. Member concerning safety and security of consumers regarding the importation and distribution of not necessarily safe products. The MSB has a target for 2015 to develop 500 different standards. If I understand properly, in 2011, 40 standards have been developed. We think that we will be on target. The latest set of standards being developed were standards having to do with the safety and security of electrical appliances, and we are working presently - if my memory serves me right - on the safety and security of *équipements informatique*, mobile phones etc. Of course, then standards will be developed. These standards will be communicated to the public, to the importers, to Customs, and only products which comply with the standards will be allowed into the country. Of course, there could be *contrebande*. Then, that's another issue.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister says he is following the issues closely. How come that we have so many substandard equipment or articles in this country? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Ministry is liaising with the Customs with regard to the importation of products? Because I am astonished to learn that we have so many substandard articles when we are importing 100% of these items.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: If the hon. Member is talking about electrical products, we are in total agreement. This is why the Mauritius Standards Bureau has finalised the establishment of standards for electrical appliances and then, of course, there will be a due process to SLO to set up regulations. Hopefully, within maybe three or four months, we will be able to implement that.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 558, under *Sub-Programme 60301: Fair Trading Practices*, does the hon. Minister consider the operation of the National Lotteries to be in conformity with Fair Trading Division?

The Chairperson: It is a question of policy.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the Minister aware - I am not casting blame on anybody, I must be clear - that, very often, there are conflicts of interest, as in any modern business, where there are technicians working and there is temptation - if we don't pay our officers well, giving them a good salary and so on? Can the Minister inform the House what is done, at least, to give

incentives to our technicians and, at the same time, protect the Mauritius Standards Bureau from any temptation and also putting norms of good practice standards?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, honestly, I think this is beyond my purview as a modest Minister of Industry and Commerce.

Mr Uteem: At page 554, under *Sub-Programme 60303: Legal Metrology Services*. There are a number of compliance tests which have been undertaken. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any case of prosecution for any trader who was using apparatus which was not conformed to standard?

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, we are approaching the end of the year and Christmas is not far.

(Interruptions)

This is a serious issue. We are importing toys and other equipment which are not, as my hon. friend just said, as per standard. May we know what action is being taken now? Because in a few weeks' time, it will be Christmas and, with these products on the market, who knows to what danger we are exposing our youngsters!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: There were two questions. First, there is the question from hon. Uteem. The legal metrology services is the institution that monitors, amongst others, the accuracy of measuring instruments, weight and dimensions, etc. and its job is to calibrate and test measuring instruments. In 2011, there were 76 contraventions against traders who were guilty of using instruments which were not accurate. Whether on purpose or accidentally, I don't know, but in 76 cases, the instruments were not accurate so contraventions were taken against these traders.

I must also reassure the hon. Member that inspection is very regularly carried out. In 2011, for example, to date 1,600 inspections were carried out. 71 packers have been visited; 280 petrol pumps have been inspected and the result is 76 contraventions.

To answer now the question of hon. Baloomoody, Mr Chairperson, the importation of toys is subject to very strict standards set by the Mauritius Standards Bureau and we have international norms. We have institutions like Veritas, SGS, etc. which have to establish certificates of authenticity for these toys, that is, they check if they are in conformity to certain standards. These certificates are mandatory. Over and above that, inspectors from the Consumer Protection Unit and the Fair Trading Division inspect shops. They go to shops, to fairs, to

different foires, etc., and they carry out *des prélèvements*. Ils prélèvent des jouets qu'ils apportent ensuite au Mauritius Standards Bureau pour tester. Over and above that, *quand un lot de jouets est importé, il y a quelques échantillons qui sont prélevés, envoyés au Mauritius Standard Bureau - évidemment they are random samples – pour être vérifiés avant d'être relachés pour être mis sur le marché.*

Mr Bodha: The hon. Minister mentioned a number of inspections. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there were cases of counterfeiting of brands and the more so ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Bodha: ...as regards products like mobile phones where famous brands have counterfeited versions sold from China and elsewhere? Were there any cases of counterfeiting which have been found during the inspections in Mauritius?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there have been cases which were reported. Actually, this is handled by a particular Division of the Police and inspectors from the Consumer Protection Unit of my Ministry do participate in the activities linked to denouncing *pour éviter ce genre de pratique*. Basically, according to law, counterfeiting does not fall under the purview of my Ministry.

Mr Seeruttun: Still on the Mauritius Standards Bureau. From what I have just heard from the hon. Minister, they are doing quite a good job in terms of doing inspections. Once items have been discovered to be either of not good standards or counterfeited, is there a mechanism in place to inform the population of those products that are on the market or just to alert them of the risks that they might be encountered by those products on market?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: It might be a good idea, Mr Chairperson, maybe to carry out further education to consumers in that respect but, in general, *quand un lot de marchandises est trouvé défectueux par le Mauritius Standards Bureau, ce lot de marchandises n'est pas libéré pour être mis sur le marché. Aussi, le lot est saisi par le Mauritius Standards Bureau et l'autorisation de mise en vente n'est pas accordée.*

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 563, can I ask the Minister whether there is a substantive Director of Trade and, if not why a Director has not been appointed since a long period?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I do not see from page 563 that there is no Director of Trade. There is one Director of Trade, one in post, position funded in 2012: 1.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is there somebody acting as Director of Trade?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The substantive Director of Trade, I understand is unwell. He has been on sick leave. So, there is *un directeur par intérim*.

Mr Baloomoody: Compliance to import and export trade regulations, I am very concerned...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Baloomoody: On page 558, under *Item No. 21 – Compensation of Employees*, I am still very concerned about the issue that we have on our market equipment and even safety equipment - I raised that issue in my speech on the Budget – which are not up to standard. So, my question to the hon. Minister is: what action is being taken at the level of his Ministry and with the Customs to ensure that these products do not come on land, especially with regard to children and safety equipment to workers?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Maybe the hon. Member has come across equipment which is not up to standard. I must confess that the institutions under my Ministry are doing their job. But, we all know that from time to time there is smuggling into the country, there are things which come in. I cannot give the assurance to the House or to the nation that there will never be any piece of equipment that will be totally up to standard in Mauritius. I must again reassure the hon. Member that concerning safety equipment and security equipment - I answered to that question about 10 minutes ago - there are regulations that are being prepared. I think they have either been sent to State Law Office or in the process of being sent to State Law Office and we said also that by March or April 2012, these regulations should be ready concerning safety equipment, including electrical appliances.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: May I still...

The Chairperson: No, please! Time is over! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under item *Legal Metrology Services* at page 559, in relation to the selling of live cattle, there has been regulation to the effect that live cattle should be weighed before being put on sale. Has his Ministry done any check to the sellers of live cattle and has there been any contravention, any fine taken by his Ministry?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Chairperson, approximately 20 days or three weeks before Eid-UI-Adha, we held a meeting at my Ministry with the importers and distributors, including the *agents* of live cattle importers, together with officers of my Ministry, together with officers of the Ministry of Agro-Industry also. The regulations were explained very clearly and we made sure at the level of my Ministry in collaboration with Agro-Industry that – I think it was about 8 days prior to Eid-UI-Adha – inspectors from CPU were permanently present at the precincts of the different sellers, importers, dealers, *agents* of live cattle and made sure that the procedures were being followed, that the certificates were there, that the cattle was being weighed prior to being sold, that the weight of the cattle featured on the receipt for payment. I have been informed by my officers that everything went according to plan and there was no need for any contravention or fine.

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 603: Trade Development (Rs54,980,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance was called.

Mr Uteem: On page 559, under *Item No. 21 – Compensation to Employees*, I take the hon. Minister to page 554, Programme 525 – *Outcome: Empowered and Knowledgeable citizens and a commercial environment free from anti-competitive practices*. Can I know from the hon. Minister how many cases has his Ministry referred to the Competition Commission for investigation?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Do I understand the hon. Member properly that he is asking how many cases my Ministry referred to the Competition Commission? Am I understanding it properly, Sir?

Mr Uteem: Yes, to ensure anti-competitive practice.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Up to now, there has been the famous Kraft example and recently the live cattle issue was referred to the Competition Commission.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 554, Programme 525, with regard to Performance Indicators, *Number of control checks at trade premises*, in 2010 the actual number of checks was 2,760. The proposed performance for 2012 is 7,000, that is, an increase by threefold, Mr Chairperson. Can the Minister confirm how we are going to move the number of visits from 2,760 to 7,000 with an increase of six Consumer Protection Officers only?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Actually, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must confess that there must have been a mistake in the figure 2,760. At the end of October 2011, 4,981 checks had been carried out and that is 83% of target. If the hon. Member would look at the HR section behind, we are recruiting six more Consumer Protection Officers, who will be, hopefully, active as from January/February to reinforce consumer protection.

Mr Lesjongard: We have 4,000 visits up to the months of October; we will have to increase by 3,000 more visits next year if we want to reach the figure of 7,000. Will we be able to meet that target with an increase of six Consumer Protection Officers only?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We will have reached, if the trend is maintained, 6,000 visits by the end of the year. In 2012, we will have six more officers and we will probably exceed the 7,000 target for next year.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a practice of having dawn raids to see to it that standards and qualities are met whilst there are inspections? May I also add that among the inspections whether there have been many cases where there have been very important fines or even terms of imprisonment for those offenders?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't know specifically about dawn raids because this sounds very military to me, Mr Chairperson. But definitely, I can reassure the hon. Member that there have been a number of raids in shops, bakeries, packing units, chiller rooms etc. and there have been a number of contraventions which has been taken. I think the last raid was carried out four or five days ago against a wholesaler in ration rice.

Mrs Hanoomanje: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has had cases of *publicité mensongère* and how that matter has been tackled and whether there has been any contravention in cases of *publicité mensongère*?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We have not had specifically cases of *publicité mensongère*. Not later than today, we had a meeting with my Permanent Secretary and the PAS, Commerce Division, to issue a communiqué regarding the affixing of prices which are inclusive of VAT because the legislation clearly indicates that prices affixed should contain the VAT component and should be very clearly mentioned. Maybe that's what the hon. Member is referring to, Mr Chairperson. Very often, in advertising, the price excluding VAT is mentioned in very big letters and the customer going there is very often unpleasantly surprised to be asked 15% more in terms of VAT. Probably, tomorrow morning, we are issuing a communiqué to that effect.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 560, under *Item No. 22900903 - Awareness Campaign*, Rs1 m. has been earmarked for the year 2012. Would the hon. Minister kindly inform the House what are the different forms of campaign that he intends to come up with to sensitise the consumers of how more to protect themselves?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, that is a mix of different types of activities, Mr Chairperson. My officers are presently working on what we call a media plan for that. That will include talks by the CPU section ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: ... in different premises, Social Welfare Centres etc; talks on the radio; interviews in the press, and we will also have regular programmes on television to raise consumer awareness on consumer rights. The sum which has been earmarked, Rs1 m. - I have a copy here in front of me; I will go very quickly through it. It is for Consumer Rights Day, launching campaign and sensitisation on consumer protection, the publications, booklets, flyers, posters, billboards, advertising screens, workshops: half a million rupees; regional campaigns following World Consumer Rights Day: Rs100,000; publications, clips, power point presentations: Rs100,000; broadcasting of clips on MBC/TV at peak hours: Rs200,000, and sensitisation campaigns to be carried out in Rodrigues: Rs100,000, making a total of Rs1 m.

Mr Seeruttun: The *Observatoire des prix* has just been set up. Has there been any positive response to see that it is working and is the hon. Minister is fully satisfied that this brings value to the consumers?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We have had actually, Mr Chairperson, very positive response to that in a sense that, in general, for a number of articles featured in the list which constituted the *Observatoire des prix*, we have noted that over two, three months' period, there is a 6% decrease in prices. Very often – if I can use that word – the aping mechanism does work and prices of that particular item tend to go down in general. I have this information here. Price reduction by 6.2% over a few months and especially promotions in the said hypermarkets and supermarkets *Libre Service* increased from 39% to 48%.

Mr Baloomoody: Regarding the issue of campaign for the protection of consumers, all of us wake up in the morning with publicity in the radio. The campaign is in Creole: *pas paye zero, to payé dans trois mois etc.* Our notices from the hon. Ministry's office are in either

French or English. Are we having control of this campaign - *to pas payé dans trois mois, to pou payé apres etc. ?* Then, after a few weeks, we will hear a communiqué in French or in English for consumer protection. Can I ask the hon. Minister to have a control of this campaign? In fact, they are false campaigns because we know ...

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Baloomoody: ... everybody is paying interest. We have to have an honest, clear publicity which is supported by the Ministry of Consumer Protection. Can we have campaign as from now on - especially the end of the year is coming -and we have a publicity where it says - a communiqué like there is in many European countries – *ce communiqué est certifié par le Ministère des Prix etc.*

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, I will take good note of the hon. Member's comment. Very often, it is true that the communiqué in the written press is in French, not English, but broadcasting on the radio and television is done, for your information, in Creole and Bhojpuri.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I have been watching the valiant attempts of the hon. Minister to parry the wave after wave of questions. I have been racking my brains looking at the figures, comparing the budget under this item to the global budget of the Ministry. Will the Minister agree that ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, please! You have made your point. Let me listen to hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: ...of all the Ministries, his is the only Ministry whose budget has been slashed by the Minister of Finance and will he tell us why?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, I don't think the issue is a question of budget being slashed or not. I suppose the hon. Member should be happy that *les dotations budgétaires sont réduites*. They should be very happy about that. But if the hon. Member goes through the different budget items, he would see that there are a number of projects, a number of programmes which have either been completed or being discontinued. The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection is not a Ministry which needs heaps of money because we don't build infrastructure, we don't invest in tangible assets, we assist business to carry out industrialisation, to export and we facilitate commerce and business, if I can put it that way, without any purpose

of trying to be vain, Mr Chairperson. It is a brain business. It is not a building business. The budget being reduced by so many millions does not really matter if the programme for which the budget of the preceding years was set has been completed. For example, we take the *observatoire de l'industrie* for which *une dotation budgétaire de R 5 millions avait été prévue. L'observatoire de l'industrie est maintenant prêt et sera lancé dans un mois.* There is no need to have another Rs5 m. There are many examples like that. We saw the RECP, AFDP, RCC programme and this is basically the reason.

(Interruptions)

I thank the hon. Member for his sympathy, but I don't really need that.

Mr Uteem: I am on page 560, on *Sub-Programme 52502: Price Control Item No. 21 - Compensation of Employees.* Are the hon. Minister and the officers of his Ministry aware of a practice where certain traders, especially pharmacists, tend to change the pricing on old stock? For example, when there is the importation of a new container of drugs coming in and the office of your Ministry will increase the price, there is no distinction between the old price that should be applicable to the old stock and the new price that is supposed to be applied to the new stock. Is the hon. Minister aware of this state of affairs, and what has he done about it?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I must start, Mr Chairperson, by disclosing my interest. In fact, my family business is in pharmaceuticals. We import and distribute. But, this is, of course, of no incidence to it. What the hon. Member is describing is a practice which could actually take place in any sort of trade, not necessarily in pharmaceuticals. But, we know that it could be a practice and I take good note of the hon. Member's remarks and I will instruct officers of my Ministry to be on the lookout specifically for that.

Mr Baloomoody: I'll refer to the same issue. It is the practice. In fact, we have heard complaints before the Budget that there were no cigarettes, no '*di vin*' available. We must have a regulation. We know that each and every bottle of alcoholic drink and packet of cigarettes are taxed. Can we have a ticket on these once they pass through the procedures of taxing? They may have a yellow, white or red ticket, so that old stock does not make money for the shop owners. Mr Chairperson, we know what the situation is. People store their products for two days prior to the Budget and they sell it afterwards - our rich or poor people from Karo Kalyptis have their wine or other drinks increased for nothing. It is the businessmen and the owners of the bar who are making money.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I do not think that is a question, Mr Chairperson, but I take good note of the concern of the hon. Members. I will certainly request the officers of My Ministry to work on that.

Mr Bodha: With your permission, I'll come to the issue of advertising again. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he could consider the advisability of setting a code for advertising with set criteria to combat the issue of *publicité mensongère*? *Par exemple, un fromage qui se considère comme irremplaçable et qui est considéré comme étant un fromage qui nous a accompagnés pendant trois générations ; ce qui est complètement faux.* Can you consider the possibility of having this code so that all advertising campaigns will have to abide by the code and they do not come with this *publicité mensongère*?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Certainly, Mr Chairperson. I know that there is a code of ethics, but which is an internal code of ethics of the Advertising Association. But, probably, the hon. Member's concern to have a mandatory code with which the advertisers or businesses have to comply is a good idea. I will certainly take note of that and ask the officers of my Ministry to look into it.

Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance (Rs25,351,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment

Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start with page 569. I note that there is to be at *SSI: PBB Strategic Plan in line with guidelines submitted*, to be ready in May and at *SS4: Formulation of a National Action Plan for Integration of vulnerable groups* to be ready in July. Could the Minister explain the difference between the two, the more so as his predecessor had announced a research plan to be carried out by an Institute to be created at the Ministry with somebody from abroad coming over to lead that Institute? We are at a complete loss. Could the Minister explain to us which is which?

Mrs Ribot: I am on page 569. Referring to *SS4* to follow what my colleague has just said: *the Formulation of a National Action Plan for integration of vulnerable groups*. The formulation of that plan will be ready by 2012. Should we understand that the Ministry for Social Integration has been working without an action plan all that time?

Secondly, on the same issue again, how many staff are involved, and do they have the required experience and qualifications?

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, money was earmarked last year for fees to be paid to a consultant to come forward with an *Observatoire de la pauvreté*. Can we know where matters stand?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, regarding *Item No.22120 - Fees*, I think my hon. colleague just mentioned this question because here we can see *Fees for Training* and under the same item last year, it was *Fees to Consultants*. We were even informed that there was a consultant preparing an assessment and so on and so forth. I even have the name of Dr. Bucket, who was working under this item preparing an assessment. May we know whether this assessment has effectively been carried out and do we have a report?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I should like to inform the House that under *SSI: PBB Strategic Plan in line with guidelines submitted*, this is an in-house plan that is going for consultation with stakeholders.

As far as *SS4: Formulation of a National Action Plan for integration of vulnerable groups* is concerned, this is meant to gauge the progress achieved, that is, consultation, of course, regarding the monitoring and evaluation.

As far as the strategic plan is concerned at the Ministry and NEF, a plan is being prepared with the assistance of UNDP and the World Bank.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Chairperson, I think we had some specific questions regarding fees under *Item No. 22120*. In this present Budget, under this item, it is mentioned '*Fees for Training*' whereas last year the same code referred to '*Fees to Consultants*' for a particular assessment. I think my colleagues and I are asking whether this assessment has effectively been carried out and does the hon. Minister have a report on the work done by Dr. Bucket who was paid under this code last year or for the current year.

Mr Lesjongard: Today we have an *observatoire de la pauvreté*; it was in the Budget last year.

The Chairperson: All hon. Members stated that they were taking the same issue and I gave the opportunity to all Members to put their questions and the hon. Minister answered. Now, hon. Mrs Labelle asked a specific question, I'll ask the hon. Minister to respond.

Mr Dayal: Let me inform the House, Mr Chairperson, with regard to Dr. Bucket, he has carried out an evaluation for the National Empowerment Foundation Programmes and recommendations are being studied for implementation. I can say to the House that he has submitted his report, and as I said it is being considered.

Regarding *observatoire de la pauvreté*, studies and surveys have replaced the item of *observatoire de la pauvreté*.

With regard to hon. Mrs Labelle, could you please repeat the question and under which item you are referring?

Mrs Labelle: I was talking on programme 731, at page 570, and when we go to page 571, it is the first item 22120, *Fees* - Rs50,000. I was saying that when you look at the Budget of last year under the same item, it was fees to consultant, poverty and so on. Questions were put and we were being informed that there was an expert, in the name of Mr Bucket, who was making an assessment, and we are even told that, I quote -

“Relates to provision for commissioning about two reports a year and so on and so forth.

There was a continuous assessment of what was being done at the Ministry”.

So, this is what we want. If there is a report, as stated last year, maybe this report should be tabled. Or, if there is no report, maybe the hon. Minister could let us know whether was stated has effectively been done.

Mr Dayal: Firstly, regarding item 22120 - fees, Rs50,000 is provision to meet the cost of training courses for staff. Dr. Bucket was appointed and is paid by the National Empowerment Foundation, not the Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue, can I ask ...

The Chairperson: No, please, I won't take three questions at the same time.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not asking a question. I was just asking about the overview of last year. We have in the Budget an overview of the Ministry and we have objectives which have been achieved or not achieved, as I am taking the Ministry concerned at page 566. So, are we allowed to ask questions on these issues?

The Chairperson: I have given the floor to hon. Mrs Labelle. Hon. Member can come with the issue later on, if there is any problem, and if there is an issue of whether question is being refused then I have to rule. I can't rule in anticipation. But, for the time being ...

Mr Baloomoody: Our 20 minutes went from where, from ...

The Chairperson: Please, I give the floor to Mrs Labelle.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. The hon. Minister has mentioned that this was fees for training. We had Rs500,000 under this item for the current year 2011, which was supposed to be fees to consultant poverty observatory. May we know whether this amount has been spent for what was stated, or what amount has been spent from this line of Budget? It was not fees for training. It was provided for fees to consultant poverty observatory and it is there where Mr Bucket came. Under this item, we were given this information.

Mr Dayal: With regard to the Rs500,000, as per the information that I have received, it's provision to meet the cost of studies and surveys on social integration and eradication of poverty. I should like to add here that an international tender will be launched to avail the services of an international consultant, to set up a proper monitoring and evaluation unit.

Mr Obeegadoo: If Rs500,000 have been spent, where are the studies and surveys, before we approve yet an another amount? What are the results of this amount spent for the last financial year?

Mr Dayal: Another question in the meantime.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask a question?

The Chairperson: No, I'll give you the floor later on, hon. Baloomoody. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. In the Budget years 2006/2007, there was the figure of 7,000 families who are considered to be absolutely poor. May I ask the hon. Minister whether that figure has increased or decreased? We have referred to a number of studies. I see also that the National Economic and Social Council falls under the purview of the Ministry. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any specific study as regards the number of people in absolute poverty by the National Economic and Social Council?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, if my memory serves me right, I answered a PQ and I mentioned that there have been reports conducted by the National Economic and Social Council. Two reports have been published; the one which I answered, hardly three weeks ago, on page 31 - if I can recall - it mentioned that there are some 7,000 families living under absolute poverty - in 229 pockets of poverty. In 29 regions, there are 229 pockets of poverty. Now, I can inform the House that shortly the two reports by the NESC will be published.

The Chairperson: Can you respond to the question which was asked about the report? Have you the information?

Mr Dayal: I mentioned, Mr Chairperson, that the sum of Rs500,000 is for studies and services that are being conducted. On top of that, I said that there will be an international tender to avail the services of a consultant of international repute to come with recommendations to address this problem of absolute poverty problem.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ...

The Chairperson: No, I have a list.

Mr Baloomoody: I have a question relating to the same issue.

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Baloomoody. Hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I get back to that item which has been renamed? Last year, it was known as *observatoire de la pauvreté* and this year it is under the item *Studies and Surveys*. Do we understand from the hon. Minister that for the past one year, no study, no survey has been carried out?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I just mentioned that Dr. Bucket conducted some surveys, it was in-house at the NEF, and the recommendations are there. At the level of the National Economic and Social Council, reports have been published and placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to the major achievement ...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Baloomoody: At page 566, major achievements, I found that there have been corrugated iron sheets and shelters constructed for homeless families. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there have been cases reported to either the Police or ICAC, with regard to corruption in that sector, and if so, what action has been taken at the level of the Ministry with regard to these people? If there are cases pending, is there any police action and if these people are still under the establishment pending the enquiry of either ICAC or the police?

Mr Dayal: Not to my knowledge, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, since there has been a question regarding corrugated iron sheets, may I ask the hon. Minister when funds have been granted to NGOs, whether his Ministry has a record of the number of houses built from the amount disbursed? For example, Mr Chairperson, in the case of a NGO having received Rs12 m. for corrugated iron sheets, does the Minister have a record? I am putting this question for months now. Does the hon. Minister have such records?

Mr Lesjongard: On the same item, Mr Chairperson, before the hon. Minister replies, can we have the cost for the construction of a corrugated iron sheet house?

Mr Dayal: The cost of a corrugated iron sheet house is Rs65,000. With regard to the question raised by hon. Labelle, this is not to my knowledge, but I have taken note of what she has said.

Mr Barbier: On the same page 566, *Major Achievements for 2011*. It is said that we have four reports published by the National Economic and Social Council in the areas of environment, management of household budget, reform of legal aid, and social integration of stigmatised vulnerable groups. May I know whether reports have been circulated to Members of the National Assembly? If not, will the hon. Minister see to it that these reports are circulated to Members of the National Assembly?

Mr Dayal: I have already answered this question. Two of them have been released, and two are forthcoming.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Still on the subject of studies and surveys, will the hon. Minister confirm in which year was the survey that identified that there were 7,000 households carried out? After having spent Rs723 m. last year through a special Ministry, has he carried out a survey to identify how many of these 7,000 households have come out of poverty?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, at page 566, I note that one of the major constraints identified is the lack of in-house technical capacity to design, monitor and supervise implementation of projects. Yet, when I consider *Programme 731*, I fail to see how this constraint is being addressed for the next year. Surely, Rs50,000 for training cannot purport to provide the required in-house technical capacity.

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I should like to point out that the survey which the hon. Member mentioned started in October 2010, and was completed in March 2011. Now, we have some 6,199 households. With regard to the question raised by hon. Obeegadoo, could he please repeat the question?

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 566, the hon. Minister identifies that one of the major constraints is the lack of in-house technical capacity to design, monitor and supervise implementation of projects. Considering *Programme 731*, as detailed on pages 570 and 571, there does not appear to be any provision for any effort, any initiative to address the lack of in-house capacity.

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I mentioned at the very outset that we would be launching tenders for an international consultancy. This will be in the direction of building capacity and to address also the in-house technical capacity.

Mr Obeegadoo: Where is the provision for that?

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on page 566, it is stated: 3200 unemployed people placed and trained as at October 2011. Can I ask the hon. Minister how they were selected, and from which area? If he cannot tell us now, is he prepared to lay the list of all those who were selected on the Table of the National Assembly?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, there is a desk at the National Empowerment Foundation. There have been 3,716 trainees who have been placed in the various sectors; 50% male and 50% female. I can give a breakdown of the number of people placed and trained. In agriculture, 37...

The Chairperson: Please, hon. Minister, circulate the copy!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, please! I asked the hon. Minister to circulate.

Mr Dayal: The hon. Member asked me to circulate, but let me reiterate that, at the NEF, there is a desk. I am taking the time of this House also to inform Members that they can tell people outside that we have got a desk where unemployed people can come with regard to training and placement. In all the CAB offices also, people can go and signify their intention as regards training and placement.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, in reply to one of the questions a few minutes ago, the hon. Minister pointed out that the cost of one corrugated iron sheet shell house was Rs65,000, and the sum that has been spent here is Rs37 m. which, according to our quick calculation, should bring us to about 1,850 houses. When we look at page 566, only 850 such houses have been built. We would like to get some clarification.

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, it is very simple. At that point in time, it was 850. Now, I can say that it is 1,010. This is a mere estimate.

The Chairperson: Last question hon. Bodha.

(Interruptions)

Please, order!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Mrs Labelle, please! I have no control over the reply of the hon. Minister.

(Interruptions)

Order! Order, please! I have called hon. Bodha for the last question.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, we had ...

The Chairperson: I'll ask you to be very brief.

Mr Bodha: I am going to be very brief, Mr Chairperson. There was a figure of 7,000 households in absolute poverty with what we call 229 *poches de pauvreté* ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Bodha: ...and a budget of Rs733 m. has been spent. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Rs733 m. were targeted to these families ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Bodha: ...or targeted to other people?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson I understand that time is over but, even then, let me say that

...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! The hon. Member can take a point of order!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, we are under Appropriation Bill. May I refer the Chair to section (73) (3) of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly?

The Chairperson: Take your point of order! No need to quote the Standing Order!

Mr Baloomoody: I want to refer to that Standing Order for hon. Members on the other side of the House who, probably, are not aware of the Standing Orders. I am referring to section 73 (3) of the Standing Orders. I will quote it.

The Chairperson: There is no need for the hon. Member to quote!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: We are at Committee of Supply, and we are called upon in this country to ...

(Interruptions)

Which country?! I don't know whether you have double nationality! We don't have double nationality!

(Interruptions)

I am voting for my country for which I take allegiance!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: We are Members of Parliament of this country! I don't have double nationality!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Baloomoody: The point of order has to do with section 73 (3), and I quote -

“When the Bill has been read a second time, it shall stand committed to a Committee of the whole Assembly, to be called the Committee of Supply to which the Estimates shall then also stand referred. (...)”

The Chairperson: I have told the hon. Member that there is no need to quote! Make your point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: My point of order is that we are at this stage, voting...

The Chairperson: No! You make your point of order!

Mr Baloomoody: My point of order is that we want explanations for each and every item we are being called upon to vote, in this Assembly, for the money – not our money!

(Interruptions)

Not my money! The money of the nation! The money for each and every institution we are called upon to supply and we want to know from this Assembly whatever rupees and cents that are being used. If we are not given explanations as such, we are not going to vote!

The Chairperson: It is not a point of order! Now, I am going to ask the question!

Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Rs36,620,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

The Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment

Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson. I refer to...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order, please! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 571, under *Item No. 28213005 - Current Transfers – National Empowerment Foundation (NEF)*. The focus of this programme seems to be shifting to *Child Welfare and Family Development Programmes for Vulnerable Groups* with an allotment of Rs126 m. Now, I would like to know how this money is to be spent. Is there a blueprint? Is there a clear plan to avoid overlap with either the Ministry in charge of Family Welfare and Children and, on the other hand, the Ministry of Education?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is right when he says that there is a transfer, that is, from Rs30 m. to Rs126 m. regarding *Child Welfare and Family Development Programmes for Vulnerable Groups*. Now, I should like to mention here, with your indulgence, Mr Chairperson, because the list is quite long where huge amounts are devoted, that we are having -

- Provision of Rs36 m. made for new proposal in Budget Speech, that is, monthly vouchers of Rs1,500 for 2,000 children in Mauritius and Rodrigues.
- New provisions of Rs22 m. made for various programme concerning welfare of child and family, afterschool care, remedial education, school camps, setting-up of some eight learning corners, child mentoring, life skills and other sensitisation campaigns.
- Provision of pre-primary schools projects, meals, transport, and *accompagnement* has increased from Rs25 m. to Rs38 m. to cater for increase in cost of food and administrative cost payable to NGOs for administrating the project.

Mr Chairperson, for pre-primary, in the past it was from 4 to 5 years, now it comes to 0 to 3 years. You will find here that it has increased from Rs5 m. to Rs41 m.; Rs5 m. for the setting up of three day care centres: African town, Beau Champ, Cité Kennedy and other regions to be identified. The Rs36 m., Mr Chairperson, are for vouchers of Rs1,500 to 2,000 children.

Mr Chairperson, when we take into consideration the pre-primary and primary, it caters for meal, transport, allowance and school fees, *accompagnement* and administrative cost payable to NGOs for the project.

Let me give you an indication, Mr Chairperson –

Meal: Rs891 per child. In 2011, it was Rs575 per child.

Transport: Rs350 per child.

School Fees: Rs650 per child. In 2011 it was Rs350.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

I will ask the hon. Minister to circulate a copy of these details!

Mr Dayal: I will stop, Mr Chairperson, because it is quite voluminous.

The Chairperson: Yes, circulate it! Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: At page 572, under *Item No. 28223008 - CIS Houses –Mauritius*, there is a provision of Rs37 m. for the coming financial year. Since the hon. Minister seems not to be aware of cases of fraud where *les ONG ont été impliquées*, may I ask him, now, for this coming year, what are the measures that have been taken, or are being envisaged to be taken to see to it that all these vulnerable groups receive value for money concerning the CIS Houses?

Mr Dayal: I should like to tell the House that I have been, and I will always see to it that every cent goes in the direction of the poor for poverty alleviation.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am still on the same item on page 572, and we have Concrete-cum CIS houses, Emergency Housing and Community Projects for Vulnerable Groups. Mr Chairperson, there was this sum of Rs85 m. which was voted last year. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the amount spent and how many such houses have been built, and also roughly the regions?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister, can you give the answer if you have the information?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, as I said, with regard to the previous question put by the hon. Member, as at October 2011, 1,010 CIS units have been constructed and 446 more are expected to be completed by December 2011. The initial budget was Rs85 m., and the revised budget is now Rs94.64 m. and targeted for 2012 is 475 units.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, on page 571, *programme 363*, under *Item No. 28213005 - Community Empowerment previously Eradication of Absolutely Poverty Programme*, in 2010 we had Rs108 m., and this year we are having only Rs41 m. Social Infrastructure for the absolute poor, we move from Rs63 m. to Rs17 m., and upgrading of living conditions for the absolute poor, we move from Rs45 m. to Rs24 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister to explain why there is a cut in the budget? On what did we base ourselves to have these cuts in the funding for the Absolute Poor Programme?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I mentioned firstly that the DCP has been moved to the Ministry of Finance and ESP to the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, and there is a decrease of Rs67 m. due to transfer of activities related to families and children to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Welfare and Family Development. Programmes, namely Life Skills, Sensitisation Campaigns, Mentoring, and Remedial Education after School Care have been introduced.

Mr Lesjongard: Under the same item, Mr Chairperson, since there has been a considerable decrease and we have understood from the hon. Minister that there has not been any study carried out, can we know on what basis we had a decrease in the budget, and can we know now how many families are concerned with the eradication of absolute poverty?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, let me inform the House that surveys have been carried out. We have got case workers and field officers; they are regularly on the field and they have carried out surveys. As I said, Dr. Buckett has carried out a survey.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: How many are concerned with the eradication of absolute poverty in our country?

(Interruptions)

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, again, the hon. Members have not been following. I mentioned the figure 6,199, and surveys and studies are ongoing. It is not something static. It is dynamic.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Bholah: Mr Chairperson, on page 527, under *Item No. 28223008 - Integrated Social Housing*, can we have from the hon. Minister details on the item *Other Housing Projects* for which a sum of Rs167 m. has been earmarked for year 2011, and whether all funds have been spent?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I would like to say to the House with regard to Integrated Social Housing that we are having one at Gros Cailloux, one at Dubrueil, one at Karo Kalyptis and one at Constance. If I go into the details, it will take some time; if you would like me to table it, I will.

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Minister can table it! Hon. François!

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, on page 571, I have three questions under *Item No. 28213005 - National Empowerment Foundation*.

The Chairperson: One question!

Mr François: One question at a time, all right. With regard to *item Rodrigues (Other Projects)*, may I be enlightened on the increase of Rs14 m.? Can I know from the hon. Minister what 'Other Projects' means?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister! What is the project for Rs14 m. for Rodrigues?

Mr Dayal: Which item?

Mr François: On page 571, *Item No. 28213005 - Current Transfer - National Empowerment Foundation (d) Rodrigues (Other Projects)*

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, there is an increase in demand for such houses and school materials.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 571 - *Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme*. May I know from the hon. Minister, out of the Rs108 m. budgeted last year and out of the Rs41 m. that are budgeted for next year, what is the amount that has been or will be spent on the region of Vallée Pitot and Tranquebar?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, I will table the information.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, many questions have been asked from this side of the House, and I think it all boils down to three simple requests that we are making, being given the very large amount of money we are being asked to approve. First is that all the surveys and studies referred to have not been made public and have not been communicated to us, for us to

assess the work done so far. So, the first request for the hon. Minister is that if there are any surveys or studies done on the basis of what we voted last year, that these be communicated to the House.

Secondly, as regards the spending on housing, I refer to what is on page 572, Concrete-cum CIS houses, other housing projects, Emergency Housing. Everybody knows about the serious allegations of frauds and malpractices reported by NGOs to ICAC concerning houses built at Dubreuil and elsewhere over the last couple of years. So, what we are asking is a clear mechanism to ensure transparency, to ensure there is nothing improper in the way these large sums of money will be spent.

The third point, Mr Chairperson, as regards the priority objectives of doing away with absolute poverty in the medium term, could we have performance targets that clearly allow us to monitor progress from one year to the next in terms of reduction in the number of families falling below the absolute poverty line?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, of course, I do not follow him along the line he has been going, because he has been emitting his personal opinion.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Dayal: This is an opinion.

(Interruptions)

No, I do not share it at all.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Dayal: I do not share it at all. There is a monitoring mechanism at the level of the National Empowerment Foundation, and then research is something ongoing. We are building database, and this is also ongoing. It is not something that is static. Let me say, Mr Chairperson, that we have got very dynamic caseworkers, and we have got fieldworkers, and still we are trying to seek the assistance of the University of Mauritius and mounting courses to further help...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Lesjongard, please take your seat.

Mr Dayal: ...to further these caseworkers to deliver the goods.

The Chairperson: Hon. Li Kwong Wing!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. In order to avoid any subjective opinion, there has been an increase under Programme 363, and a lot of programmes under the National Empowerment Foundation.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The assessment has been written in the estimate itself on page 566, where it is said that the programmes are not being effectively implemented because of lack of in-house technical capacity. The lack of in-house technical capacity is due to the fact that, up to now, there is no Chief Executive Officer, and the technical capacity is in terms of people with capacity in tourism, where we have Event Managers and HR Managers transferred from the Ministry of Tourism or the Tourism Authority. The second thing, it is written on page 566 that there is lack of field staff with skills. So, there is no skills in poverty alleviation, no skills in social work and administration. These are staff transferred from Tourism Authority. The third issue is on page 567 ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: ... where it contradicts the Minister, because it says that a monitoring and evaluation unit will be set up within the NEF to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of our various programmes on vulnerable families. So, there is no evaluation unit whatsoever.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, please!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On page 569, it is said that there will be a formulation of national Action Plan in July 2012 only. So, there is no Action Plan. There has been no Action Plan. We don't know how this money has been used, and how they monitor and evaluate the performance of all that is being paid. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether there are any technical staff, professionals in his Ministry with qualification, experience in social work, social administration, or whether they are only people with skills in HR, Events Management and tourism?

Mr Dayal: Mr Chairperson, it is a very long question and they have to bear with me with my answer. Now, to start with, at least we have been very clear and honest when we say technical support being provided by development partners, World Bank, UNDP and other consultant services for some projects such as the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Let me inform the House that UNDP had provided that UN volunteers, were not able to set up the monitoring and evaluation. Now, we are going for an international tender to avail the services of experts, consultants to have a high level consultancy. With regard to capacity building, it is not proper to say that there is no evaluation. There is at the National Empowerment Foundation level; we have got monitoring units which are conducting the work. There is one thing that many Members in the House are oblivious to. This is a Ministry that has been set up hardly a year and a half. It is still in its teething period. This is very important to know...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the Minister, make his point. Order!

Mr Dayal: Hardly a year and a half! If hon. Members will take the trouble of reading page 566, and try to see the major achievements for 2011, it is gratifying.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The eradication of absolute poverty programme has been running now for at least four years. But in the light of the latest figures given by the hon. Minister, can I ask the hon. Minister whether only 1000 families have been lifted from absolute poverty?

Mr Dayal: Again, it is a mistake to say that, Mr Chairperson. In the first instance, it was 7005, but you have people going out and new people coming in.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: What arrogance! Not you!

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister Duval, please!

Mr Bhagwan: ...to clarify on page 572..

The Chairperson: Order! No cross talking! Hon. Duval, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 572, *Capital Transfers - National Empowerment Foundation (a) Integrated Social Housing*. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the Gros Cailloux

project is the project where the hon. Minister laid the foundation stone which is mentioned here. In order not to create confusion, this is Petite Rivière. Is the hon. Minister telling us that Gros Cailloux is another project? If it is so, we agree.

But if it is the project where the hon. Minister had laid the foundation stone, it is a village of Petite Rivière and not Gros Cailloux. We have to correct this.

Mr Dayal: What's in a name!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Time is over! I am putting the question now.

(Interruptions)

Programme Code 363: Social Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities (Rs629,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I urge all Members that we have got three more ministries to cover, and we will start now with the Ministry of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives.

Ministry of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives

Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start by a question as regards the Strategic Plan at page 580, SS1. The first performance target: the Strategic Plan to be produced by May. Will the hon. Minister tell us how this would relate to the constraints and challenges outlined on page 576?

Mr Seetaram: Which page?

The Chairperson: Could the hon. Member please repeat the page?

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am quite happy to repeat, but the hon. Minister, instead of talking to his neighbour, should listen to us.

Mr Seetaram: I am not talking with my neighbour. I am listening.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order! Please hon. Sayed Hossen!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I urge all Members to keep silent and to follow the questions, so that we can move more quickly. Hon. Sayed-Hossen, if there is any problem, you address the Chair.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I said hon. Member can't come and teach us.

Mr Chairperson: Alright, the hon. Minister made his point. Now I will ask hon. Obeegadoo to repeat because, unfortunately, the hon. Minister stated that he did not hear properly the query which the hon. Member was making. Please! He should refer to the page.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will, but then I would need extra time. You should not count within our 20 minutes. Mr Chairperson, page 580...

Mr Obeegadoo: Sir, page 580, I was referring...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I have control over the time and I can decide to give extra time if need be. It is good that I draw the attention of all Members on that issue also.

Mr Obeegadoo: The point is taken, Sir. I said that my first question concerned the very first objective...

The Chairperson: Yes, would you refer to the page first?

Mr Obeegadoo: Page 580 – Programme 701; Service to be provided S1; Service Standards SS1; 2012 target May; planned to be produced in May. I am asking the Minister how this relates to the long list of constraints and challenges that are outlined at page 576 and the strategies of page 577.

Mr Seetaram: In relation to the strategies, the Ministry has focused on the improvement in the efficiency of import/export related permits and regulations through the review of non-tariff measures. These are the strategic directions for one. Secondly...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the Minister respond.

Mr Baloomoody: There is no point for the Minister to read to us what is on page 577.

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: We have to ask questions, there is no point for him to waste our time by reading; we are intelligent enough to go and read it.

The Chairperson: Please, you made your point of order. I don't allow it and I tell the hon. Minister to be brief as possible, but I have no control, I cannot anticipate what the Minister is going to say, and I cannot say that he is losing the time of the House.

Mr Seetaram: Inasmuch as it is quite a long list, and being given that the...

The Chairperson: I urge the hon. Minister. If it is a long list, he will have to circulate it.

Mr Seetaram: I'll then circulate the answer.

The Chairperson: Yes. Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you Chair. I refer to page 576 on Major Constraints.

The Chairperson: Is the Minister following? Is the Minister with the hon. Member?

Mr Seeruttun: I refer to page 576 on Major Constraints - 2.1 with regard to specific schemes and other support that will be provided for SMEs. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what are the specific schemes that he intends to put in place? Does he intend to do it by May 2012?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, concerning these specific schemes, firstly, we will address lack of finance, lack of access to the market, lack of access to industrial space and lack of access to information, and cutting-edge technology. These schemes will address those problems: firstly, there are incentives already that have been laid down; incentives and other schemes are offered, that is, the transitional support schemes for small companies. We have the booster loan scheme. Also we have the business development scheme and the business development related scheme, a special scheme for agricultural sector, the quasi equity financing scheme, the food security scheme, the scheme offered by SMEDA...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

Mr Seetaram:... and we have a long list.

The Chairperson: Yes! Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to page 582 - *Programme 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness; 22120008 Fees to Consultants (MBGS)*, we budgeted an amount of Rs66 m. last year, and this year it has been reduced to Rs11 m. Can we know from the hon. Minister why such a decrease first? Second, how much has been spent out of that Rs66 m? Can we also get the names of the consultants? Fourth, how many SMEs have benefited from that scheme?

Mr Seetaram: Concerning fees to consultants, we have a sum which comes to Rs11,600,000. These are provisions made for payment of fees to the MBGS Manager, one Senior Sdviser, two Advisers, two additional Advisers...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, order!

Mr Seetaram: In 2012. How do we come to that figure? That figure was Rs66,600,000 before. This sum was earmarked before, because we had three components. The first component

being the MBGS – Mauritius Business Growth Scheme; the second component being the strengthening policy institutional framework and also the third component, which is increasing access to finance, the credit constraint to SMEs. However, as at to date, only the MBGS scheme is operational, hence the increase in that very provision.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please order!

Mr Lesjongard: How much money has been spent as consultancy fees, the name of the consultants and the number of companies which have benefited of that scheme?

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, if I may, these consultancy fees are fees to consultants for MBGS Manager. These are not private companies. These are fees for MBGS manager, one senior adviser, two advisers and two additional advisers to be recruited in 2012.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please order! Yes.

(Interruptions)

Please, order, order! Hon. Lesjongard, please! You asked for a clarification, the Minister gave you the clarification. You may not be satisfied, but I cannot have control over the information the Minister gives. I now pass over to hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, with your permission, before asking the question, can I ask that I don't be disturbed by hon. Sik Yuen who has changed his seat? Can he resume his seat? He has changed his seat, and he is disturbing me. I am lacking concentration.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please! I am drawing the attention of all hon. Members that they have been assigned a seat and, according to the Standing Orders, they should be at their seat.

Mr Bhagwan: There are two Members who have changed their seats, Sir: hon. Sayed-Hossen and Sik Yuen. So, I cannot put my question.

The Chairperson: I ask all Members to resume their seat.

Mr Bhagwan I cannot concentrate watching them.

The Chairperson: I ask all Members, including hon. Assirvaden.

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order! Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: I am the one and only.

The Chairperson: Yes. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 582 Sir. Can I ask...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, no cross talking.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Too much noise, Sir. Page 582, under *Item No. 26313083 - Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*, we are being asked to vote Rs34 m. Can I know from the Minister the composition of the Board of SMEDA and how this sum of Rs34 m. is being apportioned in terms of salaries and other funds for the Small and Medium Enterprises, the activities of SMEDA? Secondly, how many persons have been recruited on contract at the SMEDA and the different posts they are occupying at the management of SMEDA? Can we have a list of the activities of SMEDA with regard to fairs for SMEs? Are there fairs for the SMEs in the pipeline, especially in December? If yes, where and what is the programme of activities? I'll come to *Item No. 22120008 - Fees to Consultants (MBGS)*. There is a reduction.

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, I'll ask you to come one by one. You asked a series of details, and I'll ask the Minister.

Mr Bhagwan: I'll wait for my reply. I have only three questions, Sir, concerning this page.

The Chairperson: If it is okay with the hon. Minister...

Mr Bhagwan: He can take note and then, afterwards, he will give me what I have asked for. Secondly, Sir, how is the Rs34 m. of grants apportioned? Is it by different sectors? Can we have the list of the beneficiaries per sector? Under *Item No. 22030 - Rent (MBGS)*, there is an increase of nearly half a million rupees. It is meant for which building, and how was that building rented?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun, please!

Mr Seetaram: Firstly, there is the composition of the Board. We have the Chairperson who is Mr Varen Andee, and then we have members. We have the representative of the Ministry

of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. There is the Financial Management Analyst, representative of Finance. Then we have Mr Raghoobur, Senior Industrial Analyst, representative of Industry. We have Ms Basant Lallah, Senior Cooperative Development Officer, representative of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Business obviously. Mr Heeraman, Division Environment Officer, representative of Environment. We have Mr Chitamun, representative of the Ministry of Youth. We have Mr Reynolds Permal, 'Lizié dan la Main', and then we have Mrs Luchmun Roy, Business Development Officer, Acting Secretary NWESC, representative of National Women Entrepreneurs Council. We have Mr Dilmohamed, representative...

The Chairperson: Please, you will circulate the list. I urge the hon. Minister, if the list is long, please circulate it.

Mr Seetaram: Then we have the list of activities asked. I will circulate that.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the rent...

Mr Bhagwan: ...apportionment of the items of expenditure of SMEDA.

Mr Seetaram: I will circulate that information. The rent was Rs690,000; it became Rs1,140,000. It represents the rental of parking slots for MBGS advisers, which amount to Rs360,000. Secondly, provision of Rs780,000 has been made in view of increased activities of the MBGS as a result of additional responsibilities entrusted to them. The MBGS Unit moved from St. James Court to Development Bank of Mauritius building on a larger surface area free of charge, that is, they moved to an area of 2,200 sq ft in August 2011. Previously, the MBGS was housed at St. James Court, and the rental agreement is as it is. That is the apportionment.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order!

Mr Seetaram: We have the breakdown of the administration and other costs which come to Rs44,448,000. Business Development Services – Rs14,935,000 and implementation of programmes: so I will also circulate all.

The Chairperson: Yes. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mr Uteem: I'll take the hon. Minister back to page 575, the first bullet under Major Achievements for 2011....

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo, if you don't behave, I will ask you to leave the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I order you out. Please leave.

Mr Uteem: Page 575....

The Chairperson: Please, I am waiting for the hon. Member to leave first.

(Interruptions)

No comment, I am waiting for the Member to leave.

(Interruptions)

I stated I don't want any comment so long as the hon. Member has not left the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jeetah, did you hear or do you want to join him? Hon. Sayed-Hossen, please you join. Out!

(Interruptions)

I don't want any comment. Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you Chair. I was referring the hon. Minister to page 575, on the Major Achievements. The first bullet point mentions 65 projects approved for a total project value of Rs70.2 m. When answering to a PQ, the hon. Minister mentioned that only Rs15 m. had been disbursed not Rs70.2 m. May I know from the hon. Minister out of the sum of Rs15 m. that has been disbursed under this programme, how much was paid to the consultant who presented the project under this scheme?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, I have more accurate figures as at to date and there was an application amounting to Rs286,000, and the projects that were approved by the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme amounted to 68. The value that was approved is Rs75.3 m. The amount disbursed as at to date is Rs16.5 m. roughly, and this has been disbursed to 25 enterprises.

Mr Uteem: The question was: how much of this money has been paid to consultants who presented the project?

Mr Seetaram: I don't have the ratio for consultants with me, I'll surely circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Gungah!

Mr Gungah: Chair, I know it is quite difficult to ask questions in such an atmosphere...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please no comment!

Mr Gungah: I am trying....

The Chairperson: No comments please; ask your question!

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, on page 582, under *Item No. 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, I see that in the year 2011 there was an estimate of Rs1 m. - the only estimate - and nothing for the following years. Can we know whether we have stopped studies and surveys?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister should follow!

Mr Gungah: Is it too loud?

The Chairperson: No, not too loud. The hon. Minister did not follow which item. I think there is a problem somewhere in your microphone.

Mr Gungah: It is *Item No. 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, Sir.

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the studies and surveys, provision has been made for the setting up of an *observatoire des prix*, and the Consumer Protection Division has now been transferred to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, can we know why there are no estimates for the years 2012, 2013 and 2014?

The Chairperson: It has been transferred; this is what has been said. Last question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, again I refer to the MBGS. When we look at the figures in the Budget, we understand that almost some Rs19 m. have gone as administrative cost for the setting up of that MBGS. Can we know, as at today, the exact number of SMEs and the exact amount of money that has gone to these SMEs under that scheme?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister should follow. If he has any problem, he should stop the Member straightaway.

Mr Lesjongard: I will repeat my question.

The Chairperson: Yes, please!

Mr Lesjongard: At page 582, *Item No. 22120007 - Fees for Training (MBGS)*, *Item No. 22120008 - Fees to Consultants (MBGS)*, *Item No. 22900099 - Miscellaneous Expenses (MBGS)*, *Item No. 28215005 - 90.10 Pay Back Scheme (MBGS)*, these are the...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Minister asked me to repeat! I am repeating!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order, please let the hon. Member make his point.

Mr Lesjongard: These are the administrative costs related to the implementation of the MBGS, which amounts to some Rs90 m. What I am asking the hon. Minister is the exact amount that has been given to SMEs and the number of SMEs as at to date which have benefited from that scheme.

Mr Seetaram: I will circulate the answer.

Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprises and Cooperatives (Rs32,554,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 582, under *Item 26313083 - Grants - Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*, Rs34 m. ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier, please, don't disturb your friend!

Mr Uteem: It has been reported that the ICAC is investigating a case relating to appointment of a liaison officer in SMEDA. Is the hon. Minister in a position to inform the House whether this officer has been interdicted pending the outcome of the inquiry by ICAC?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, I have been made aware that there is an inquiry before the ICAC, and obviously I can neither preempt the outcome nor can I give any further explanation. I don't even know if he has been provisionally charged or he has been asked to give a statement ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: You are not aware. That's enough!

Mr Seetaram: I don't know.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I did not give you the floor, hon. Baloomoody! Hon. Baloomoody, please! Hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the same item, SMEDA, a vote of R34 m. is being examined, and I see that it is planned again to vote Rs34 m. in the coming two consecutive years. Is the Minister able to tell us whether there is any plan for a merger of all

these SME service providing institutions and is there a time frame for merging it with other institutions?

Secondly, can he also tell us how many small enterprises have closed down during this year? Is aware that there is a data protection fee which applies to all SMEs, even to a sole proprietor, and is he considering any action to have this waived for small enterprises?

Mr Seetaram: Firstly, there have been talks about consolidation of activities between institutions like the SMEDA, the MBGS, NICE. Further, after the transfer of the NPCC to the Ministry of Finance, talks have started, but we don't have any official stand...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No comment, please!

Mr Seetaram: The merger would obviously be a matter of policy decision. Concerning the closing down of SMEs, in fact, there was, I believe, a PQ recently concerning job loss and closing down. As per communication from Statistics Mauritius, we don't have, in fact, statistics for closing down of SMEs, whereas we do have other statistics.

Concerning the data protection, I shall consider and see how we can accommodate.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, on page 582, *Programme 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness*, I have a general question. The Budget provides for 275 units for industrial space for enterprise development. Can the hon. Minister say whether there has been any study or any evaluation, and on what basis they have come to provide 275 units for industrial space?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No cross-talking!

Mr Seetaram: The point is that there has been a lack of industrial space at affordable rates for SMEs. So, as a matter of policy, there have been initiatives in that direction. For years, SMEs have been complaining about lack of industrial space at affordable rental. Regional SME parks have been set up to come at the rescue of those complaints, and that is precisely the idea of this budget.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether any proper assessment had been made by the Ministry with regard to the demand?

Mr Seetaram: In relation to the assessment or survey, I think I will obviously circulate the answer. Regarding projects concerning industrial parks, let me inform the House -

40 units have been earmarked for La Tour Koenig;

40 units at Bambous;

15 units at L'Abattoir Road, Roche Bois;

40 units at Solitude, and

40 units at Plaine Magnien.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, you wanted to take the floor? Do you have a question? No? Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: At page 582, under *Item No. 22120 – Fees*, also under *Item No. 22120008 – Fees to Consultants (MBGS) respectively*. I see that an amount of Rs66,600,000 was budgeted last year. May I know from the hon. Minister how much of that amount has been spent, to whom it has been given and for what purpose?

Mr Seetaram: Like I stated earlier, there was that sum which was earmarked for 2011 concerning 3 components – (i) the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS), (ii) Strengthening Policy Institutional Framework and, (iii) Increasing Access to Finance to Credit Constraint SMEs. However, two of them are no longer operational. The only one which is operational is the MBGS and this is what explains the decrease in that sum. And I suppose the hon. Member is asking for the decrease.

Mr Uteem: How much money was paid to which consultant?

Mr Seetaram: Mr Chairperson, I will have to circulate that answer.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 576, I am referring to the item '*Major Constraints and Challenges*', where it is said, I quote -

“Lack of coordination and duplication in the SME service providing institutions causes misuse of human and capital resources.”

And to address these problems, it is said on the same page, and I quote -

“These institutions are being reshaped to reduce duplication and improve performance of these enterprises. (...).”

Will the hon. Minister explain to the House what are the institutions that are concerned with that reshaping, and how does he intend to go about to reshape those institutions?

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the lack of coordination and duplication, being given that the NPCC went to Finance and, like I stated earlier, there have been talks for the consolidation of all institutions like SMEDA, MBGS and NICE, because the whole point is to avoid duplication of

duties. So, whichever institution is doing a particular task, we are trying to consolidate that particular activity, so that the particular activity is not duplicated over a few institutions. We have it in a clustering where we have an activity – obviously, this is a matter of policy and talks have started.

Mr Uteem: On the same page 582, with regard to *Other Expenses, Item No. 28215 - Transfers to Private Enterprises*, where there are two other items, namely *Item No. 28215002 - Matching Grant (MBGS)*, and *Item No. 28215005 - 90:10 Pay Back Scheme (MBGS)*. Last year, an amount of Rs42 m. was budgeted. Can the hon. Minister confirm whether no money has been spent under this item last year?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, concerning the sum of Rs42 m. earmarked for *Matching Grant*, what I can inform the House is that provisions were made for the *Grant Scheme 50:50* and also the *loan scheme 90:10*.

Now that provision is being made under the National Resilience Fund, the sum of Rs42 m. does not appear for this year.

I will have to circulate that one as well.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 582, under *Item No. 21110 – Personal Emoluments*, can I know from the hon. Minister whether, since he assumed office, any adviser has been appointed and in what capacity? Also whether he has an adviser on information matters? May we know the names of the advisers, if any?

Mr Seetaram: As at today, only the adviser on information matters has been appointed.

Mr Bhagwan: May we know the name of the person?

Mr Seetaram: I will circulate it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Nom là aussi to pas koner!*

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: What is there in a name to circulate? Why can't the name be divulged?

Mr Seetaram: I can say it.

The Chairperson: Yes, please!

Mr Seetaram: It is Miss Corinne Minerve.

Programme Code 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness (Rs51,255,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 583, I would like some details on *Item No. 22900 - Goods and Services*. There is an increase of nearly Rs3 m. Also under *Item No. 22900099 - Miscellaneous Expenses*, where there is an increase as well for Other Expenses. Can the Minister give us some justification? The International Year of Cooperatives: Rs3 m. May we know what are the activities scheduled, where is it supposed to be held? Could he tell us a bit of the programme? On the next page...

The Chairperson: No, please! We will take the three items first. Hon. Minister, for *Goods and Services*, we have 2 items. One is the increase, and the second concerns details about the *International Year of Cooperatives*.

Mr Seetaram: The *International Year of Cooperatives* has been announced by the United Nations for 2012. In relation to the *International Year of Cooperatives*, as there will be several events that will be held during the year itself, starting January 2012, that is why a sum of Rs3 m. has been earmarked for that particular year.

Concerning the second question....

The Chairperson: About *Goods and Services!*

Mr Seetaram: There has been an increase in office equipment and furniture to meet the purchase of fax machine and computers for RCCs and Head Office, to purchase filing cabinets, to meet the cost of postage of office, petty expenses. So, it is a compilation of expenses.

Mr Seeruttun: Page 583 *Item No. 21 – Compensation of Employees*, I note a decrease in the salaries of 2012 compared to 2011. Will the hon. Minister explain why the decrease, given that, in 2012, the number of employees has gone up from 154 to 165?

Mr Seetaram: There has been a decrease due to the non filling of vacancies and two CDOs being on leave without pay.

Mr Gungah: Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister ...

Mr Seetaram: On which page?

Mr Gungah: On page 583, under *item 28*, why is there an increase in *Other Expense* for more than Rs1.2 m.?

Mr Seetaram: There have been transfers to other non-profit institutions and concerning that, there has been grant to the MCU to meet payment of salaries, allowance to staff and payment to federations.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, with regard to promotion and development of cooperatives ...

The Chairperson: Could the hon. Member, please specify the item so that the hon. Minister can follow?

Mr Baloomoody: Sorry!

The Chairperson: Specify the page and the item!

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, I will specify it to you; give me the time. I am on page 578, *items Promotion and Development of Cooperatives - Priority Objectives – Ensure compliance to legal framework and enhance good governance of cooperative societies and Major Services – Provision of appropriate legal framework for the promotion and development of co-operatives.* We know that in all these co-operatives, one of the main problems is with regard to the compliance with the legal issues. I'll take the hon. Minister back to page 586, with regard to the *Promotion of Co-operative Entrepreneurship*, there is no staff with regard to legal issues, no legal officers in that sector. One of the main problems in the co-operatives is with regard to the legal framework, for them to abide to the legal procedures and principles. So, can I ask the hon. Minister what action is being taken in the new Budget to ensure that the co-operatives do work in the legal framework?

Mr Seetaram: I do appreciate the suggestion made by the hon. Member. I would like to inform the hon. Member that concerning Priority Objectives and Major Services, there is an increase in professionalism and performance in cooperatives to -

- (i) increase business efficiency and competitiveness, and
- (ii) enable the cooperative movement to further increase contribution to the socio-economic development of the country.

Further, concerning the Priority Objectives, again, further technical assistance and guidance have been earmarked for appropriate cooperative for the project implementation. These are the priority objectives. Also, we have the facilitation of capacity building. As the hon. Member would be aware of, at the cooperative level, we do have the Registrar of Cooperatives and we also have the Cooperative Tribunal, which is also chaired by a lawyer.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: At page 583, under *Item No. 28211031 - Other Current Transfers*, these are new items of current grants to three different cooperative federations. Can we know for what purpose these grants are being given, whether it is to subsidise wages and salaries of staff or whether it is for any specific project under each federation?

Secondly, with regard to the Mauritius Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative Federation, can we know in which year it was set up, how many members there are and for what year were the last accounts audited?

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the first part in relation to the other current transfers, it is a grant to meet the payment of salaries and allowance to the staff of that federation.

Secondly, concerning the Mauritius Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative Federation, it is a grant to that particular federation to meet the payment of salaries and allowances to the staff.

Concerning the members, I shall circulate the answer.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 583, still on *Programme 604, Promotion and Development of Cooperatives*, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a plan or a study to boost up the cooperative sector, in view of the challenges which have been set out at page 576?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, I have already stated about the priority objectives. We also have new pillars in that sector, which is the fair trade concept and this is a new area. This also has appeared on the Budget, which would also boost this sector and, more specifically, concerning boosting up of the cooperative sector, various actions, activities, programmes and projects being implemented on a sectoral basis.

Regular meetings are being held at the cooperative federations to assist them in the conception and implementation of strategies and projects aiming at -

- (i) improving their governance through implementation of code of best practice;
- (ii) increasing efficiency;
- (iii) upgrading their capacity, and
- (iv) attracting youth and women within their fault.

The Chairperson: Following that one, yes please.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Minister misunderstood the question. What I was driving at is a sort of a global plan with no bits and pieces, but a global plan or a study which has been carried out to boost the cooperative sector. He has mentioned, at page 576, several challenges which are facing the sector. Is there a global plan to address these challengers?

The Chairperson: Is there a global plan, hon. Minister?

Mr Seetaram: Concerning the global plan, all sectors have been taken on board. We have the cane sector, the cooperative credit union, the consumer sector, agriculture, livestock, fish, pig and the women sector. So, this is the plan for the cooperative sector.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 583, *Compensation of Employees*, we see that there has been a decrease from Rs50,639,000 to Rs49,545,000 ...

Mr Seetaram: Which item, please?

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 583, the first item, 21, *Compensation of Employees*, there has been a reduction in the total sum. Can I ask the hon. Minister how he reconciles the fact that there has been a reduction in the total sum whereas there has been an increase in the staffing position?

Mr Seetaram: There has been a change in the salaries to staff, in salary compensation and also for extra assistance for advisers on contract.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the salaries of staff have been reduced? Are we to understand this?

Mr Seetaram: The salaries to staff: Rs146 with increment, which amounts to Rs36,000 roughly, salary compensation Rs905,000, allowances Rs660,000, end-of-the-year bonus and so on and so forth, whereas there has been a decrease due to non-filling of vacancies and two CDOs have been on leave without pay.

Mr Uteem: At page 580, *Programme Code 604, Auditing and monitoring of cooperatives*, may I know from the hon. Minister why we don't have any percentage for 2010 and whether his Ministry audits every single cooperative society or do they rely on independent auditors as well?

Mr Seetaram: We have a percentage of cooperative societies receiving unqualified audit report; about 94%. 29 cooperatives societies out of 854, representing 6%, receive qualified audit report for the following reasons -

- non-availability of records and documents;
- book of account not completed;
- accounting system not appropriate;
- non-compliance of relevant standards, and
- non-compliance with provision of the Act.

The proposed remedial actions are -

- training on filing and keeping records;
- training and bookkeeping;
- appointment of qualified internal controllers, and
- establishing appropriate internal control system.

Mr Uteem: That was not my question. My question was why is there no figures provided for 2010. Secondly, is every cooperative society audited by officers of your Ministry or do you rely on external auditors as well?

Mr Seetaram: If a particular cooperative has a turnover of Rs10 m. or below, it is audited by the internal audit at the cooperative, whereas if it is over Rs10 m., then they will have to look for a private auditor.

Mr Bhagwan: With regard to the International Year of Cooperatives, has there been any specific theme which has been approved? The Minister has said that it would be spread all over the year. So, can we have an indication as to when the first activity is scheduled to start?

Mr Seetaram: In fact, for the International Year of Cooperatives of 2012, there is a calendar of events. There have been talks and sittings over that particular calendar and it is due to start in January.

Mr Bhagwan: Under what name?

Mr Seetaram: Under that of 'Cooperative enterprise built a better world'.

Mr Baloomoody: May I refer the hon. Minister to page 586, again on cooperatives. We know that there was not a Registrar, Cooperative Societies last year. Can we be informed whether a Registrar has been appointed and, if so, who is that gentleman or gentlewoman? Also, what are his/her qualifications?

Mr Seetaram: As at to date, there an Acting Registrar, and it is Mr Khelawon.

Mr Baloomoody: I would like to inform the hon. Minister that there are cases pending at the Deputy Registrar Office.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, may we know from the hon. Minister how many cases are pending at the Registrar Office regarding irregularities - perhaps more than irregularities - at all the cooperatives?

Mr Seetaram: I don't have exact information. I will have it circulated.

Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs75,057,000), was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance (Mr X. L. Duval): Sir, I beg to move that you do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 29 November 2011, at 11.00 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(1) ROSE HILL - TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(2) MONT ROCHES - MAIN ROAD

(3) MRA – REVIEW COMMITTEE – SMEs

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): I have a question concerning my good friend, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure.

There is the problem of traffic light in the Rose Hill area which is a cause of concern. In fact, the light remains yellow at Vandermeersch Street and the Malartic Street. They were repaired, but after some time they were out of service. I think these two traffic lights need to be changed.

MONT ROCHES - MAIN ROAD

Following the Plaines Wilhems sewerage works, the main road of Mont Roches had been resurfaced. Good job! The problem now is that with this new tarmac we can speed up. So, can I ask ...

(Interruptions)

Do you have a problem?

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Member make his point, please!

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, I am being disturbed. With the resurfacing of the Mont Roches Road, the main link road to Flic en Flac to St Martin is now becoming a pretext for cars to speed up.

May we ask the hon. Minister to, at least, urgently liaise with the Traffic Management Unit? Because accidents can happen any time. Initially, there were humps there. I think that now these need to be repainted as the road markings have not been done properly. Can I ask the hon. Minister to take urgent action regarding the Mont Roches Road so that remedial works can be done immediately?

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the traffic lights are concerned, a few days back the hon. Member raised up the issue here. In fact, I have already given instructions to the technicians, and they have detected certain technical defects there. I can assure the hon. Member that the needful is being done.

Secondly, with regard to the Mont Roches road, I must say that quite a huge amount of money has been spent on the tarring of that road. It is a good road, in good running condition just like a tarmac.

It is a fact that after putting the tarmac they cannot put humps again because we are discouraging the utilisation of humps. However, I am going to give instructions to the Traffic Management Unit to take all the required safety measures.

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, they have taken action, but it needs to be renewed. If there are traffic lights there, at least, they can be changed.

Mr Bachoo: I am going to do the needful.

MRA – REVIEW COMMITTEE – SMEs

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take the opportunity of the presence of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance at this late hour to be here.

I have received complaints from many SMEs with regard to the action of the MRA. Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whenever there is an assessment by the MRA, and if the assessment is being challenged by the Review Committee, they do take action to recover. Then by recovering, they freeze all the assets of the company, of its Directors pending the

determination of the Tribunal, and this is disproportionate to the claim of the MRA. This, of course, creates considerable problem to the SMEs, hardship, both financially and businesswise.

So, can I appeal to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to intervene vis-à-vis the MRA? If there is a claim of Rs2 m. or Rs5 m., you freeze the proportionate of what the MRA is claiming. The MRA should not freeze all the assets over. There are *Petites et Moyennes Entreprises qui ont donné R 10 millions à R 20 millions*, which are being freezed because they are challenging Rs2 m. or Rs3 m.

So, can I take the advantage of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development who is present to look into the matter?

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into it!

At 00.31 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 29 November 2011 at 11.00 a.m.