



**SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2015**

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Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Local Government
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Santaram Baboo	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sudarshan Bhadain	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform

**Institutions**

Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands
Hon. Jayeshwur Raj Dayal, CSK, PDSM, QPM	Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

**PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS**

Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai
Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
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Serjeant-at-Arms	Badal, Mr Ramesh

**MAURITIUS**

**Sixth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 02 of 2015**

**Sitting of 10 February 2015**

**The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 a.m.**

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - LUNCH ROOM - ACCESS

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have an announcement to make regarding access to the Lunch Room during the sittings of the National Assembly.

I refer hon. Members to the announcement made by my predecessor, on 06 November 2007, wherein a number of decisions were taken with a view to reinforcing security within the precincts of the National Assembly.

I have to inform hon. Members that I wish to maintain the same arrangements.

Therefore, I wish to draw attention to the fact that access to the Lunch Room is and will be restricted as follows -

- Morning Tea - Hon. Members only
- Lunch and Dinner - Hon. Members
  - Special VVIP Guests (within my discretion)
  - Parliamentary Counsel and representatives
  - Officers of the National Assembly and other officers on specific official duty.
- Tea Break - in addition to the abovementioned, members of the Press accredited with the National Assembly.

Hon. Members, I rely on the cooperation of one and all for the strict compliance with the above.

Thank you.

**PAPERS LAID**

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table -

**A. Prime Minister's Office –**

The Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Human Rights Commission for the year ended 30 June 2009 and for the period ended 31 December 2010. (In Original)

**B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development**

(a) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.3 of 2015).

(b) The Freeport (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.4 of 2015).

(c) The Value Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No.5 of 2015).

(d) The Digest of International Travel and Tourism Statistics 2013. (In Original)

(e) The Digest of External Merchandise Trade Statistics for the year 2013. (In Original)

(f) Loan Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the People's Republic of China. (In Original)

**C. Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research –**



The Annual Report 2012 of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute. (In Original)

**D. Ministry of Local Government –**

- (a) The Beau Bassin/Rose Hill (Markets) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (Government Notice No.7 of 2015).
- (b) The Barkly Fair (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (Government Notice No. 8 of 2015).
- (c) The Da Patten Fair (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (Government Notice No. 9 of 2015)
- (d) The Plaisance Fair (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (Government Notice No. 10 of 2015).
- (e) The Chebel Fair (Amendment) Regulations 2014 (Government Notice No.11 of 2015).

**E. Ministry of Arts and Culture –**

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust for period July 2008 – June 2009 and July 2009 – December 2010. (In Original)

**F. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection –**

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 6 of 2015).

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### DR. NAVINCHANDRA RAMGOOLAM - FORMER PRIME MINISTER - PROVISIONAL CHARGES

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP, former Prime Minister, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the provisional charges lodged against him;
- (b) if an objection to departure has been lodged against him, and
- (c) if he has been interrogated in relation to the -
  - (i) Roches Noires bungalow case of July 2011;
  - (ii) death of Mr A.K.R. in Police custody at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station, and
  - (iii) case regarding the audio recording at Rivière du Rempart in December 2014.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on Saturday 07 February 2015, the following charges were lodged against Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, former Prime Minister -

- (i) “Conspiracy”, and
- (ii) “Money Laundering”.

The enquiry is still in progress.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police filed a “Prohibition Order” against Dr. Ramgoolam on 07 February 2015, together with the Provisional Charges, to which the Bail and Remand Court acceded.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (c) (i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police sought to interview Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam on Saturday 07 February 2015, at the Central CID, Line Barracks, in connection with the theft at Roches Noires bungalow and after being cautioned, he declined to give his statement and informed that he would do so at a later stage.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (c) (ii), as far as the case of the death of Mr A. K. R. in Police custody at Rivière du Rempart Police Station is concerned, in light of fresh information obtained on the case, a new enquiry is in progress, and so far Dr. Ramgoolam has not been interrogated.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) (iii) of the question, relating to the audio recording at Rivière du Rempart in December 2014, I am informed that the enquiry into the case is in progress and Dr. Ramgoolam would be interrogated in due course.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has informed us that...

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry, I think I missed one page.

Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam appeared before the Bail and Remand Court on the same day and was granted bail subject to the condition that he furnishes a surety of Rs200,000 and enters into a recognizance of Rs1 m. under each charge. He was released on parole by the Court pending his attendance at Rivière du Rempart and Upper Plaines Wilhems District Courts respectively on 09 February 2015 to do the needful in relation to surety and recognizance.

On 09 February 2015, he appeared before the District Courts of Upper Plaines Wilhems and Rivière du Rempart and furnished the required sureties.

I wish to point out that according to information obtained from the Commissioner of Police, in the course of the enquiry, searches carried out at the residences of the former Prime Minister at Desforges Street, Port Louis and Riverwalk, Floreal, have led to the securing of a substantial sum of money.

**Mr Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, we heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that there are two provisional charges. In the case of the one relating to money laundering, if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has gone through the provisional charge before the Court concerned, has it been brought to his attention that the provisional charge amongst other things reads thus, I quote -

“(...) was found in possession of over Rs4 m. composed of Mauritian rupees and foreign currencies and another huge amount of around Rs200 m., suspected to be proceeds of corruption and bribe found in two safes seized by the Central CID which have to be forced opened, as access therewith is not available”.

Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister tried to find out how can, in a provisional charge, be said that the two safes have not yet been opened, and yet there is a huge amount of Rs200 m. in those two safes yet to be opened?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, we must not forget that this is just a provisional charge. The enquiry is still on. The counting is not over and it was supposed to continue today but, unfortunately, the former Prime Minister has fallen ill. I think I am not in a position to answer to many supplementary questions because being given that he has not yet given his defence statement, being given that all the money has not yet been counted; I think any new information that may go out may cause a lot of prejudice to the enquiry.

**Mr Bérenger:** The Rt. hon. Prime Minister will have understood my point. Is it serious to put in a provisional charge that the safes have not yet been opened and yet the Police, the CID knows that there is a huge amount of more than Rs200 m., concerning safes not yet opened, according to themselves?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I suppose the Police has acted under information received.

**Mr Bérenger:** Madam Speaker, therefore, the first mention was of Rs200 m. Then I heard - because now you can't say I didn't say that - the Sergeant - not Sergeant-in-Chief - now in charge of the Press Office saying that he had talked to Police Officer Jangi and he had been told "*li paret ki ena plis ki R 200 millions*". *En direct!* Then that figure was - by the same Police Officer, now Press Officer - said to be between Rs450 m. to Rs500 m. That was yesterday and today it has climbed up, according to the same Police Officer, to Rs800 m. when, in fact, they have already started counting the money.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I suppose it is all estimates, but I can't answer for the Press Officer.

**Mr Bérenger:** Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that? Is he satisfied with the way Police is handling this case? If that is the trial by the Press, what is? Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister satisfied with the performance of that new Sergeant, freshly appointed Press Officer? He thinks he is a pop star. I don't know if the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has watched him, making jokes! Since when does the Police whilst a prosecution is on, the enquiries are on, behave in that manner through the Press and the MBC? Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister satisfied with the way the Police is conducting the whole thing and whether, in the end, they are not going to mess up their own case?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I am not concerned with comments. I am satisfied the Police is handling the enquiry properly and it is only when the formal charge will be brought that we will know what is the exact amount.

**Mr Bérenger:** The amount is one thing, but the way the Police is conducting, I am surprised that a lawyer and Prime Minister is satisfied with the way the Police is behaving concerning the Press and the MBC, but *chacun a son opinion*, Madam Speaker. I have seen that, at a point in time, apart from the Police, ICAC surfaced. Is it at the request of Government or the Police that ICAC has stepped in?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, from the information that I have, it was at the request of Police.

**Mr Bérenger:** Well, I am not suggesting that Rt. hon. Prime Minister should interfere in the details of the enquiry, but does he not agree with me that, at this stage, the Police should carry out its enquiry and ICAC should not be brought in? There is going to be a big *polémique* around ICAC; the one-man ICAC that we have, the way he was appointed; there is going to be a debate about that and it is now a one-man only, ICAC, and lawyers are lawyers. I can see on the horizon whatever happens they are going to challenge, the composition of ICAC, the legality of ICAC if ICAC steps in. Will not the Rt. hon. Prime Minister agree with me – I will deal with ICAC later on – that ICAC should be kept out of even the money laundering aspect of the case?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, if that is so, Counsels for the former Prime Minister should have objected. In fact, the hon. Attorney General was there at the invitation of the Police, there was objection and he went away.

**Mr Bérenger:** As far as the interdiction to leave the country is concerned, I think I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister saying that it is only on the 7<sup>th</sup> when provisional charges were put, that an interdiction to leave the country was lodged against the former Prime Minister. Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, when the Bail and Remand Court granted bail to the former Prime Minister, it bluntly put it that she did not agree with that argument that he might leave the country, because - I quote the ruling of the Magistrate –

“Had he wanted to escape justice, he had ample time to do so prior to his arrest.”

Does that explain why in a case like that, ample time was left to the suspect at this stage for him to leave the country if he so chooses and it is only on the 7<sup>th</sup> that an Interdiction to Departure was placed?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the Police thought it right at that time and this was the normal procedure.

**Mr Bérenger:** Now that there is an interdiction - I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is aware that the Court is to step in - if the accused has been informed that there is an interdiction, then that interdiction, if he has been informed, lapses after 72 hours, unless the Police goes to the Court and obtains an order this time - not from the Police, but from the Court - to interdict him from leaving the country. Has this already been done? Is it being done?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, I have no information about that.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I can move to the last part of my question. Concerning the Roches Noires bungalow affair, I think I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister say that the former Prime Minister has not to date given a statement. He has said he will later on give a statement. Have all the other aspects of that inquiry into the Roches Noires bungalow affair been completed?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the inquiry has not yet been completed, because the former Prime Minister has not given his statement so far. Once his statement is given, then the Police will consider whether other statements have to be recorded.

**Mr Bérenger:** Concerning the other case, the death of Mr A.K.R. in Police custody at Rivière du Rempart Police station in July 2011, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that a new inquiry has started and is in progress. It has been repeatedly reported in the press that one suspect of this aggression – supposedly aggression, theft and so on - is in detention. Is that the case? Is he formally under detention or is he being kept at the Special Mobile Force for whatever purpose?

**The Prime Minister:** In which case is that?

**Mr Bérenger:** It is in the case of the death in Rivière du Rempart Police station of Mr A.K.R. It has been repeatedly reported that there is a suspect being held by Police in relation to that case. Is it so?

**The Prime Minister:** No. I have not read that. Nobody has told me that and I think this is a very wrong impression that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has got. I am not aware of anything of that sort.

**Mr Bérenger:** It is not an impression. That has appeared repeatedly in the press and there has been no Police communiqué to advise the public that no one is in detention in relation to that case. Therefore, it is not just my impression. It has been reported and not denied by the Police. They talked a lot about other things but, in that case, I suppose they could have clarified the situation. The new inquiry is still in progress, Madam Speaker. Has any link been established, at this stage, between the Roches Noires bungalow affair and the death of Mr A.K.R. in Rivière du Rempart Police Station?

**The Prime Minister:** I cannot answer to this question. The inquiry is still on.

**Mr Bérenger:** The last part of my question, Madam Speaker, regards the audio recording – the *bande sonore* – at the Rivière du Rempart meeting in December 2010. Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister what explains the fact that there have been several arrests - the most important thing apart from life, the most important thing in life is freedom - and every day there were articles in the press, statements by the Police, so and so is going to be called, so and so is going to be arrested, it went on and then suddenly it disappeared. It is off the radar screen completely. Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister – because as I said people have been arrested? Why this inquiry is supposedly proceeding in that way?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, it is not the first time that somebody is arrested in a case. The hon. Leader of the Opposition should know that. The Office of the DPP made an application dated 19 December 2014 for a production order directing the following service providers V-mail LLC Facebook Inc. and Google ILC to disclose the user ID who posted the link on the web. The Judge's Order was obtained on the same date and forwarded to the Police. I must add also, in the meantime, the Police officers who were engaged in this case were very busy with the other cases and that is why this inquiry has been a bit delayed.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that one of the charges against the former Prime Minister is one of money laundering. In view of the fact that a huge amount of money is involved in foreign currency, is the hon. Prime Minister aware whether the hon. Attorney General has made any request for any foreign State for assistance under the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters for this case?

**The Prime Minister:** No, I am not aware of any.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Mohamed.

**Mr Mohamed:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, since before the 10<sup>th</sup> of December of 2014, we have all in Mauritius heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister before then, gave information that, at some stage, he was aware of the intricacies of the case of Roches Noires in relation to the death of the person referred to in question (c) (iii), whether since he seemed to be aware and made statements to that effect, when does he intend to give a statement to the Police to share that important information, because we need justice to be done and if he does not intend to do so, maybe he could tell us how he could communicate that information to the Police and when he would do it?

**The Prime Minister:** This information was being circulated, it reached me and it has reached also the Police. So, I don't have to inform the Police.

**Mr Ganoo:** May I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, in view of the substantial amount of money which has been found on the premises of the former Prime Minister and in view of the fact that all parties in this House are agreeable that a legal framework be set up to control the finances of political parties, doesn't the Prime Minister think that it is urgent to uphold the dignity of the political class in this country after what has just happened to come up with a legislation, either setting up a Select Committee or come up with a legislation once for all for the financial control of political parties?

**The Prime Minister:** This is irrelevant to the PNQ.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, did you ask the floor? No! That's alright. Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** Well, I'll pick up from where hon. Ganoo left. My last question will relate to now that the country is - I think we can all agree on that - *en état de choc*, being given that in the Electoral Programme of the present Government, it was stated that there would be a new Declaration of Assets Act that will be made public and it was stated also that a law – new law – would come forward to control, to make transparent, *les finances des partis et des campagnes électorales*. This has been picked up in the Government Programme, but I note that it is no longer said in the Government Programme that these declarations of assets will be made public. There has been a change between the *programme électoral* and



the *programme gouvernemental – le discours-programme*. Will the hon. Prime Minister see to it, being given where we are, that the two things are done as soon as possible - a new Declaration of Assets Act, foolproof, as he said in his electoral program, to be made public? A new Declaration of Assets Act - this is what his programme spoke about - and also that will enlighten what took place in 2000-2005; things will be activated so that a law to regulate, to control, make transparent *les financements des partis et des campagnes électorales*, will be before the House as soon as possible.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, this Government means to implement all its promises.

**Madam Speaker:** One last question, we have got three more minutes. The last question is usually for the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Does he have any other questions?

**Mr Bérenger:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/3 and B/4 have been withdrawn. The Table has been further advised that the following Parliamentary Questions which have been addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will now be replied as follows - B/6 in regard to the report of the Truth and Justice Commission will now be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications; B/10 in regard to the Maurice Ile Durable Commission will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management;

in relation to the Jin Fei Project at Riche Terre will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

I also wish to inform hon. Members that the Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions will be replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister at the end of Prime Minister's Question Time, time permitting. PQ No. B/18 in regard to the Canal Anglais behind the Military Road, Cité Martial, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport; B/34 in regard to the E-Judiciary project addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development; B/37 in regard to works being carried out at Canal Dayot, GRNW, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public infrastructure and Land Transport; B/41 in regard to works being carried out at Sable Noir, GRNW, addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.

Questions addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Ameer Meea!

**MASTER M. T. I. J. – DEATH - INQUIRY**

(No. B/1) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Rt. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the death of late master M. T. I. J. whose dead body was found on or about 10 December 2014, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand in relation to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 10 December 2014, after having received information on a dead body at Beauvonges, Police officers of Bambous Police Station and officers from different units within the Police went on the site. The dead body was thereafter conveyed to mortuary at Candos Hospital for autopsy.

On the same day, the corpse was identified as that of M.T.I.J.

Autopsy carried out revealed the cause of death as being “*incised wounds of neck*”. The case was thereafter referred to the Major Crime Investigation Team for enquiry. As at 06 February 2015, some eight persons have been interviewed and some items have been secured for examination purposes. The investigation is still being pursued by the Police.

Once the investigation is completed, the Police will refer the case file to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether in this case despite there have been eight persons who have been interviewed any person has been arrested pursuant to the case?

**The Prime Minister:** No, I don’t think anybody has been arrested. They have all been interviewed and after interview they have been allowed to go.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister if he can request the Commissioner of Police to convey to the family of the deceased person any progress of the enquiry so that they are reassured that the enquiry is being done because up to now the Police has not communicated any information to the deceased person’s family.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, the members of the family should try to get the information from the Commissioner of Police.

### **MINISTRIES - ADVISERS/PRESS ATTACHÉS – APPOINTMENT**

**(No. B/2) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to Advisers/Press Attachés employed on a contract basis and attached to each Ministry, since July 2005 to date, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case –

- (a) their qualifications;
- (b) their areas of responsibility;
- (c) their salaries and any other allowances drawn;
- (d) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (e) the make and model of Government car put at their disposal.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the information sought by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

Nevertheless, I can already confirm that the number of Advisers employed by the Government will be far smaller in comparison to the number employed by the previous Government. For example, in my own office, prior to the last general elections, there were 21 Advisers in post, compared to only two who are so far in employment.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister confirm whether the number of advisers - which is good news that there will be less and we welcome that - would there be less advisers at the Ministry of Finance as opposed to the previous Ministry of Finance?

**The Prime Minister:** We will have to have some patience; in due course, we will know.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** I take up from what the Rt. hon. Prime Minister stated. He has stated that there will be less advisers. Can I ask him whether he will give instructions and there will be a new policy for Government to request the press attachés who have been appointed not to engage actively in political activities during office hours because they are paid from public funds? Would the Prime Minister issue new directives to that effect?

**The Prime Minister:** Directives have been issued that they should do their job.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has said “only two” therefore, it is easy for him to give the names of these two privileged gentlemen or gentlewomen who have been appointed advisers since the last elections?

**The Prime Minister:** I do not have the names with me...

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan, last question!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Will the Rt. hon. Prime Minister at least also request the press attachés to do their jobs with regard to public relations which is the work that they are supposed to do and not to accompany Ministers in their private visits in constituencies and also at the time they are receiving members of the public because this is when and where they are engaged in political activities?

**The Prime Minister:** I have not received such information.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea next question!

#### **RIVIÈRE DU REMPART POLICE STATION - MR A.K.R. – DEATH**

**(No. B/3) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to late Mr A. K. R., who passed away while in Police custody, on or about 30 July 2011, at the Rivière du Rempart Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the inquiry thereof has been reopened and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### ROCHES NOIRES – BUNGALOW – THEFT

(No. B/4) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the case of the theft which occurred on or about 03 July 2011 in a bungalow reportedly belonging to a Very Important Person, at Roches Noires, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the inquiry thereof has been reopened and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

*(Withdrawn)*

### SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS – MEASURES

(No. B/5) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to new types of synthetic drugs on the market, including Wazabi, Black Mamba, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the quantity thereof, estimated to have been introduced in Mauritius, indicating the measures taken or that will be taken to prevent the proliferation thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the year 2013, criminal intelligence revealed that new types of Synthetic Cannabinoids made of new psychoactive substances have entered Mauritius. *Wazabi* and *Black Mamba* are the street names of two of those Synthetic Cannabinoids.

Since October 2013, these ‘Synthetic Cannabinoids and their derivatives’ are considered as dangerous drugs according to the First Schedule to the Dangerous Drugs Act.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that 30 cases of sale or consumption of this new type of drug have thus been established by the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit. In all these cases, enquiry is still in progress and examination by the Forensic Science Laboratory is still being carried out to determine, *inter-alia*, the quantity of the synthetic drug secured so far.

Madam Speaker, it is indeed of paramount importance that our citizens are shielded from the consumption of not only the *Wazabi* or *Black Mamba*, but from any other incumbent or potential illicit drugs.

A series of measures are being adopted by the Police to prevent illegal drug proliferation which include, *inter alia*, the following -

- (i) the setting of an intelligence cell which enables the pro-active targeting of local and foreign drug dealers and their network;
- (ii) drug mapping where drug transactions, drug traffickers, pedlars and addicts are located;
- (iii) aerial patrols, undercover operations, intensive surveillance, raid and searches, and
- (iv) drug reduction programmes comprising sensitisation campaign in collaboration with NATReSA and other NGO's.

Moreover, Police is working in close partnership with the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to tighten security so as to prevent entry of drugs at the Port and airport.

Madam Speaker, my Government has a zero tolerance policy against the drug scourge. I have taken a commitment in the Government Programme to set up a Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking and my Government shall pursue a relentless fight against traffickers, while ensuring that the seaport and airport are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and technology to counter any attempt to introduce drugs in Mauritius.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has made reference to the Commission of Enquiry to be set up, have the terms of reference been prepared or finalised or will they be discussed with the people concerned, the police, the NGOs and so on?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, there is a committee working on it and there will be consultations.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In view of the ever changing scene of drugs in Mauritius and abroad like in this case of Synthetic Cannabinoids drugs, can the hon. Prime Minister consider the fact of creating a Drug Observatory like it is the case in many

countries abroad, so as to keep aware parents, educators and all those concerned with the prevention of drugs and to take precautions concerning new drugs entering the country?

**The Prime Minister:** We will take this into consideration.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** One last question! Madam Speaker, we have only three Rehabilitation Centres for drug addicts around the island. My question is whether consideration will be given to increase the number of Rehabilitation Centres under the aegis of the Ministry of Health because actually the number is too low and also they do not have the human resource and the necessary logistics to combat this *fléau*?

**The Prime Minister:** I hope the Minister concerned will look into it.

### **TRUTH & JUSTICE COMMISSION REPORT - IMPLEMENTATION**

**(No. B/6) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Truth and Justice Commission, he will state whether the main recommendations contained in its Report have already been implemented and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - PROCEEDINGS - LIVE BROADCAST**

**(No. B/7) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the live broadcasting of the proceedings of the National Assembly through television, radios and web tv, he will state if Government intends to –

- (a) set up a Select Committee to look thereinto, or
- (b) study the draft report of the previous Select Committee on live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House of the Fifth National Assembly and implement its recommendations.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, as the House may be aware, a Select Committee of the National Assembly was appointed in April 2011, under the chair of hon. Nandcoomar

Bodha, to consider the live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House and matters ancillary thereto.

I am informed that 11 meetings of the Select Committee were held between April 2011 and January 2012 and I understand that the Committee has completed its assignment and a draft report already exists.

In the circumstances and in view of Government's determination to reinforce democracy in this country, it is proposed to set up a new Select Committee of the House to consider the draft report and to propose firm recommendations to the House.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what, according to him, will be the time frame that the Select Committee will be set up and whether he will give urgent consideration to set up the Select Committee, as soon as possible, in order to prevent further abuse from the MBC/TV?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, Madam Speaker, it is our habit to act quickly.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Pending the setting up of the Select Committee, can I make a request to the Prime Minister to see to it that now that we are starting debates at the National Assembly, firm directives should be given to the MBC/TV - we have all been victims of one person at the MBC/TV - not to have the Opposition becoming *muet* every Tuesday?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, instructions have already been given to the MBC that they should be objective in whatever they do.

**Mr Mohamed:** Would the Rt. hon. Prime Minister consider the possibility of not holding a new Select Committee since there was broad consensus at the time that the Select Committee sat down and did its work? All parties in Parliament were represented under the able chairmanship of hon. Bodha – as he was then Minister of Government – and we were also honoured with the presence of hon. Obeegadoo, hon. Baloomoody, hon. Ganoo, hon. Bhagwan and many other Members from all sides of the House. Having said so, there has been broad consensus and I am also, Madam Speaker, happy to see that the hon. Minister Bodha is nodding and acquiescing that there was consensus. If that is the case, why go through a Select Committee again? If we really mean business, and I would like to see it happen, that we go faster than the previous Government has done.

In the past ....



*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed, you made your point. Do not make a statement, please! You made your point!

**Mr Mohamed:** Can we go faster than going for a Select Committee and wasting time ...

**Madam Speaker:** Please, allow the hon. Prime Minister to reply.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, we should not go as fast as to knock ourselves down. We are in Government and we will do what we consider is right.

**Madam Speaker:** Last question, hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** I am picking up on the same question of hon. Mohamed. Has the Rt. hon. Prime Minister given thought to the possibility of coming up with a motion and asking this House to adopt, by way of resolution, the draft report which has been produced by the previous Select Committee?

**The Prime Minister:** We will come with the final report.

## **RELIGIOUS & SOCIO-CULTURAL FUNCTIONS – POLITICAL SPEECHES**

(No. B/8) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, following Government's decision not to take the floor during socio-cultural functions, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of legislation, as is the case in Singapore.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, in my New Year address to the Nation, I indicated that relations between Government and socio-cultural organisations would henceforth focus on our partnership to address problems within our society, including the erosion of values. Obviously, we shall actively continue promoting together our rich and diverse religious, cultural and linguistic heritage.

The use and misuse by the former regime, of religious and socio-cultural platforms that had been converted into political platforms have been prejudicial to national unity.

Hence, I decided to act, and the decision I announced in my New Year Speech is not only a Government decision, but a political one as well.

The issue of bringing legislation to give effect to this decision does not arise. I expect politicians on all sides to be responsible enough to adopt this line of conduct.

**Mr Bérenger:** Of course, we agree fully that specially on religious occasions former Members of Parliament and former Ministers and so on used to make cheap political speeches. We all agree this is out of place, but can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister where does he draw the line? Because we must not write off the history of our country, the richness of our cultural heritage and so on. I understand only a few days ago, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister attended a dinner on the occasion of the *Fête du Printemps*. Well, it is a great occasion, and supposedly on the basis of what he has decided he makes no speeches. Where do we stop? I mean, next thing, we will stop making speeches on the occasion of the abolition of slavery of 02 November. I think this has not been really thought through. I don't think it is making speeches on such occasions that is wrong, it is making the wrong speeches on those occasions. So, can I appeal to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to rethink it. When we are dealing with the history of Mauritius, the richness of our cultural diversity and so on, I don't think it is progress for the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and others to make decent, proper speeches on such occasions.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, unfortunately, insofar as socio-cultural societies are concerned, we know what use has been made of them in the past and in most cases the politicians don't stick to the subject matter, they slip away and they do the most heinous type of politics on these platforms.

**Mr Jhuboo:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Madame la présidente, un sujet aussi délicat que la politique et le religieux mérite qu'on s'y attarde un petit peu plus. Est-ce que le Premier ministre, à la lueur de ce qu'il a déclaré, à la lueur de ce que le discours-programme fait mention, c'est-à-dire de consulter la nation sur les sujets d'importance comme le rôle du religieux et de l'état, n'envisage pas un référendum pour élucider toutes ces questions ?

**The Prime Minister:** Anyway, I don't find it necessary.

**Madam Speaker:** Last question on this issue!

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Rt. hon. Prime Minister has given an indication of the new policy of Government to the nation, which I agree. Can I make a request to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to give directives to the MBC/TV? We have the politicians who are debarred from making speeches, which is a good thing, but at least the MBC/TV should not give voices to the presidents of the socio-cultural centres or persons who go on TV and make speeches and which are covered live by the MBC/TV. It would defeat the purpose. On one hand, you have the politicians and, on the other hand, the representatives of socio-cultural centres who make political speeches live on the MBC/TV.

**The Prime Minister:** Well, it is for the MBC/TV to act on the merit of each case.

### SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MRS N. S. –

#### VIP LOUNGE FACILITIES

**(No. B/9) Mr M. Hurreeram (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to access to the VIP Lounge, he will state if Mrs N. S. was granted such facilities and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the number thereof, since July 2005 to December 2014, and
- (b) if any official request was made therefor and, if so, in which capacity.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Airport Terminal Operations Ltd that Mrs N. S. was granted access to the VIP Lounge at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport on 71 occasions ...

*(Interruptions)*

Namely, 35 departures and 36 arrivals. I find it strange how is it 35 departures, but 36 arrivals between 21 September 2008 and 26 November 2014.

In regard to part (b) of the question, no official request was made for such facilities in favour of Mrs N. S. at the level of Home Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office, which is responsible for processing of applications and grant of access to the VIP Lounge. However, such requests in respect of Mrs N. S. were made by the Private Office of the former Prime Minister directly to the Airports of Mauritius Ltd. or Airport Terminal Operations Ltd. These requests were not made through the normal channel. Thus, there is no information in

which capacity Mrs N. S. benefitted from such facilities, but the public knows how and why she was granted such facilities.

**Mr Hurreeram:** Can we know whether the close relatives of Mrs N. S. were granted the same facilities at the VIP Lounge?

**The Prime Minister:** Well, if she was accompanied by her relatives, I am sure they must all have been granted. I don't have a list of facilities granted to families.

**Madam Speaker:** No question! The Table has been advised that the following PQs addressed to the hon. Prime Minister have been withdrawn: Nos. B/12, B/13 and B/14.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - JURISDICTION**

(No. B/11) **Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Human Rights Commission, he will state if Government intends to review -

- (a) the jurisdiction thereof, and
- (b) increase the number of staff thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, the National Human Rights Commission was created in April 2001 under the Protection of Human Rights Act 1998. The Act was amended in 2012 to create a Human Rights Division; a Police Complaints Division; and a National Preventive Mechanism Division. These Divisions operate under the Protection of Human Rights Act; the Police Complaints Act; and the National Preventive Mechanism Act, respectively. The main purpose of the amendments was to broaden the mandate and functions of the National Human Rights Commission in line with international best practices.

However, as mentioned in the Government Programme 2015-2019, an independent Police Complaints Commission presided by a former Judge of the Supreme Court will be created to further consolidate the fundamental rights of our citizens.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am advised that the Commission is taking the necessary measures to increase its technical staff while the staffing of the new Police Complaints Commission will be looked into after its establishment.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can I ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister whether he has taken cognizance of the report of the Human Rights Commission 2013, where the President, now, the Chairman, suggests that we should include new human rights, that is, the Economic

Rights, the *abolition de la peine de mort* Rights, *le droit des travailleurs du sexe*, *le droit de la communauté LGBT*, whether Government intends to consider the suggestions, at least, of the Human Rights Commissioner?

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, we are trying to do our best to appoint all the members of the Commission because I know for quite a long time there was only the Head who was there and even his contract has expired, but still he was continuing. We mean business and we are going to do everything so that this Commission can do meaningful work.

### **POLICE FORCE – PROMOTIONS**

**(No. B/12) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police information and table a list as to the number of –

- (a) Permutations;
- (b) Demotions, and
- (c) Promotions thereat, since 10 December 2014 to date, indicating, in each case, the reasons therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **VACOAS POLICE STATION – TOURISM AUTHORITY VEHICLE – REPORTED CASE**

**(No. B/13) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case was reported at the Vacoas Police Station on 09 January 2015 in regard to a vehicle bearing registration number 6271 Oct 08 owned by the Tourism Authority and, if so, indicate who was driving the vehicle and in which capacity, and

- (b) the outcome of inquiry carried out thereinto.

*(Withdrawn)*

## PARASTATAL BODIES - VACANCIES

(No. B/14) **Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to parastatal bodies and other institutions where the State is a majority shareholder he will state the vacancies thereof that will –

- (a) be advertised, and
- (b) not be advertised, indicating the reasons therefor.

*(Withdrawn)*

**Madam Speaker:** Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/19 in regard to the renegotiation of the Avoidance of Double Taxation Treaty; B/44 in regard to introduction of subject teaching at primary level addressed to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research; B/47 in regard to SICOM Tower addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms. PQ No. B/31 in regard to the project for the construction of a dam at Rivière des Anguilles addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport will now be replied by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities.

Hon. Ameer Meea, next question!

## MOTORCYCLES - MODIFIED SILENCERS

(No. B/17) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Authority whether, in regard to motorcycles with modified silencers emitting loud noises on being run, he will state if he is aware of the increasing number thereof and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Speaker, I am fully aware of this nuisance caused by increasing number of motorcycles with modified silencers.

I wish to inform the House that Section 83 (3) of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 provides that –

“No person shall -

- (a) fit on the exhaust pipe of a motor vehicle any extension or other device likely to cause excessive or unusual noise; or
- (b) alter the silencer in such a way that the noise caused by the escape of the exhaust gases is made greater by the alteration.”

The same legislation also provides that any person who contravenes Section 83 (3) of the Act shall commit an offence and may be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000.

To address the ongoing problem, the *Police de l'Environnement* carries regular checks and establishes contraventions against riders. For the years 2013 and 2014, a total of 1220 and for the month of January 2015, 78 contraventions have been established.

With a view to curbing down this offence drastically, the following measures will be implemented –

- (i) an *opération “Coup de poing”* will be undertaken by the six teams of *Police de l'Environnement* throughout the island for a period of two weeks;
- (ii) an awareness campaign will be undertaken to sensitise the public on the provisions of the law and associated fines;
- (iii) training will be given to the regular Police on the enforcement of the provisions of this piece of legislation to enable the whole Police force to take firm actions against contraveners in the future;
- (iv) the strength of the *Police de l'Environnement* will be also increased, and
- (v) provision for stiffer penalties including seizure of motorcycles will be also looked into.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Speaker, I, myself, have raised this issue in this House since 2012 and up to now there has not been any drastic change in this issue.

*(Interruptions)*

And also, I think this House will agree with me that this issue is a terrible nuisance and discomfort for all persons around the island, but especially in densely populated regions.

So, therefore, I welcome all these measures that the hon. Minister just announced, but can I ask the hon. Minister that whether he - as he likes to say - as Raj Dayal, would personally monitor these operations on the field and also be there so as to bring results and whether he needs to wear his *simili cuir* jacket to do these operations with the Commissioner of Police?

*(Interruptions)*

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea, refrain from making comments! Ask your question!

(Interruptions)

Ask your question!

(Interruptions)

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to take firm action where it is required and this is at the leadership level and at all levels. As a responsible Minister, I can give you the guarantee if we are going ...

(Interruptions)

Excuse me, Sir.

Madam Speaker, the point is very clear; we are going to see to it that all actions proactive, active, reactive will be taken in time.

(Interruptions)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that there would be an *opération coup de poing* regarding this issue.

(Interruptions)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr Baloomoody:** Regarding this issue, there would be an *opération coup de poing*, the hon. Minister has just mentioned. Can I ask the hon. Minister to ensure that this operation takes place at night because we know all those who have modified their motorcycles do venture in illegal rallies at night and this is where most disturbances are being caused?

**Mr Dayal:** The officers of the *Police de l'Environnement* work on a 24-hour basis by day and by night and your suggestion is taken on board.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed!

**Mr Mohamed:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Minister how many equipment exactly for monitoring noise emitted by motorcycles does the *Police de l'Environnement* have; if he could give us the exact figure?

**Mr Dayal:** I need notice of this question, but just to tell you that the equipment that we have; they are functioning as per our requirements.

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Ameer Meea! Last question!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. According to a previous reply in 2013, it has been stated in this House that there has been a Technical Committee that has been set up at the Ministry of Environment so as to look in this matter and also that this Technical Committee found that there were two problems; one with the sound level meters and secondly, with modification to the law, that is, the law should have been amended. So,



can I ask the hon. Minister what has happened to this Technical Committee and what has been its finding?

**Mr Dayal:** I need notice of this question, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Okay! Next question! This has been sufficiently debated. PQ No. B/19, please! Hon. Uteem!

### **MAURITIUS/INDIA - AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE TAXATION TREATY**

**(No. B/19) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the renegotiation of the Avoidance of Double Taxation Treaty between Mauritius and India, he will state where matters stand.

**The Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Mr S. Bhadain):** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, discussions on the India Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty have been ongoing for a number of years to address concerns raised on the operations of the current tax treaty.

I understand that in May 2014, Mauritius had proposed the setting-up of special cells both in Mauritius and in India to fast track the renegotiation of the DTA. As a follow-up, the then Secretary to Cabinet led a delegation to India for the renegotiation.

Madam Speaker, the DTA is an instrument of critical importance for both Mauritius and India and has meaningfully served the interest of both countries. We will shortly resume the renegotiation process in a spirit of fairness, equity and transparency and in line with all principles of good governance, whilst also taking into consideration the long-term economic interests of both countries.

We will create the appropriate conducive environment for the further development of Mauritius as an International Financial Services Centre.

The renegotiation of the DTA with India is now, Madam Speaker, being seen as an opportunity rather than a threat.

The forthcoming visit of His Excellency the Prime Minister of India will certainly facilitate this process.

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the hon. Minister aware that in a written reply to Rajya Sabha in India, the hon. Minister of Finance, Arun Jaitley stated that India has made certain proposals for the revision of DTC to end round-tripping and other aspects.

Mauritius is yet to agree to such revision. It would appear from the Indian side that the ball is on our camp. May I know from the hon. Minister what he is doing to hit back the ball?

**Mr Bhadain:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker, we are aware of the proposals and there is a committee both at the level of my Ministry and the level of the Ministry of Finance which is currently looking into the matter.

**Mr Uteem:** May I know from the hon. Minister whether any meeting of the joint working committee comprising of officers of Mauritius and India has been scheduled and if so, when?

**Mr Bhadain:** This is precisely what the committee is looking into at the present moment, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Uteem:** May I take it that, as at today, the hon. Minister is not in a position to tell us when he is going to have a new meeting and is he aware that time is running out? Only last week the Foreign Investment Promotion Board of India refused treaty to 23 FDI proposals including FDI proposals from Mauritius companies? So, whereas we are sitting here, India is taking action and denying treaty provisions to our FDIs.

**Mr Bhadain:** The committee is actively working, Madam Speaker, and we will certainly inform the House of any progress in due course.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question, hon. Uteem!

### **PORT LOUIS SOUTH & PORT LOUIS CENTRAL - STATE LANDS - ILLEGAL OCCUPATION**

**(No. B/20) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the State lands in Constituency No. 2, Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, he will state if any illegal occupation thereof has been reported and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) state, in each case, the measures Government proposes to take in relation thereto.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):**  
Madam Speaker, there are 181 squatters who have been identified by my Ministry in Constituency No. 2, Port-Louis South and Port Louis Central as follows –

Tranquebar	-	82
Vallée Pitot	-	29
Vallé Pitot near Eid Gah-		67
Citadel	-	3

As regards part (b) of the question -

(i) squatters in the region of Tranquebar will soon be relocated to Pointe aux Sables where a housing project has been implemented together with the necessary infrastructure facilities;

(ii) for the squatters in the region of Vallée Pitot, upon my request, a survey and the registration of these squatters are currently being carried out. It is proposed to regularise those squatters in ‘in situ’ provided that safety and the eligibility criteria of my Ministry for the allocation of a building site lease.

(iii) regarding those squatters in Vallée Pitot near Eid Gah, lying within and alongside the proposed alignment of the Ring Road project, a committee comprising of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and my Ministry have tasked to look for other suitable sites in the region of Port Louis and Pointe aux Sables for relocation of these squatters, and

(iv) as far as the three cases of Citadel, the survey of the State land has been completed and the case of each squatter will be dealt with on a case to case basis.

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister mention that there were only 82 cases of illegal squatters in Tranquebar. The number is actually far greater than this. The 82 cases concern only those who had been identified for relocation in Pointe aux Sables. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he will carry out a full survey and identify the exact number of squatters in Tranquebar and come up with solutions with regard to those above these 82?

**Mr Soodhun:** Madam Speaker, I have already mentioned that according to the information that I have, in Tranquebar, we have 82 cases that have been registered in my Ministry. Anyway, I am going to ask my officers to consider the suggestion of the hon. Member and definitely we are going to have a solution.

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister refers to a number of squatters in the Vallée Pitot Eid Gah area. Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that there is a problem of landslide and that the officers from Japan Corporation has already issued warning that at any time some of these houses may be in a way crumbled down. In the light of the observations made by the Japanese expert, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister give an indication what Government intends to do for those people whose houses are at risk?

**Mr Soodhun:** According to the information that I have, we have already started an enquiry and with the collaboration of my colleagues, Minister of Environment, Minister of Social Integration and Minister of Public Infrastructure. We have already set up a committee with the Japanese experts to look into the case of Vallée Pitot and Chitrakoot. We have already set up a committee and very soon we are coming to a conclusion and we will have a solution.

**Madam Speaker:** Next question!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister mentioned that some of the houses in Vallée Pitot may be affected by the Ring Road track. Is that still the case? Is the Government still going ahead with the Ring Road across Vallée Pitot?

**Mr Soodhun:** According to my information, yes.

### **PORT LOUIS - HAWKERS**

**(No. B/21) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to hawkers operating in Port Louis, he will state the –

- (a) number thereof, and
- (b) measures that will be taken to regulate the situation thereof.

**Dr. Husnoo:** Madam Speaker, as soon as I took office one of my priorities was to look into the issues of hawkers in Port Louis and to come up with appropriate measures to address this problem.

In this context, I started consultation process with all major stakeholders namely the Market Traders Association, the Street Vendors Association and the Central Market Association with a view to obtaining the ideas and suggestions for a long-term, sustainable and workable solution to this issue taking into consideration the following factors –

- (i) the legitimate aspirations of those hawkers to continue their trade so as to earn a decent living to support their families;
- (ii) the qualm of the shop owners and the market traders who have time and again made representations to the effect that hawkers were operating at their doorstep and competing against them, and
- (iii) the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court in August 2012 ordering the City Council of Port Louis and the police authorities to take necessary measures to refrain hawking activities within 500 metres radius of the Central Market.

However the *Front Commun des Commerçants de l'île Maurice* which was invited did not respond positively.

I am informed that surveys were conducted by the City Council of Port Louis in the years 2009 and 2012 which revealed that around 1200 hawkers were operating along the various roads in the city.

I am further informed that two sites have already been identified at ex-CWA building, Decaen Street and the Immigration Square for the relocation of the 1200 hawkers. I personally visited these two sites to assess their suitability in terms of the size, accessibility and availability of basic amenities. I am given to understand that according to a study carried out by the City Council of Port Louis in June 2013, the site at Decaen Street can accommodate about 606 hawkers whereas the one at Immigration Square, 357 hawkers. But I am trying to see if we can accommodate more hawkers on these sites.

However, it is noted that major refurbishment works would have to be carried out at the ex-CWA building to make it functional and basic amenities such as covered stalls, toilet and parking facilities would have to be provided on these sites.

Madam Speaker, the House may wish to note that these works will entail substantial investments and will take time for implementation in view of the procurement procedures. We believe that with the concerted efforts of all the parties, namely the City Council of Port Louis, the Street Vendors Association and other stakeholders, this project can be implemented in about a year.

**Mr Uteem:** The hon. Minister mentioned that the building will take one year, may I know from the hon. Minister what action will be taken, if any, with regard to these hawkers now operating in Port Louis during that one year?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Madam Speaker, as you know, this problem has been going on for ten years or more. I have been here only for two months. I have started working on this project, Madam Speaker. It is going to take a bit of time if we are going to have a durable solution to this problem. I don't pretend I can solve this problem in a few months' time. It is going to take its time, but we are working on it to find a durable solution, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister said that he visited two sites and he mentioned only two sites. I am given to understand that, in fact, he visited three sites with the Lord Maire of Port Louis and others. So, what has happened to the third site that was visited and that is supposed to be included amongst the sites available? Secondly, the former Minister made a statement that the former Minister of Finance that made Rs171 m. available for that project. Is this still available?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, Madam Speaker. In fact, when I did the site visit, I walked from La Gare du Sud to La Gare du Nord. But, it was not just these two sites, there were a lot of sites on the way. A lot of roads were included. I did not mention each and every road specifically. So, we visited quite a number of sites. That's No. 1. Secondly, you are right, there were Rs117 m. earmarked for the project, but, as I mentioned, we are working on these sites and that's going to take a bit of investment. The money is here, we are going to invest it to provide these new facilities to hawkers.

**Mr Mohamed:** The hon. Minister clarifies something. If the money is there provided for by the previous Government, if the sites are there provided for the previous Government, he is not telling the House, I hope, that the procurement process and the preparation and implementation of the previous Government's project to come with the solution will take a year! I am sure that he can find ways and means of being more reasonable with the time that

it would take to implement the project because this goes against the very policy of the hon. Prime Minister, they are going fast, because it is extremely slow.

**Dr. Husnoo:** Madam Speaker, this problem has been there for ages. Nobody has been in a rush to provide the solution for the last ten years. Now they want me to provide solutions very quickly.

*(Interruptions)*

In no way! I am working on it. These sites have been identified. We are planning a new project, better project than what was envisaged previously. That's why we are working....

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Speaker, just after assuming office, the hon. Minister made a statement to the effect that duty-free vehicle would be given to *marchands ambulants*. Can I ask the hon. Minister how this measure will be applied and what is the time frame for the application of such measure?

**Madam Speaker:** Excuse me! I don't think this question can be accepted, because the question is in regard to hawkers, the number thereof and the measure that will be taken to regulate the situation. Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

#### **SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - EDC HOUSES - ASBESTOS**

(No. B/22 ) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the EDC houses in which asbestos is present, in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof that –
  - (i) have been pulled down, and
  - (ii) are still in place, and
- (b) the remedial actions that have been in respect thereof.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, in Constituency No. 14, there are 8 Cité EDC, namely Bel Ombre, Case Noyale, La Ferme, L'Embrasure, La Mivoie, Petit Bien, Surinam

and Tamarin, comprising 479 housing units. Asbestos panels and corrugated iron sheets were used for their construction. The inhabitants of these housing estates are all owners of the housing units.

With regard to parts a (i) and (ii) of the question, I wish to inform that out of the 479 housing units -

- (i) 96 have been pulled down by their owners and have been reconstructed in concrete;
- (ii) owners of 330 housing units have carried out an extension to their existing housing units using concrete materials;
- (iii) 45 housing units are in their original state without any extension. They are being properly maintained by their owners and are in good physical conditions, and
- (iv) eight housing units are in deplorable conditions, out of which four units are occupied and four units are unoccupied.

Madam Speaker, as for part (b) of the question, the inhabitants of these housing estates have been informed of the schemes available for the upgrading or the reconstruction of their housing units. Any house owner who either wishes to upgrade or reconstruct his housing unit may take advantage thereof. The facilities include -

- (i) assistance for the removal and carting away of asbestos wastes;
- (ii) grant, on a priority of consideration basis, for the casting of roof slabs or for the purchase of building materials through the National Housing Development Company Ltd.;
- (iii) subsidised loan facilities from the Mauritius Housing Corporation Ltd., and
- (iv) assistance from the National Empowerment Foundation for the construction of a housing unit.

Madam Speaker, the sensitisation campaign on how to maintain the housing units and on facilities available for construction is an ongoing exercise undertaken by the officers of both the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and my Ministry. I shall personally effect a site visit to assess the situation *de visu*. Besides, I shall immediately request the dedicated Committee at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to assess the situation in those EDC



Housing Estates and to provide an update as well as indicate whether there is any immediate intervention which is required.

I can assure all my hon. Colleagues of No. 14 that we are going to effect a visit with all the hon. Members and with my officers with different Ministries. After our visit, if there is any action to be taken, you rest assured that I'll do it.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Madam Speaker, I welcome the proposal of the hon. Minister and wish to reassure him that my colleagues and myself will be part of the visit whenever he carries the visit in Constituency No. 14. My immediate concern, Madam Speaker, is with regard to the extensions being carried to those houses. The Minister is aware and he stated in his answer that those houses belong to *cités* in that constituency and to poor families and very often they carry out extension works. Is he aware that whenever those families carry out extension works to those housing units, they are exposed to asbestos?

**Mr Soodhun:** I just mentioned that wherever there is an extension, they contact my Ministry which will do the needful with the Ministry of Health to assist people so that, at least, we can take the necessary precautions with the asbestos products. This is being done and this is going to continue to be.

**Mr Mohamed:** I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for his answers. One question that I would like to put is that there is a report that I have come across which is on the Internet, and I believe it was *à un moment commandité* at the time when hon. Lesjongard was himself Minister of Housing and Lands, that talks about the responsibility of Government in all sorts of removal of asbestos and the financial responsibility and liability of Government in such removal which all Governments have not taken up to now. Could he consider, therefore, the possibility of not only assisting in a passive manner but, financially being responsible, as that report said one should be for helping people in carting away asbestos from those houses and also, not to forget - since I am on my feet - if you would allow me, Madam Speaker, that Constituency No. 13, the Cité Batimarais....

**Madam Speaker:** I am sorry, hon. Member!

**Mr Mohamed:** ...is also concerned...

**Madam Speaker:** The question relates to Constituency No.14, let us stick to that.

**Mr Soodhun:** Madam Speaker, I have already answered that we are already giving assistance and, if needed, yes. But, I have mentioned that my colleague from the Ministry of

Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and I are going to work closely so that where it is needed we are not going to refuse. It is not only just to bring the television to assist. We are going to help these people.

*(Interruptions)*

This is not our way just to go for publicity....

*(Interruptions)*

There are five years for election, it is not tomorrow.

**Mr Ganoo:** This is an issue which has been raised several times in this House. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister himself when he was Member of the Opposition asked a question, which I have in my hands. The solution to this problem is that, true it is that a few of these houses have been pulled down and rebuild by the owners, Some are in fair conditions, as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister just said himself but, the fact is that there are still many houses, not only in Constituency No. 14, but in other parts of the country which are still made of asbestos and in which our citizens are still living. We all know that this is a health hazard.

**Madam Speaker:** Question, please!

**Mr Ganoo:** In view of the fact that these houses constitute a health hazard, in view of the fact that the Truth and Justice Commission itself decreed that many housing estates have been constructed with asbestos, “a toxic substance which is damaging to health and that these houses should be pulled down”, and in view of the fact that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister himself, when he was a backbencher, asked a question if Government proposes to pull down these houses and build new ones free of charge - this was the question that was put to the previous Housing Minister of the past Government very often - can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister come up with a special scheme for these old couples because most of them are old people and they are still living in these asbestos houses? True it is, there are many schemes that have been made available, but can the hon. Minister come up with a specific scheme to enable the people who are still living in asbestos houses...

**Madam Speaker:** You have made your point, hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** ... to pull down these houses once for all so that Mauritius can be free of asbestos houses?

**Mr Soodhun:** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I am going to visit these houses and I am going to set up a Committee. Then, we are going to take this into consideration. I have already mentioned that we are going to give priority to all these houses. The hon. Member can rest assured together with all the hon. Members that we are going to sit down and put our heads together, be it Government or the Opposition, and come to a solution.

**Madam Speaker:** The Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn....

*(Interruptions)*

Yes? Okay, one last question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since Government raised the issue of a *plan* Marshall - I think it was during the celebration of the 1<sup>st</sup> of February - can Government give a guarantee to the House that they will include construction or reconstruction of such houses in that *plan* Marshall?

**Mr Soodhun:** Madam Speaker, I just mentioned that we have set up a Committee and the hon. Member is aware, as I have already mentioned, we are going to see to it that we are in a position to see what the situation is exactly and I have already set up an enquiry. After the enquiry, I will be able to know what decision we can take. But, the hon. Member can rest assured that this is not going to be neglected.

**Madam Speaker:** The Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn: Nos. B/6, B/44, B/47. Hon. Members as a matter of courtesy I wish to inform you that the afternoon session will be chaired by the hon. Deputy Speaker as I am leaving on overseas mission. I now suspend the sitting for one and a half hour.

*At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

### **JET SKI & SEA KART – LICENCES**

**(No. B/23) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the licences issued by the Tourism Authority for the operation of Jet Ski and Sea Kart around the island, he will state if his Ministry is envisaging the cancellation thereof.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that it has received five applications for the operation of jet ski for the period July 2013 to December 2014. Thereafter, the Tourism Authority issued five Letters of Intent as follows -

- Sports Craft Enterprises on 25 July 2013, at Black River;
- Blue Shell Co. Ltd. on 23 July 2013, at Pointe aux Piments;
- North West Fun Ltd. on 23 July 2013, at Trou aux Biches;
- Watercraft Enterprises Co. Ltd. on 31 July 2013, at Pointe Jérôme, and
- Cap Nord Ltd. on 02 December 2014, at Cap Malheureux.

I am also informed that the Tourism Authority has issued Tourist Enterprise Licences and Pleasure Craft Licences to the following three companies -

- Blue Shell Co. Ltd., which started operations on 27 December 2013
- North West Fun Ltd., which started operations on 30 December 2013
- Sports Craft Enterprises, which started operations on 12 May 2014

The conduct of jet ski activities were subject to conditions imposed by the Tourism Authority and clearance from the Ministry of Fisheries. The licences of Blue Shell Co. Ltd and North West Fun Ltd were suspended on 30 December 2014 for non-compliance with the main conditions imposed by the Ministry of Fisheries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am further informed that the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands has on 30 January 2015 advised that with a view to reinforcing conservation of the marine eco system, it will not entertain any application for jet ski in Mauritius waters. The Tourism Authority has been requested to take note for compliance.

In regard to sea kart, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that six Letters of Intent were issued for the period February 2014 to January 2015, including one which was issued nine days before the General Elections. Subsequently, five were cancelled due to non-compliance with the conditions and withdrawal of applications. One Letter of Intent is still valid up to December 2015.

The Tourism Authority has issued a pleasure craft licence to Fun Adventure Ltd. which is valid until April 2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Fisheries has advised that the operation of Sea Kart can only be carried out outside the lagoon and excluding –

- (i) Identified potential aqua culture sites;
- (ii) Marine protected areas;
- (iii) Diving sites, and
- (iv) Dolphin watching sites.

The conduct of this activity is, therefore, being closely monitored and a decision thereon will be taken by the Tourism Authority at the appropriate time in the light of the advice of the Ministry of Fisheries.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we refer to the last part of my question, it deals with cancelling of those licences. I have heard the Deputy Prime Minister saying that objection has come from the Ministry of Fisheries. Do we understand that there is no clearcut policy from Government with regard to the use of jet ski and sea karts.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** There is certainly a clear-cut policy with regard to jet ski. The Ministry of Fisheries has advised that it is no longer in favour of operation of jet ski in Mauritian waters. That is clear. Now the first two licences were suspended because they have violated the conditions imposed by the Ministry of Fisheries which had inspected them before the general elections, in fact, but they were suspended after the election. There remains a third operator which is in Black River which has not been suspended because they have not got any adverse report, so far. However, in view of the advice given and the opinion of the Ministry of Fisheries concerning operation of water ski, that file has been sent to the State Law Office for advice or for further action. In any case, it comes up for renewal in May. I must say that, as a matter of substance and also in form, I am against what has happened. Substance, I believe that the jet skis are not appropriate for the environment conditions in Mauritius. In form in that these licences were issued, they were issued in total secrecy, without any transparency at all.

**Mr Lesjongard:** From the reply of the Deputy Prime Minister, I understand that he is dead against the use of jet skis in our lagoons. Then, do I understand that Government will shortly take a decision to ban the use of jet ski?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** The hon. Member should not put words in my mouth. I said that it is being reviewed in the light of the letter from the Ministry of Fisheries and once

the review happens and with the help of the State Law Office, we will take a decision as to whether or not to renew the licence at Black River.

**Mr Bérenger:** At least, in the past, there was a policy when hon. Bodha was Minister, there was consensus, jet skis were banned. Take a decision. Why do we have to wait for a negative comment from the Ministry of Fisheries, Tourism Authority, those who will be appointed, revoked, replaced? Why not take a policy decision? Why not going back to the policy decision that was taken and ban it?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Ban it for future licences, of course, but the existing licence, you will understand, that it is different, in that the licence has been given, with a question mark as to how the licence was given. We should not also do something that is illegal. It must be done following legal advice from the State Law Office and that is how we operate.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm to the House, because from what he stated, no prior consultation was carried out with Ministries concerned, for example, the Ministry of Fisheries before the licences were issued?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** No, no, it is not what I said. I said that the licences were issued, in utmost secrecy. In fact, even a few days before the licences were issued, a parliamentary question was asked to the Minister. He did not mention at all that the letters of intent had already been issued six months before. So, the whole thing was shrouded in secrecy. Therefore, there was no transparency and no chance for anybody else to make an application for these licences.

## **DOLPHIN & WHALE WATCHING - MEASURES**

**(No. B/24) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the activity of dolphin and whale watching, together with swimming with dolphins, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to whether –

- (a) it is conducted in a responsible and sustainable manner, and

- (b) whether he is aware of the dangerous and chaotic situation prevailing during the holding thereof and, if so, will he state the measures proposed to be taken in relation thereto.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that the Tourism Authority (Dolphin and Whale Watching) Regulations 2012 were promulgated in November 2012 with a view to –

- (i) ensuring that swimming with dolphins and whale watching activities are carried out in a responsible, orderly, safe and sustainable manner;
- (ii) disturbance to cetaceans is minimized, and
- (iii) the safety and security of swimmers and protection of cetaceans are ensured.

The regulations provide, *inter-alia*, that the activity is conducted during specified hours, pleasure crafts keep a reasonable distance from the cetaceans to prevent casualties/incidents by propellers, an insurance cover as well as services of life-savers, medical first aid kit and an oxygen kit are available at all times.

I am, however, informed that these regulations have met with much resistance from operators on the ground that they were costly to implement and are therefore not being fully complied with.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have placed the notion of quality in service delivery at the forefront of my agenda. I will, therefore, review the whole situation in the very near future and take measures as appropriate, in particular training of skippers, the observance of safety and security norms and well-being of the dolphins. Meanwhile, I have directed the Tourism Authority to make an assessment of the situation before deciding on the way forward.

**Mr Lesjongard:** I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for his reply. True it is that this activity attracts a lot of tourists, but he will agree that the way it is being carried out right now is in a very irresponsible and unsustainable manner. What we need to do is to supervise that activity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please put the question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I know what measures...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please put the question!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Yes, let me come to my question. You should give me some time to come to my question.

*(Interruptions)*

*Je comprends que ce n'est pas grave. Excusez-moi, M. le président !*

**Mr Lesjongard:** What measures he is envisaging to take so that, in the meantime, these activities are carried out in a responsible and sustainable manner?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** On this point, we have no issue, we are on the same wavelength. The activity should be encouraged because it is popular with tourists and also takes care of the livelihood of a number of people on that west coast. It should be carried on, but it should also be carried on in a way that it does not ruin our reputation with tourists, it does not endanger the dolphins and also it does not endanger the tourists who may be swimming or whatever with the dolphins. So, this whole thing has got to be taken into account. It has taken a lot of time, there is a lot of resistance, but at some point in time, we will have to insist that everything happens according to the rules and regulations and according to what international practice recommends.

**Mr Ganoo:** If I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister properly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand that he intends to conduct a review exercise of the whole situation, including probably the legislation also. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether in view of the review exercise that he proposes to conduct, he will kindly have proper consultations with the different associations of pleasure craft owners so that a consensus might be eventually reached?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I, in fact, saw in a file that my predecessor had a lot of discussions with a lot of people, but could not reach consensus. So, hopefully, we can reach consensus, but at the end of the day, we will have to do what we have to do.

**Mr Bérenger:** Sir, I take it that the regulations referred to must have been prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority. Can I know who has the responsibility to supervise the application thereof and if it is the Coast Guard then we have a real problem. I know that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister himself criticised the Coast Guard some time back, about a year ago. Rightly so! So, if it is, if I am right, we have a big problem and can I insist, therefore, that the Coast Guard - I think it is under the Prime Minister's control - that we must put our heads together? Otherwise the supervision will remain as it is, that is, dead!



**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the same issue that we have all over Mauritius, in fact, the implementation of laws and regulations are sometimes haphazard, but I agree that we must ensure that once we have the regulations that they are, in fact, enforced and that is the issue. The enforcement of the regulations is the main issue.

### **EBENE LINK ROAD & VANDERMEERSCH STREET - CONGESTION**

**(No. B/25) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to road congestion along Ebene link road to Vandermeersch Round about and Vandermeersch Street, Rose Hill towards Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if urgent measures will be taken under the Road Decongestion Programme to alleviate the hardship of road users thereat.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government is fully aware of the hardship of road users plying on the Ebène Link Road particularly between the roundabout on Julius Nyerere Avenue and that of Vandermeersch Street and along the Vandermeersch Street itself. In the past various surveys have been carried out by the Road Development Authority and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and several options have been proposed.

However, the best option remains the construction of the A1-M1 road and bridge between Coromandel and Sorèze and as a connection to Port Louis to the completed Ring Road under the proposed Road Decongestion Programme. This will provide great relief to the traffic along Vandermeersch Street and its interchange with Ebène and Réduit.

However, in the meantime, the following mitigating measures are being considered –

- (i) A third lane will be created from the roundabout at Ebène Link Road with Vandermeersch Street to this junction with Malartic Street;
- (ii) Provision of a dedicated right turning lane from Vandermeersch Street and Malartic Street;
- (iii) Prohibition of vehicular traffic from Sivananda Avenue and Malartic Street into Vandermeersch Street;
- (iv) Traffic lights at the junction of Vandermeersch and Malartic Streets will be put off and the following junctions will be controlled by the Police –
  - (a) Junction of Larché Street and Malartic Street;
  - (b) Junction of R. Rouchecouste Street and Charles de Gaulle Street

(c) Junction of Port Louis/St Jean Road and Malartic Street.

- (v) Traffic from Royal Road, Rose Hill and proposing to join Vandermeersch Street will have the option of doing so through Reverend Lebrun Street.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these measures will be made operational during morning and afternoon peak hours only.

**Mr Bhagwan:** May I ask the Minister whether he had a fresh look since he has mentioned this question having a third lane along Vandermeersch Street from the roundabout of the CEB. I think the whole population of that area will strongly object to that because we have, I would say, the most popular Promenade Armand which people have been using for years. Once a Minister came there and we said we would have a *grève de la faim* there. So, I am sure the whole population of Rose Hill will strongly object to that, if he could review. Also, among the measures proposed by the Minister here I reiterate the issue of having a bypass, a small bridge behind the QEC. There have been surveys and site visits but, unfortunately, that area was not on the list of the decongestion programme. Can the Minister have a fresh look with his Officers to have this bypass behind the Ebène SSS to go near the Reverend Lebrun Street?

**Mr Bodha:** There are two observations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. First of all, as regards the third lane, I have, in fact, raised this point and I have been told that the encroachment is going to be only on one metre. So, I do not think that the whole area as regards ...

*(Interruptions)*

Okay, let us see what can be done then.

Second, as regards the bridge, it is not a small bridge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have been told that, in fact, it is a major bridge. Anyway, in the light of what hon. Bhagwan has said, I am going to review the situation and I would be very grateful to him if he has any other suggestions and proposals because at the end of the day what we want is a better fluidity of the traffic.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Pending the proposal mentioned by the Minister, can I make a request to him? The measure proposed about putting Police Officers here and there has been on paper for years, but on the field, in fact, there is congestion the whole day. One day we will have a problem when somebody is sick and needs to go to hospital. Can the Minister, at least, liaise

with the Commissioner of Police to see that there are regular Police Officers because once we were having Police Officers only when a Deputy Prime Minister was residing there? Can I make a request to the Minister to have Police Officers posted at the different junctions nearly the whole day?

**Mr Bodha:** I will do what can be done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Will the Minister agree that the roundabout at the junction between Vandermeersch and the Ebène Link Road is of no use?

**Mr Bodha:** Well, that is a technical question. I think we may ask the TMRSU to see whether this can be done.

**Mr Uteem:** I heard the hon. Minister mentioning again the bridge which is going to link A1M1 which had been referred to by the previous Government. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a time frame, procurement procedures have already been followed, where is the status and when can we expect the opening of that bridge and road?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are now seeing what are the priorities of the decongestion programme and we are going to have consultations with the Minister of Finance and we will have a set of priorities. It is going to be one of the priorities.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Sir, in the main planning of the Ebène Cybercity and the whole region, questions were asked here previously and mention was made, and I know that there was sufficient land reserved for the construction of a new bus terminal being given that the Place Margeot had been built over the years for the eastern region. Can I make a request to the Minister to have a fresh look of having a new bus stand project be implemented which will help to solve part of the problem?

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into the matter.

#### **ALBION VILLAGE - CITE MARCEL CABON– SEWERAGE**

**(No. B/26) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the acute sewerage problem at Cité Marcel Cabon Albion Village, he will –

- (a) state if urgent consideration will be given for the compulsorily acquisition of land for the installation of a leaching plant thereat, and

- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for regular pumping of individual sewers to alleviate the hardship of the inhabitants.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavello):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from available records, the President of Albion Village Council, as far back as January 2013, made representations through the hon. Member regarding this unacceptable and parlous state of affairs. Yesterday, I visited the site in company of two officials of the Authority. Indeed, there is an acute waste water issue in that area.

The House will wish to note that in 2013, the Authority identified a plot of land for the placement of a common septic tank. Designs were also put up. The matter unfortunately rested there. I have now requested the Authority to revisit the matter urgently.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I have asked the Authority to effect at least a one-off pumping. I understand that this cannot be done on a regular basis.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I raised that issue on many occasions here that there was a plot of land identified and it was the responsibility of the Minister of Housing to identify the owner and have a compulsory acquisition. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to, at least, make a request to the Minister to, at least, speed up ....

**Mr Collendavello:** Of course!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, I have not yet finished!

**Mr Collendavello:** Sorry!

**Mr Bhagwan:** With due respect, can I make a request to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to ask the Minister of Housing to expedite matters if they have identified the owner of the land and if it is okay, then to proceed accordingly?

**Mr Collendavello:** The question is longer than the answer!

*(Interruptions)*

The plot of land is identified, but those were the days of indolence when nothing was being done! Now things are being done; I have talked to my hon. colleague...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Collendavelloo:** We will follow up and the cost is Rs8.95 m...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** We will definitely follow up here and come and see to it whether the reply of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has been initiated.

The Vice-Prime Minister has informed us of one off. If the Wastewater Management Authority does not have funds - I still remember that there was a case which was made with the National Empowerment Foundation where it was agreed that the NEF, being given that people of that housing estate are of very low income, they can't even afford to pay this private lorry, I'll say once per day, at least regularly, every fortnight or every month to have this cesspit emptied.

**Mr Collendavelloo:** Well, what I have been given to understand is that regular pumping on a regular basis would not be practicable and would not be feasible. However, I have seen the site, it is impossible as it is just near a school, the health hazards are extreme and we are going to do this pumping. The problem is that houses have been built, I understand, on the place where the water table is very high. So, this is why in the rainy season and since we have been in office, rain has not stopped falling. In Albion it is extremely high, but now we can do the one off pumping and we will see how to monitor the situation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next question, hon. Uteem!

#### **STC - MOGAS & GAS OIL – MONEY COLLECTED**

**(No. B/27) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to Mogas and Gasoil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the amount collected, in terms of –

- (a) excise duty;
- (b) Maurice Ile Durable levy;
- (c) contribution to Road Development Authority;
- (d) contribution to Rodrigues transportation and storage;
- (e) contribution to the Build Mauritius Fund;

(g) contribution to subsidy on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG);

(g) flour and rice, and

(h) Value Added Tax for 2014 and estimated for 2015, indicating if Government will consider reviewing the various components of the price structure thereof to bring down their prices.

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, with regard to Mogas and Gas Oil, the amount collected in respect of the various components are as follows –

S/N		Payable to	Product	2014 Rs M	2015 (Estimated) Rs M
(a)	Excise Duty	Mauritius Revenue Authority	Mogas	1,896	1,966
			Gas Oil	738	886

(b)	Maurice Ile Durable Levy	Mauritius Revenue Authority	Mogas	53	55
			Gas Oil	67	81

(c)	Contribution to the RDA	Road Development Authority	Mogas	325	337
			Gas Oil	391	470

(d)	Contribution to Rodrigues Transportation and Storage	Rodrigues Subsidy Fund	Mogas	9	29
			Gas Oil	11	43

(e)	Contribution to	Ministry of	Mogas	176	728
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	Build Mauritius Fund	Finance	Gas Oil	224	1,075
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(f)	Subsidy on Rice, Flour and LPG	State Trading Corporation	Mogas	263	273
			Gas Oil	336	403

(g)	VAT	Mauritius Revenue Authority	Mogas	1,107	1,171
			Gas Oil	1,147	1,462

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the last part of the question, I propose to consult my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development on the possibility of reviewing the price structure for Mogas and Gas Oil.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, only six days before the announcement of the new price structure, the hon. Minister gave an interview to the press and it is important to have announced a substantial fall in the price of Gas Oil and Mogas, and I quote –

*“La decision de faire baisser les prix, fait ressortir le ministre, sera prise afin que la population mauricienne se rende compte tout de suite que l’Alliance qu’elle a portée au pouvoir, tient à respecter son engagement pris pendant la campagne electorale pour rendre la vie des mauriciens moins pénible. »*

May I know from the hon. Minister, why is it that only one month after coming into power they are getting back to what was one of their central themes in their electoral campaign?

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in January 2015, the price structure for Mogas and Gas Oil was reviewed to increase, first, the contribution to the Build Mauritius Fund from R1 to Rs4 and the contribution to the Rodrigues Transportation and Storage from 5 cents to 16 cents.

We are all aware that the country needs immediate measures to face the water problem and, as a responsible Government and as announced in the Government Programme, the water supply problem is our priority and huge amounts have to be invested to solve the water

distribution problem. That is why the contribution to Build Mauritius Fund was increased from R1 to Rs4 to have the necessary funds.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** The hon. Minister has announced that just on this item of Build Mauritius Fund, we are going to pay Rs1.2 billion from users abroad. May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that only those who are road users who buy oil and gas oil, have to fork out for national problems as opposed to the general budget that is done every year under the supervision of this Parliament? Why are we creating this huge fund which will not be under the scrutiny of Parliament?

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the country is highly indebted and if we start taking debts again, we will be facing a situation which will be very difficult for the forthcoming generation. So, the best decision was to increase the Build Mauritius Fund to solve the water problem.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the figures, but I did not take them down. The contribution to subsidy on three things: LPG gas, flour and rice. We have been given the amount of funds collected. Can we have on these three items –

- LPG subsidy;
- Flour subsidy, and
- Ration rice subsidy

the sum actually spent in 2014? We have the sum collected, how much was spent on these three items of subsidy?

**Mr Gungah:** I don't have the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is the last supplementary question on this.

**Mr Uteem:** The hon. Minister announced again that a substantial amount of money will go to the MID Fund (Mauritius Ile Durable Fund). May I know from the hon. Minister why are we still paying for the MID Fund when the Government has already abolished the Office of MID Commission?



**Mr Gungah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MID does not fall under my responsibility and it will be presumptuous on my behalf to decide whether the subsidies should be discontinued or continued.

**QUARTIER SOLITUDE, PLAINE MAGNIEN – INHABITANTS -  
RELOCATION**

**(No. B/28) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the implementation of any project for the relocation of the inhabitants of Quartier Solitude, Plaine Magnien and, if so, will he state where matters stand.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, my attention had already been drawn to the issue by the hon. T. Henry, hon. M. Jhugroo and hon. B. Hurreeram.

I am informed by the Officer in Charge of the Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd that the Solitude village at Plaine Magnien is located on the approach path of aircraft serving the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport. This represents a hazard to both the safety of aircraft operations and to the health of the inhabitants of the said locality.

AML commissioned a survey and a valuation exercise in 2008 in view of acquiring the properties of Solitude to create an operational safety buffer zone around the airport and to relocate the inhabitants. The survey was carried out by Alan Tinkler & Ramlackhan Company with a view to acquire the properties of solitude to create an operational safety buffer zone around the airport. This exercise revealed that 26 households were concerned and out of which 17 have the title deeds and 9 did not possess title deeds or lease agreements.

In August 2009, the then Government had set up a Ministerial Committee to look into the question of relocation of the inhabitants of Solitude Village in Plaine Magnien. The Committee had a first meeting on 27 August 2009 and took cognizance of the situation. The Committee recommended amongst others for the relocation of illegal occupants by Government and for IML to acquire the land from property owners concerned.

I am informed by AML that it is still waiting to proceed with the acquisition of the said land once the case of illegal occupancy of the portions of land have been resolved by the relevant authorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have spoken with my colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands who is agreeable, in principle, to the relocation of the nine

squatters. I have requested IML to update the evaluation exercise with a view to compensating the land owners concerned once the squatters have moved.

**Mr Ramful:** I am thankful to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister for his answer on this question, but may I also invite him to the fact that to look into the matter and if he could expedite matters given that I have in my possession a letter from the District Council of Grand Port to the effect that the residence and land owners of that particular area are being denied their right to effect constructions on their respective properties and may I table this letter?

It is a letter dated 05 May 2014 from the Acting Chief Executive of the District council.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I agree with the hon. Member and with all the other hon. Members from that Constituency that these families whether they be squatters or land owners are living in a difficult situation and I will do my utmost to expedite matters.

#### **CAMP CAROL - STATE LAND - LEASE**

**(No. B/29) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Government decision to allow leaseholders of State land having a housing unit to purchase their respective plots of land, he will state where matters stand in regard to the leaseholders of State land at Camp Carol, Kenya in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the amendment of the State Land Act in 2013 to allow for the sale of State land on which stands a residential unit at a nominal price of Rs2000., on 04 February 2014, an advertisement was made by my Ministry inviting applications for the purchase of State land by building site lessees. Some 120 applications were received from the lessees of Camp Carol, Kenya for the purchase of their respective plot of land. It is to be pointed out that in cases where the residential sites are more than 10 perches in extent, these plots cannot be sold and would remain on lease.

Given the haphazard development by the lessees in the locality whereby the boundary limits have not been respected, my Ministry is presently carrying out a fresh survey to

determine the exact extent of State land being occupied by each lessee. The ongoing survey exercise is expected to be completed in four months' time.

If the plot of the State land leased is found to be of an extent of 10 perches or less, a survey will be drawn up in respect of each plot. The building site lessee will then be requested to contact a Notary to complete procedures for the purchase of the State land. In case of plots exceeding 10 perches, a new lease agreement will be granted to the lessees.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that the former Government has spent more than 10 years with this problem, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister if he can settle this matter as early as possible?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would just inform the Chief Whip of the Government that in four months' time the survey exercise would be completed.

### **BANGLADESHI WORKERS - PERMITS**

**(No. B/30) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the granting/renewal of permit for the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers, since July 2005 to date, he will state if he will consider the advisability of setting up a fact-finding committee or a full-fledged Police inquiry to be carried out thereinto.

**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the grant of Recruitment License is governed under the Recruitment of Workers Act, 1993 by the Licensing Authority, namely, the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry. In accordance with the same legislation, appeals against the decision not to grant recruitment licence are referred to for consideration by the Minister.

I am also aware that the Director of Audit has, in his report for the year ended 31 December 2013, pointed out some shortcomings in the manner applications and appeals for the grant of Recruitment licence have been processed. According to a report, amongst others, consolidated returns which were to be submitted within a prescribed timeframe were not being forwarded by agencies. Moreover, some agencies were operating despite the expiry of their licences and appeals made after the prescribed delay of ten days have been entertained and granted.

In some cases recruitment licence had been issued on appeal despite objection from the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the shortcomings highlighted by the Director of Audit, I have instructed my Permanent Secretary to carry out an in-depth enquiry into the matter. If such enquiry discloses any irregularities or malpractices, I will then decide as to whether it would be appropriate for the setting up of a Fact-Finding Committee or to order a full-fledged Police enquiry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also proposing the setting up of a High-Level Committee under the aegis of my Ministry to look into issues relating to the employment of foreign workers in general, including the review of the existing regulations, the streamlining of procedures, as well as the proper operation of recruitment agencies in line with the new policy orientation of this Government as announced in its Programme 2015-2019.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Gobin!

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the expected time frame for this in-depth enquiry being conducted at the level of Permanent Secretary from the hon. Minister, please?

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, I cannot say for now. It will take the time it will take.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Jhugroo:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister how many Bangladeshi workers have been recruited since July 2005 up to now?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Callichurn:** I don't have the figures actually, in 2005 up to now, I can tell for 2014, the figure is around 21,252.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the Consulate for Bangladesh was the father of the former Minister and one of the recruiting agents there was the brother-in-law of the former Minister?

**Mr Callichurn:** For which period is the hon. Member referring to?

*(Interruptions)*

Unfortunately, I do not have the information at hand. I need notice of the question.

## **RIVIÈRE DES ANGUIILLES - DAM - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/31) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a dam at Rivière des Anguilles, he will state if -

- (a) a tender exercise thereof was launched and, if so, when, and
- (b) the financing thereof has been secured until its completion.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a), the Central Procurement Board is now evaluating certain expressions of interest for Consultancy for the design, review and construction supervision of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam. I have to inform the House that this project dates back to at least September 2012 when the *Agence Française de Développement* agreed to fund the project in an amount of 62.5 million Euros. Because of inordinate delays on the Mauritian side, the AFD cancelled the loan agreement.

The financing will have to be reviewed probably from Government side, we shall see where to get the money.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Jahangeer!

**Mr Jahangeer:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can the hon. Minister confirm if the consulting engineers involved in Bagatelle Dam will be barred from participating in this project?

**Mr Collendavelloo:** Sorry, I did not hear the last part. If the consulting engineers of the Bagatelle Dam will be...

**Mr Jahangeer:** Will be barred?

**Mr Collendavelloo:** Well, they have been barred. Coyne and Bellier were the consultants for Bagatelle Dam. They made a mess of it all and the result is that now we have perhaps to sustain arbitration proceedings. Coyne and Bellier also obtained the consultancy for the Rivière des Anguilles Dam. At least one good decision was taken to cancel them immediately and they are now, I understand, barred from applying for consultancy. I hope the Central Procurement Board will follow this consistently.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister what was the amount, the finance offered by *l'Agence Française de Développement* and the conditions - I take it was a loan - and what is, at this stage, the revised estimated cost to come of that dam?

**Mr Collendavelloo:** The initial estimated project cost was Rs4.5 billion. Now, it has got to be updated, of course, because this amount is the initial one. We will update this in the light of what the new consultants will have to say. We hope that we can start the project by March 2017 to end in December 2020.

To be more direct to the hon. Leader of the Opposition's question, it was a loan amount of Rs62.5 m. from the *Agence Française de Développement*. The duration was to be November 2012 to 31 March 2018 with the date of first disbursement being 07 January 2013. This deadline not having been respected, the loan agreement was cancelled.

*(Interruptions)*

No. 62.5 million Euros. The cost Rs4.5 billion and the loan was in Euros, 62.5 million.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Minister mentioned the Consultants with regard to the project. Can he give the names of the consultants?

**Mr Collendavelloo:** No. I am afraid not. It is with the Central Procurement Board. There is a shortlist. They are now going to identify the Consultant.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Minister talked about the inordinate delays which hindered the progress of this project. Can he elaborate on what he means by inordinate delays?

**Mr Collendavelloo:** Well, I enquired into this. The official version which was given to me was because of the Coyne and Bellier problem with Bagatelle Dam, they terminated the agreement with the Consultants and that led to these delays. I am not too sure I follow this official explanation very well, let us take it for what it is worth now, but the fact is that there were inordinate delays.

### **RODRIGUES - CYCLONE BANSI**

**(No. B/32) Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management whether, in regard to the aftermath of cyclone Bansi in Rodrigues, he will state -

- (a) if consideration will be given for the setting up of a Rodrigues Emergency Rehabilitation Programme, in partnership with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, for the implementation and emergency projects for the construction and rehabilitation of -
- (i) bridges;
  - (ii) drains;
  - (iii) masonry;
  - (iv) retaining walls, and
  - (v) retention basins, as a matter of urgency and, if so, when and, if not, why not, and
- (b) any other remedial measures envisaged for any other affected sectors.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the removal of all cyclone Bansi warnings over Rodrigues on Saturday 17 January 2015, I led a Task Force to Rodrigues comprising representatives of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, the Special Mobile Force and the Central Electricity Board. On Sunday, 18 January 2015. The main objective of the Task Force was to take stock of the impacts of Cyclone Bansi in Rodrigues and to ensure that prompt action is taken by the concerned authorities regarding reconstruction works. This exercise was carried out jointly with representatives of the Disaster Committee of Rodrigues.

Fortunately, except for the electricity network and agriculture, Rodrigues did not suffer considerable damages in terms of infrastructure and buildings, and no casualties were reported. At the time of the visit, around 80% of the electricity network had already been restored. With the support of the Task Force, the whole network was restored after a few days. In the circumstances, the need for the setting up of a Rodrigues Rehabilitation Emergency Programme is not felt. However, during the visit of the Task Force, certain works were identified for disaster risk reduction and mitigation. These include the gradual replacement of the '*Radiers*' located along the coastal roads by bridges, construction or rehabilitation of drains along existing roads as appropriate and the construction of a flood wall. The Public Infrastructure Division of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has been advised to look into the execution of these works. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport has agreed to provide technical assistance whenever required.

With regard to part (b) of the question, coastal erosion was noted between Anse des Anglais to Grand' Baie. My Ministry will shortly arrange to send experts from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency presently working at my Ministry and a team of officers to carry out a technical assessment and to advise the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on remedial measures. Thank you.

**Mr Leopold:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there are no armed vehicles in Rodrigues which can be used during adverse seasons?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was observed and remedial actions will be taken once we make the necessary arrangements for housing the appropriate infrastructure. So, armed vehicles will be provided to hospitals and also to certain emergency services.

#### **MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES – MV MAURITIUS PRIDE**

**(No. B/33) Mr J. Leopold (Second Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mauritius/Rodrigues route, he will state where matters stand as to the operation and to the proposed replacement of the MV Mauritius Pride.

**Mr Koonjoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the first part of the question the MV Mauritius Pride, a 25-year old vessel, stopped all operations in February 2014 for technical reasons.

According to information received from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd, the vessel had already undergone dry docking and thorough repair works in 2013 at a total cost of some Rs70 m. and, in 2014, an additional Rs100 m. of new repairs to maintain its seaworthiness as well as its compliance with the mandatory Conventions of the International Maritime Organisation.

The Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd. sold the ship in September 2014 for the sum of USD 1,080,000, (i.e. some Rs30 m). The House may wish to note that the purchase price of the vessel was around Rs200 m.



In order to fulfil the transport requirements of the Rodrigues People, Mauritius Trochetia has stopped its services to Reunion and Tamatave and is currently focusing its services only to Rodrigues and Agalega to ensure that there is no disruption of service.

Operations of Mauritius Trochetia to Reunion and Tamatave are expected to resume with the arrival of a new container vessel.

As regards the proposed replacement of MV Mauritius Pride, the previous Government took the decision to replace the vessel by a container vessel of 350 to 500 container capacity as a back-up for Mauritius Trochetia. In this perspective, following an expression of interest, an international shipbroker, Howe Robinson, has been appointed to advise and recommend on the purchase of second hand container vessel as a back-up for Mauritius Trochetia. I understand that the ship broker has, since 27 November 2014, already submitted its proposal to the Central Procurement Board for consideration. The Central Procurement Board has shortlisted a number of vessels, but given the specificities and the operational constraint of the port of Port Mathurin, none of these shortlisted vessels meet all the criteria and technical requirements to guarantee a safe and risk free berthing at Port Mathurin. In this regard, further investigation and diligence is being carried out to find out whether some of the shortlisted vessels could still berth at Port Mathurin with a minimum acceptable level of risk.

Subject to the above outlined limitations and the timely approval of the Central Procurement Board and the availability of funds, the replacement vessel could be finalised around April 2015.

**Mr Leopold:** Given the fact that the Mauritius Trochetia is the only vessel which is serving Rodrigues to make the liaison within the islands of Rodrigues and Mauritius and the Mauritius Trochetia is going to dry dock for maintenance, can I ask the hon. Minister what are the dispositions he has taken so as to ensure liaison between the two islands and whether the hon. Minister is contemplating lowering the airfare so as to allow people to move freely from Mauritius to Rodrigues?

**Mr Koonjoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the airfare is concerned, I am unable to answer this question but, so far, the replacement of Trochetia if in case something happens, we are taking precautions and in case we get the money from the Ministry of Finance we are thinking of either to buy a new vessel or to charter a vessel. We are looking forward to it; arrangements have been made in case anything happens to charter a vessel.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister what procedures have been used before selling Mauritius Pride and who purchased it?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The Mauritius Pride was sold in September 2014 to RJ Maritime Consultancy Limited for USD 1,080,000, as I said, plus an additional of approximately USD 72,000 for its remaining bunker on board, that is, a total of approximately Rs36 m. net of any brokerage commission.

**Mr Bérenger:** Clearly there is danger being given that we are relying on only one vessel, Le Trochetia, which is not a new vessel. I heard the hon. Minister say that in case - he seems to have thought about it - Le Trochetia is not available, runs into trouble, he will have to charter a vessel. Can I know whether the advance work has been done, that a list of possible chartered vessels that can be chartered has been identified? Because the hon. Minister, himself, pointed out that Port Mathurin is a difficult harbour, not any chartered vessel will be able to come in and out. Do we have a list of possible chartered vessels?

**Mr Koonjoo:** We are looking upon that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But, I can guarantee the hon. Leader of the Opposition that everything will be done so as no problem arises between now and 15<sup>th</sup> of April.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Next question!

#### **DOMAIN NAME “MU” - REGISTRATION**

**(No. B/35) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the domain name “mu”, he will state –

- (a) the name of the person/entity in whose name the domain is registered, indicating in the case of a corporate body the name of the -
  - (i) directors;
  - (ii) shareholders, and
  - (iii) beneficial owners thereof, and
- (b) the measures Government proposes to take with a view to securing the domain name “mu” in the name of the State, indicating the time frame thereof.

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Dot Mu (.mu), which is the country code Top Level Domain for Mauritius, is registered in the name of Internet Direct Ltd. In relation to part (a) (i) of the question, the present Directors of the said company are Mr Prefumo Jean Pierre Guito and Mr Subbiah Subramaniam.

In relation to part (a) (ii) of the question, the shareholders are Mr Kwok Kem Yen Kwok Vee Kong also known as Yann Kwok and Ms Kwok Kem Yen Ah Chook Yolande, each holding 95% and 5% shares respectively out of stated capital of Rs50,000, as evidenced from records obtained from the Registrar of Companies.

With regard to part (a) (iii) of the question, it would appear that the beneficial owner is Yann Kwok as he has been the relevant party who has continuously approached the previous Government in respect of renting or selling of the gov.mu second level domain. According to records and Notes of Meetings available at my Ministry, he has had several rounds of discussion and negotiation with Mr Gunputh Rao Rama, the then Senior Adviser of the previous Prime Minister. These negotiations have revolved between an amount of Rs25 m. claimed by Mr Yann Kwok in October 2013 and Rs864,217,926 claimed by him in October 2014. For the .govmu domain while for the claim made for .mu in 2005 was to the tune of – this is what I am informed - USD20 m.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, according to international best practices as recommended by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, what is called commonly as ICANN which is, in fact, the international body responsible for internet domain names a Multi-Stakeholders Forum for Internet Governance should be set up in Mauritius. This Multi-Stakeholders Forum would comprise representatives of the local internet community, including amongst others, the private sector and academia.

In this context, my Ministry has engaged discussions with the different stakeholders to form this forum so that we can promptly act.

My Ministry has also applied to join the Government Advisory Committee of ICANN which will allow Mauritius to voice out the danger of one man holding the Dot Mu Domain.

The establishment of the Forum will enable the local internet community to take an active participatory role in the policy formulation for the administration of the .mu domain

and internet domain names in Mauritius, with a view to securing the .mu country code Top Level Domain.

In fact, the purpose of the re-delegation is to secure this .mu administration in the name of the Multi-Stakeholders Forum and not in the name of the State as per the guidelines of ICAC.

I am informed that the process of re-delegation is long haul and has to have the participation of the internet community at large and a case be made to ICANN for re-delegation. Further, the Forum should be ready in terms of technology and resources to be able to actually take over in case re-delegation is approved - which explains the long haul nature of the process.

My Ministry is also liaising with IT consultants on the way forward.

**Mr Gobin:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister mentioned claims for certain payments, may I know from him whether these payments have been made or they have been put on hold?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, those who are responsible for that company, Internet Direct Ltd, there have been negotiations with them. These were the figures that were proposed to Government, but I understand that there has been no conclusion of any sort of amicable settlement. Therefore, no payment has been made.

**Mr Bérenger:** May I know from the hon. Minister the date, the year on which the domain name "mu" was registered in the name of the – I won't try to repeat the owners, but the company we are talking about? Has an inquiry been carried out to find out whether anybody was responsible for not an individual company, but for Mauritius to register that domain name, directly or through any State entity? Has somebody somewhere failed to assume his responsibility?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have the exact date, but I am informed that it was registered by Mr Kwok. I can find out the exact date and provide it to the House.

With regard to if there has been any irresponsibility from anybody in Government at any time, well, that also I would have to find out in order to provide the House with this.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any formal agreement between the Government and this company, and if this is the case, whether he is prepared to table a copy of that agreement?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Well, I must say, it has been difficult for me to find out all the information about this process. I am still looking into it, but, as at now, from what I know, I have been informed that there has been no agreement as such. But I can tell the House that I am looking into the matter and trying to get more information. Of course, what I have said today, if there is any rectification to be made, I will definitely come to the House for that.

### **CHEBEL & BARKLY – HOUSES - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/36) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the construction of houses at Chebel and Barkly, Beau Bassin, he will state –

- (a) the number thereof as at todate under construction, giving details of the -
  - (i) commencement date thereof, and
  - (ii) expected date of completion thereof
- (b) if proper drainage and amenities thereof have been provided therefor and
- (c) the criteria that will be used for the allocation thereof.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I must point out that there is no house construction site in Barkly as such. I am sure that my colleague is aware. I am informed that, as a matter of fact, the National Housing Development Company Ltd. is presently embarked on the construction of 93 housing units in Chebel under three different work contracts as follows -

- (i) The construction of 73 housing units over a plot of land of an extent of 5A38P in Chebel, near Barkly. The works started in May 2014 and are expected to be completed in October 2015.
- (ii) The construction of eight housing units on a vacant plot of land of an extent of 37 perches within Firinga Two NHDC housing estate. These works started in April 2014 and are expected to be completed in March 2015.
- (iii) The construction of six housing units on a vacant plot of land of an extent of 35 perches within Firinga Two NHDC housing estate and six additional

housing units on a plot of land of an extent of 41 perches within Firinga Four NHDC housing estate. These works started in October 2014 and are expected to be completed in August 2015.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that, in all housing projects, provision is being made in the relevant contracts for basic infrastructure such as road, footpath, drains, individual water and electricity supply and appropriate waste water disposal.

I shall impress on the NHDC the need to ensure that contractors strictly respect their contractual obligations.

With regard to part (c) of the question pertaining to criteria for allocation, I am informed that -

- (i) applicants should not be owner of a house or of a residential plot of land, and
- (ii) their monthly household income should be between Rs6,200 and Rs10,000 and applicants should have been registered in the Social Register of Mauritius with the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions.

**Mr Bhagwan:** In fact, there are two sites, the Firinga is at Chebel and the first site is at Maingard and Barkly. Where the site is situated it is a low range – *terrains marginaux que l'industrie sucrière a donné au gouvernement*. Can I impress upon the Minister, for the first site at Barkly Maingard, that he requests the NHDC to revisit the site because it is found in a very low region and is a flood prone area and also to have this survey being effected and make sure that these new houses may not be found in flood prone regions?

**Mr Soodhun:** Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to take the suggestion of hon. Bhagwan into consideration.

#### **LA NICOLIERE RESERVOIR – POTABLE WATER**

**(No. B/38) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the La Nicolière Reservoir, he will state if any recent test has been carried out to ascertain that potable water thereof is free from cyanotoxins and cyanobacteria known as blue-green

algae and, if so, the outcome thereof, indicating if the water supply thereof as at to date is safe for consumption.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo):** I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the quality of raw water at La Nicolière reservoir is being regularly monitored. So far, although the presence of algae in the raw water has been detected, no toxic-green algae have been found in the course of any of the groups test at the CWA laboratory.

Constant monitoring is being effected. Raw water is treated and is therefore safe for consumption save that usual precautions such as boiling of water should be followed. The La Nicolière treatment plant will be upgraded. For that purpose, Consultants have already been shortlisted.

### **WORKERS (FOREIGN) – WORK PERMIT**

**(No. B/39) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplémousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to foreign workers, he will state -

(a) the number thereof from;

(i) India;

(ii) China;

(iii) Bangladesh;

(iv) South Africa, and

(v) other countries who are under contract of employment, indicating if

Government proposes to renew their work permits, and

(b) if Government intends to -

(i) impose a security bond on foreigners seeking work permit in Mauritius, and/or

(ii) review the ratio thereof to that of local workers with a view to reducing local unemployment.

**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the record available at my Ministry, there are currently around 38,843 foreign workers in Mauritius among whom 7,815 Indians, 3,114 Chinese, 21,252 Bangladeshi, 112 South Africans and 6,550 from other countries.

It has been the policy of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to allow companies to have recourse to foreign labour when the skills required are not

available locally. In this regard, there are guidelines in accordance with section 4(1) of the Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) Act, 1993 for applications for work permits.

The renewal of work permits is presently being considered on a case to case basis so as not to cause prejudice to companies which already have projects or orders in hand.

However, as I indicated earlier to my reply to PQ B/30, in line with the Government Programme 2015-2019 to the effect that the recruitment of foreign workers will be limited to scarcity areas and the work permit regulations will be reviewed, I am reiterating my proposal for the setting up of a high level committee under the aegis of my Ministry to look into the issues relating to employment of foreign workers in general, including the review of existing regulations, the streamlining of procedures, the need for a security bond or deposit, the ratio of foreign workers to local workers as well as the proper operation of recruitment agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Mohamed!

**Mr Mohamed:** May I ask the hon. Minister as regards security bonds and his intention to review it, is he aware that it was reviewed in actual fact by the previous Government under the Directors of the then Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance who thought that it would be business-friendly to do away with the bonds?

**Mr Callichurn:** I am aware, but we are planning to review the whole system.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry has got any control with regard to the recruiting agents from India, China and Bangladesh?

**Mr Callichurn:** From China we do, from India as well we do, but unfortunately not from Bangladesh.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from hon. Minister whether on an on-going basis there is anyone in his Ministry who monitors the employment contract of these workers because we have a lot of workers who seem to be working in Bakeries and other things as opposed to their place of work for which their permit had been allocated?

**Mr Callichurn:** Unfortunately, I don't have the information at hand. I need notice of the question.

**Mr Mohamed:** With regard to the same issue and as the question puts it reviewing the ratio and with a view of reducing local unemployment and now since I see that there is a new portfolio to that Ministry which is very good news that specifically of training which is an excellent and welcome news, would the hon. Minister consider - since now he holds the portfolio for training - to enlist, since I gather the MITD (The Mauritius Institute for Training and Development) as well as the Human Resource Development Council is now, I hope,



under his portfolio, since he is - if I am not mistaken now, as I said good news - the Minister of Training?

**Mr Callichurn:** Yes indeed. But we have not come to a decision regarding the institution being transferred to my Ministry. We are still working on it and we should come with a solution shortly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question! We've spent a lot of time on this question. I would rather move to the next question!

**Mr Ganoo:** With regard to reviewing the ratio of local workers in order to reduce local unemployment, may I ask the hon. Minister when this exercise would be carried out and if he could pay a special attention to the building and construction sector where, in fact, the employment of foreign workers is impacting heavily on the employment of our local masons? And may I also, in the same breath, appeal to him to have a look at a recent report which was commissioned by the building and construction companies written by Mr Pierre Dinan in which the latter highlighted the very extremely urgent situation of our local workforce in this particular sector?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Ganoo, you cannot introduce new matters which have not been said before. Thank you.

**Mr Ganoo:** I think it is directly relevant to part (ii) of the question; the question of local workers with a view to reducing unemployment. I was drawing the Minister's attention to the Construction Sector, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr Callichurn:** I take good note of the hon. Member's point and I shall eventually when working on the paper take into consideration your proposition.

## **RIVIERE DU REMPART & PAMPLEMOUSSES DISTRICT COURTS & POLICE STATION - RENT**

**(No. B/40) Mr K. Teeluckdharry (Second Member for Pamplemousses & Triolet)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the premises rented by Government for housing the District Courts of Rivière du Rempart and Pamplemousses and the Pamplemousses Police Station, he will state -

- (a) the terms and conditions thereof, indicating the amount of rent paid therefor on a monthly basis, and
- (b) if Government proposes to -

- (i) construct new buildings or
- (ii) restore the existing ones.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Master and Registrar that both the Pamplémousses and Rivière du Rempart District Courts are located in the same rented building situated in Pamplémousses. The details regarding the terms and conditions are as follows -

- (i) The lease agreement started on 16 October 2013 and will end up on 31 October 2018.
- (ii) The monthly rent payable is Rs400,000 exclusive of VAT escalating annually at the same rate as the Consumer Price Index established by the Central Statistical Office or 5% per annum whichever is the higher.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) (i) and (ii) of the question, Government has in the 2015-2019 programme provided for the review and upgrading of all District Courts premises to ensure better services to all stakeholders.

As regards Pamplémousses Police Station, I am informed by the Police Department that it is housed in a rented building owned by Mrs Sohawon Bibi Azizah. It is of approximately 2917 square feet and is situated at Royal Road Pamplémousses.

The Lease Agreement has been renewed for a period of two years with effect from 01 February 2014, at a monthly rental of Rs37,500, as recommended by the Valuation and Real Estate Consultancy Services, Valuation Department.

As regards the construction of new buildings for Pamplémousses Police Station and restoration of existing ones, I am also informed that provision has been made in the 2014 Budget for the construction of a new Police Station at Pamplémousses. In that connection, a portion of land of the extent of 0A 45 P has been acquired by the Government and vested with the Prime Minister's Office. Preliminary design of the new Police Station is in progress at the Architecture Section of my Ministry and is expected to be completed by mid-March 2015.

**Mr Teeluckdharry:** This answers my question. I have no further question.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister if any tender exercise was carried out before these premises were rented and if he can give the name of the owner?

**Mr Bodha:** From the information provided to me, in July 2013, the Judiciary launched public advertisement inviting prospective owners to submit a building for rent to house both the District Courts, but only one, Mascarene Court submitted an offer.

**Mr Baloomoody:** I understand my question will be answered by the hon. Prime Minister and it will come as Written Question now.

#### STATE LANDS - BENEFICIARIES

**(No. B/42) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State lands, he will state if consideration will be given for an in depth inquiry to be carried out to establish -

- (a) the beneficiaries thereof for the last 40 years, and
- (b) the number thereof that are still being used to generate income.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (a) of the question, hon. Members would surely understand that compilation of such a list would be quite a time consuming exercise, as we are considering a forty year period. The more so that...

*(Interruptions)*

*'Coffre la pas encore ouvert.'*

The more so that during such a long period there have been numerous cases of transfers and also sale of State lands to lessees. However, the information is being compiled and, at the earliest possible - before five years - it will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Mohamed:** I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. I see and I totally agree that 40 years is indeed a long time, but since the new Government has been talking and making a lot of do about the importance of transparency which I totally applaud, the importance of being clear and open which I totally applaud, therefore, as far as the 40 years is concerned, I only wanted to find a roundup figure. But because transparency is important, would the hon. Minister therefore consider putting up a special team in order - in the name of that

transparency that you rightly hold up to uphold - to work on this before the year is over because for this Government, this transparency is indeed important?

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Member is aware since I have been appointed as Minister and you have seen the transparency starting, you know.

*(Interruptions)*

So, I can assure the hon. Member this is for the first time that at the Ministry of Housing and Lands, we are going to appoint a full-time lawyer and we have already set up a committee since the following day I have been appointed as Minister. I am sure I am coming in this august Assembly to give the long list which concerns - you know - 40 years, but not 40 years, recently we can start from 10 years. I think it would be enough to understand.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over!

## MOTIONS

### 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 Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

(4.02 p.m.)

### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - MOTION OF THANKS

**Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, namely -

"That an Address be presented to the President of the Republic of Mauritius in the following terms -

"We, the Members of the Mauritius National Assembly, here assembled, beg leave to offer our thanks to the President of the Republic of Mauritius for the Speech which he

has addressed to us on the occasion of the Opening of the First Session of the Sixth National Assembly."

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like first of all to congratulate Madam Speaker for her nomination as Speaker of the National Assembly, particularly as the first woman Speaker of this august Assembly. I am happy that Parliamentary representation of our gender will increase in the future as stated as follows in the Presidential Speech, on page 58 -

“Our electoral system will be reformed to introduce a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly and guarantee better women representation.”

The word ‘better’ is not devoid of meaning because in the current historical period, women have still not obtained their deserved place at all levels of the Government, of the State generally and in all other sectors of our society. In this context, I will quote Louis Aragon, one of the greatest modern French thinkers, who wrote, in 1963 -

« *L’avenir de l’homme, c’est la femme. Elle est la couleur de son âme.* »

*(Interruptions)*

I wish to thank sincerely the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and the Leader of the House, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, for having entrusted to me the presentation of the motion of thanks in response to the Presidential Address. This is indeed a great honour bestowed upon me, as a member of the National Assembly for the first time, and on the occasion of my Maiden Speech.

The great Charles Darwin said, I quote -

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

This Government is precisely proposing its programme, for the five years to come, under the title ‘Achieving Meaningful Change.’

Mauritians are both very intelligent and responsive to meaningful change. They know that now is the time for real, positive and decisive change. And that is exactly why they voted this Government into office on the basis of the programme now contained in the Presidential Speech, while vigorously rejecting at the polls the former Government’s electoral programme.

*Mr Deputy Speaker*, je vais poursuivre mon discours en français pour qu'il soit mieux diffusé et compris par la population, du fait que nos médias sont pour la plupart francophones.

Tout d'abord, à la faveur de ce '*Maiden Speech*', je parlerai, le devoir du député l'exige, de ma circonscription de Grande Rivière Nord Ouest/Port Louis Ouest, mais dans le contexte du discours-programme. C'est une honte pour la République de Maurice qu'une des régions de sa capitale ait été aussi négligée par les autorités pendant les quelques dix dernières années. Le discours-programme présente, dans ce contexte, une lueur d'espoir pour ma circonscription.

Je suis fière d'avoir été choisie pour la représenter et c'est aussi une des régions les plus défavorisées du pays. Je vais défendre farouchement, et en toute indépendance, les intérêts de mes mandants. Je suis bouleversée par la situation scandaleuse, concernant l'eau, le grave manque de logements décents, les bidonvilles d'une atroce misère, comme à Balloram Lane, Pailles, et ailleurs, l'exclusion socio-économique, le manque d'infrastructures sportives, un grave problème de drogue, l'inégalité et la grande pauvreté qui y règnent - des problèmes d'une ampleur phénoménale. Je me crois autorisée d'invoquer l'esprit du discours-programme pour plaider pour un '*meaningful change*' dans ma circonscription.

Et pour me ranger aussi aux côtés de mes mandants dans leur méfiance face au projet de *CT Power* qui, dans l'état actuel des choses, manque de transparence et leur fait craindre pour leur santé. Ils sont aussi - et je les soutiens - révoltés par une odeur nauséabonde provenant de la station de traitement d'eau usée qui envahit la raison, rendant misérable la vie des résidents, exigeant une solution radicale quel qu'en soit le coût. Nos pêcheurs sont très affectés par la destruction des récifs par la population et les effets néfastes des travaux dans le port, ce qui affecte tragiquement leur gagne-pain et interpelle les autorités surtout dans la région de Bain des Dames.

L'ancien gouvernement et l'ancienne administration municipale qu'il contrôlait ont laissé perdurer un grave manque de drains surtout dans les quartiers et morcellements habités, de La Butte à Richelieu, ainsi qu'une absence de diverses autres mesures contre les inondations, une saleté répugnante qui affectent les rues, les cours d'eaux et l'environnement en général. Il y existe aussi un manque d'infrastructures sportives dans des régions comme Camp Benoît, Pointe aux Sables et ailleurs. Et quand il en existe comme à Vallijee, les terrains sont peu ou pas entretenus ou irrigués et restent fermés pendant des mois alors que,

par exemple, l'irrigation goutte-à-goutte est une solution pour garder les terrains de foot verts pendant toute l'année. Enfin, il faut créer dans la capitale des routes piétonnières embellies et touristiques comme en Europe ou aux États-Unis, pour concilier les intérêts des commerçants qui ont pignon sur rue avec ceux des marchands ambulants, dont beaucoup viennent de ma circonscription, pour que tout ce monde-là, qui contribue à l'économie interne du pays, puisse opérer et prospérer.

M. le président, de l'inégalité, je citerai un philosophe français célèbre, André Comte-Spoville, qui a écrit en 2004, dans son 'Guide Républicain' -

« L'égalité des chances, c'est le droit de ne pas dépendre exclusivement de la chance, ni de la malchance. C'est le droit égal, pour chacun, de faire ses preuves, d'exploiter ses talents, de surmonter, au moins partiellement, ses faiblesses. C'est le droit de réussir, autant qu'on le peut et qu'on le mérite. C'est le droit de ne pas rester prisonnier de son origine, de son milieu, de son statut. C'est le droit d'être libre, en se donnant les moyens de le devenir. C'est protéger l'avenir, autant que faire se peut, contre les injustices du passé, et même du présent. »

L'éducation postsecondaire et la formation professionnelle permettront la libération de la pauvreté, si l'égalité des chances les rend accessibles. Bien sûr! Venant d'une famille pauvre, je peux témoigner que je suis sortie de la misère grâce à l'éducation et à la formation professionnelle. J'ai eu la chance d'accumuler une expérience considérable dans les professions de marketing, d'enseignante, de travail avec les femmes et enfants victimes de violence familiale, et de me former professionnellement comme psychologue et avocate. Je me suis fait élire députée pour participer à ce que le discours-programme appelle un '*meaningful change*' en proposant, entre autres choses, une fourniture d'eau adéquate tous les jours, un programme massif de construction de logements pour les plus démunis, l'éducation tertiaire étendue au plus grand nombre et la création d'un grand nombre d'emplois, par - entre autres choses - un nouveau miracle économique.

Je me crois autorisée d'affirmer que l'éducation doit être réformée de manière à être adoptée par nos compatriotes les plus démunis comme l'outil par excellence pour leur libération de leur quotidien de misère et de souffrances. Ainsi, j'accueille favorablement le chapitre sur l'éducation dans le discours-programme. Et cet engagement à la page 6, où le nouveau gouvernement lie directement l'éducation à la libération de l'individu de la pauvreté, je cite -

*“Government will set up a special financial assistance scheme to help students from modest families to pursue tertiary education and thus contribute to their own economic and social advancement”*

Cependant, j’insisterai sur la base de mon expérience dans l’enseignement au Canada, que dans chaque classe dans toutes les écoles, on devrait placer un deuxième enseignant. Soit un *Teacher Assistant*, comme on l’appelle au Canada. Il faudrait recruter et former quelques milliers de *Teacher Assistants*. Cela permettra aux enseignants de chaque classe de leur déléguer la responsabilité d’offrir un encadrement supplémentaire séparé aux élèves jugés difficiles ou à problème, surtout en retard sur les autres enfants. Ce système permet de réduire les échecs, y compris dans les écoles ZEP. Il existe des diplômes professionnels de *Teacher Assistant* délivrés dans les grands pays, par diverses institutions postsecondaires. Ces quelques milliers de jobs peuvent être créés très vite.

M. le président, petite fille encore, je fus formée politiquement par mon père ouvrier et militant qui me tenait la main pour m’emmener dans les années 70 aux meetings du MMM pour écouter ses plus grands ténors, y compris l’actuel Premier ministre et l’actuel *Leader* de l’opposition, promettre des changements profonds et transformateurs de notre société, un socialisme à visage humain. Militante précoce, je me suis déjà battue seule, et j’ai obtenu une victoire face à une grande propriété sucrière alors que j’étais collégienne, lorsque les grands patrons ont cédé à ma révolte contre la discrimination, et permis aux enfants des ouvriers et des laboureurs d’aller à l’école et au collège dans les autobus de la propriété. Ce fut un exemple de *‘meaningful change’* qui mit fin à une pratique discriminatoire, et qui a vu aussi l’éclosion de ma vocation de politicienne, inspirée par le désir que notre société soit fondée sur l’égalité des chances.

M. le président, je vais essayer d’expliquer l’expression *‘meaningful change’*, thème central du discours-programme.

La République de Maurice a un besoin urgent d’une renaissance glorieuse après dix années de déclin généralisé. Jamais, dans notre histoire nationale, n’avons-nous souffert concernant nos meilleures valeurs morales, un déclin d’une ampleur aussi grande que durant cette sombre période, venant d’un des niveaux les plus élevés de l’appareil d’État. Puisque l’exemple vient d’en haut, ce déclin s’est aggravé et répandu pour menacer les fondements mêmes de la République en détruisant l’éthique très stricte exigée pour la bonne gouvernance.



Nous avons besoin d'un '*meaningful change*' après tant d'abus de pouvoir, d'érosion de nos valeurs démocratiques, d'arrestations fréquentes et arbitraires de journalistes, de syndicalistes, d'opposants politiques, de protestataires et d'autres personnes exprimant leur désaccord avec le gouvernement du jour. On a fermé le parlement pendant presque une année par crainte d'une mise en minorité – ce qui, en droit, au Canada, a été comparé à un coup d'État contre la Constitution de Westminster. Des légistes ont rappelé que ce fut la raison qui valut au roi Charles 1<sup>er</sup> d'Angleterre d'avoir la tête tranchée par le parlement anglais en 1649. A Maurice, le peuple a pacifiquement décapité l'ancien régime dans un grand sursaut démocratique.

Le '*meaningful change*' est d'importance vitale pour la nation, parce que la norme, durant ces dernières années, a été un manque de transparence dans l'administration publique, allant des nominations, recrutements et promotions en violation de la démocratie, à l'allocation sans appels d'offres de contrats de plusieurs milliards de roupies.

Le discours-programme prescrit un '*meaningful change*' aussi parce que des tendances sectaires et divisionnistes ont été encouragées de l'intérieur de l'appareil d'État, une pratique qui ne peut que fragiliser l'unité nationale. Aucun gouvernement n'a le droit de s'identifier avec un mouvement sectaire, quel qu'il soit, comme l'a fait l'ancien régime, et d'introduire dans l'appareil d'État des gens qui prônent publiquement leur foi dans le communalisme.

Le discours-programme vise à ce que la nation tourne le dos aussi à des pratiques de dilapidation des fonds publics atteignant des proportions records, du jamais vu durant toute l'histoire du pays, de par leur ampleur. Cela concerne, entre autres, de nouvelles autoroutes qui se sont effondrées pour avoir été mal construites, pourtant à coups de milliards de roupies, le Bagatelle Dam dont le fond ne cesse de s'enfoncer dans la terre, et des mégaprojets, véritables mirages ou éléphants blancs, comme le Dream Bridge au-dessus de Port Louis et les projets de Jin Fei et de Neotown, dont rien que les préparatifs et les infrastructures préliminaires ont coûté encore des centaines de millions de roupies. '*Meaningful change*' veut dire la fin de ces pratiques scandaleuses et le retour d'un gouvernement dont le Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, réalisa, en contraste, des mégaprojets magnifiques et productifs comme le Caudan Waterfront, le Midlands Dam ou la Cybercité, méritant pleinement, au passage, le titre de Père de l'île Maurice moderne.

M. le président, le discours-programme veut créer une nouvelle île Maurice. Et c'est pourquoi il y a tant de nouvelles têtes dans cette auguste Assemblée Nationale, du côté de la majorité gouvernementale. Le peuple a voulu d'une nouvelle génération de politiciens dont je suis fier de faire partie. Notre tâche sera de guider la nation plus loin en avant en ce 21<sup>ème</sup> siècle. L'Alliance Lepep a forgé un judicieux mélange entre de nouvelles générations et des aînés de calibre, tel le Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Et c'est de partout qu'est venu le cri de ralliement du peuple autour de cette alliance durant la campagne électorale, et qui se résumait au mot 'changement', reflété aussi dans l'expression 'viré Mam'. Un mot, une expression, une volonté forte de changement que le discours-programme se devait de refléter.

Le discours-programme est un agenda pour la renaissance de notre nation en termes de moralité, de chances égales pour tous, de méritocratie, d'unité nationale, de renaissance économique, de gouvernance transparente et de combat contre l'exclusion et la pauvreté.

M. le président, le discours-programme propose un '*meaningful change*' au niveau de l'organisation et du financement des élections. Un autre changement a déjà commencé pendant la campagne électorale au No. 1 (Grande Rivière Nord-Ouest/Port Louis Ouest) qui s'est déroulé d'une manière civilisée. Ce qui est, je l'espère le prélude aux élections futures. Le respect mutuel a prévalu entre nous et nos adversaires de l'Alliance opposée. Si je dois remercier avant tout ceux qui m'ont élue, je me dois aussi de saluer mes adversaires dont deux ont retrouvé le chemin de cette auguste Assemblée.

Certains trouveront difficile de croire que je n'ai pas une seule fois mentionné le nom de mes adversaires lors de mes meetings. Il est donc prouvé qu'on peut gagner une élection autrement. Et qu'il suffit à l'électeur de découvrir le potentiel, la personnalité et les autres qualités positives d'un candidat, ainsi que son programme et celui du parti qu'il représente, pour décider pour qui voter – non pas sa capacité de dénigrer l'adversaire.

M. le président, le 10 décembre dernier, la victoire massive de l'Alliance Lepep aux élections générales, fut un signe indéniable d'un ras-le-bol populaire face à la manière de gouverner de l'ancien gouvernement. Le secret d'une victoire d'une telle ampleur se trouve dans le projet de société présenté au peuple Mauricien par l'Alliance Lepep tout au long de la campagne électorale, aujourd'hui officialisé dans les 66 pages du discours présidentiel.

M. le président, nous avons un programme magnifique pour gouverner durant les cinq prochaines années. C'est une chance unique offerte au présent gouvernement d'entrer dans

l'histoire à la manière des autres gouvernements dirigés par Sir Anerood Jugnauth comme Premier ministre. Ils l'avaient alors fait en apportant un miracle économique sans précédent dans l'histoire nationale. Et un partage accru du gâteau national au plus grand nombre de Mauriciens, faisant reculer la misère et les angoisses qu'elle entraînait dans une majorité de familles jusqu'au début des années 80. Le chômage fut vaincu, les salaires s'améliorèrent, une race de nouveaux petits, moyens et gros entrepreneurs fit surface, et la situation matérielle de tout le monde fit un grand bond en avant.

La nouvelle majorité dirigée par Sir Anerood Jugnauth a promis au peuple mauricien un nouveau miracle économique et je ne doute pas qu'on pourra rééditer en tel exploit. Nous avons de quoi pour nous inquiéter de la baisse de l'euro, mais l'optimisme gagne du terrain aux États-Unis, la Chine et l'Inde continuent à investir massivement en Afrique, le continent d'à côté dont nous sommes partie intégrante.

Le nouveau gouvernement va offrir à nos PME, quelques R10 milliards via une nouvelle banque (page 40 du discours-programme), et aussi des avenues pour leur marketing sur ce continent. En Afrique, les classes moyennes ont dépassé la taille de celle de l'Inde. Elles sont avides de produits d'importation et ont de plus en plus des moyens d'acheter et aussi de faire du tourisme et du *shopping duty-free* chez nous.

L'honorable ministre des Finances et du Développement économique a annoncé que les PME deviendront l'épine dorsale de notre économie. Elle joue déjà un grand rôle dans l'économie nationale comme l'ont souligné des économistes, dont un livre sorti récemment, racontant l'histoire de l'entreprise privée depuis les origines du pays sous la Compagnie Hollandaise des Indes, jusqu'à nos jours, *'In Search of Excellence'* qui affirme qu'il y aurait à Maurice un total d'au moins 175 000 petits entrepreneurs.

Un total de 92 000 d'entre eux était officiellement recensé en 2007 par le *Central Statistics Office*. Il faut y ajouter 20 000 très petits planteurs de cannes, qui vendent leurs produits aux six grandes usines du pays appartenant au gros capital. Ce livre estime qu'il faut y ajouter encore les autres petits et moyens entrepreneurs comme d'autres petits agriculteurs, les éleveurs de porc, les pêcheurs, et les petits commerçants et même les marchands ambulants qui ne vivent que de leurs activités commerciales.

Les 92,400 petits opérateurs, parmi les 175 000 estimés par l'auteur, contribuaient à l'économie mauricienne, selon le CSO, la somme de 43 milliards de roupies en 2007.

Toujours en 2007, ces petits opérateurs ont investi 1 milliard de roupies, sans compter leurs confrères agricoles et les autres petits producteurs et commerçants. C'est parmi ce type d'entrepreneurs dont le nombre va jusqu'à près de 200 000 mauriciens qu'on trouvera ceux qui démocratiseront l'économie nationale.

M. le président, très peu de mauriciens avaient réalisé jusqu'ici que des PME sont en position d'entrer, de plain-pied, cette fois, dans des activités importantes d'exportations/réexportations sur notre propre continent, l'Afrique, lorsque celle-ci se réveillera, comme c'est le cas actuellement. L'Afrique enregistre des taux de croissance économique record, qui nous rappellent le réveil des géants comme l'Inde ou la Chine.

Il y a eu durant les siècles passés, un '*playing field*' totalement inégal entre, d'une part, ce qu'on appelle le secteur privé 'historique' ou 'le gros capital' contrôlé par un tout petit groupe, et, d'autre part, le reste de nos entrepreneurs.

Je ne jette pas la pierre sur ce secteur privé qui se considère 'historique' car il a bien travaillé et a créé beaucoup de richesses au fil des siècles. Mais l'émergence des petites et moyennes entreprises et de nouvelles grandes entreprises dans une société devenue démocratique apportera certainement une plus grande égalité de chances, où le gouvernement précédent a échoué, c'est-à-dire une véritable démocratisation de l'économie.

M. le président, le discours-programme souligne que le pays sera gouverné dans la transparence. Car ce sera un gouvernement avec le peuple et pour le peuple, ce qui a été accepté et largement salué et sanctionné par l'électorat. Cette identification obtenue entre le gouvernement et le peuple est en contraste avec le rejet par l'électorat du pouvoir monarchique et autoritaire qui nous a précédés, et qui s'était juré de perdurer, tout au moins pendant sept ans encore - le peuple mauricien a finalement envoyé ce projet dans les oubliettes de l'histoire.

Concernant le projet de diffuser la connaissance de l'histoire nationale comme proposé dans le discours-programme, à la page 20, par un musée de l'histoire et de la culture, c'est une belle initiative. Toutefois, si la vraie histoire nationale continue à ne pas être enseignée, on pourrait voir renaître des dinosaures qui risquent de contaminer les jeunes qu'ils pourraient inspirer encore avec leurs concepts rétrogrades. Ces dinosaures tentent encore d'effacer le miracle économique des années 80 de la mémoire nationale. Nous avons aujourd'hui une nouvelle génération de politiciens qui, au gouvernement et aussi dans

l'opposition, et je dirais le *Leader* de l'Opposition lui-même, voudrait que la nation jette un regard neuf sur notre histoire. Nous voulons faire reculer encore plus, bien des maux, préjugés et malaises qui perdurent depuis l'indépendance, entretenus par une déformation de l'histoire nationale à des fins politiciennes. L'histoire nationale doit être libérée des préjugés et des ethnocentrismes qu'elle a charriés dans pratiquement tous les livres et manuels prétendant raconter cette riche et passionnante histoire mauricienne, d'une époque à une autre.

Le refus d'enseigner l'histoire nationale aux mauriciens depuis leur plus tendre enfance dans les écoles et collèges continuera à faire un tort immense à l'unité nationale, ce qu'a d'ailleurs fait comprendre *the Truth and Justice Commission* dans un langage très clair. Il existe déjà depuis belle lurette une nouvelle tradition académique d'écrire l'histoire nationale sans les visières de l'ethnocentrisme et du fanatisme politique, et la nouvelle génération de politiciens qui a émergé aux élections du 10 décembre doit bien le savoir, quels que soient les partis auxquels ils appartiennent.

Je conclus sur ce sujet par une citation du premier tome, publié en 1897, d'un des livres préférés de deux très grands tribuns, les frères Bissoondoyal, Basdeo et Sookdeo, 'Histoire de Maurice' par Evenor Hitié, un ouvrage dont les copies du deuxième tome furent, dit-on, brûler par des membres de l'oligarchie économique de l'époque : Evenor Hitié a écrit : 'le premier livre d'une nation, c'est son histoire.'

M. le président, le discours-programme ne restera pas un vain mot si nous ne réalisons pas ce qu'il propose pour réduire et vaincre les inégalités, la discrimination et le manque de confiance de la population dans l'impartialité de nombreuses institutions, dont l'État lui-même. Ce programme propose à la page 4, '*A transparent and merit-based recruitment and appointment policy to ensure meritocracy.*' Je cite, à la page 9 –

« *A considerable number of well-remunerated seasonal jobs will be created in the cruise, shipping and hospitality sectors. The recruitment and training exercise will be carried out in an open and transparent way under the aegis of the Government.* »

Et à la page 30 –

“*Government firmly believes that in order to achieve results, the Police Force must attract and retain the best competencies. To promote transparency and meritocracy, an independent body will be set up to conduct examinations within the Police.*”

On lit à la page 64 que le nouveau gouvernement vise à “*making opportunities more equal for all our fellow countrymen.*” Notons l’accent qui est mis, de manière répétitive, sur les notions d’égalité des chances et de transparence dans les nominations et les recrutements et aussi, à la page 55, dans l’octroi des contrats. Ce manque de confiance est la source de tous les malaises qui divisent la nation. La situation a empiré durant ces dernières années avec un népotisme et un favoritisme effrénés. On a alloué des contrats, des terres de l’État, des emplois et diverses autres faveurs à une clique dont les principaux membres font chaque jour la une de la presse à la faveur d’enquêtes ouvertes par le nouveau gouvernement. Le discours-programme se propose de mettre fin à ces pratiques inacceptables qui ternissent l’image du pays à l’étranger.

Les nouvelles générations de Mauriciens croient de plus en plus dans les notions d’égalité de chances et de transparence. Celles-ci constituent une revendication massivement soutenue le 10 décembre par une révolte de l’électorat contre ce qui a été une violation systématique de ces valeurs pendant presque 10 ans. Presque un demi-siècle après l’indépendance, le peuple mauricien cherche toujours à vivre dans un Etat Mauricien qui donnerait d’en haut, un exemple qui serait suivi par tout le reste des institutions publiques et les institutions privées, en termes d’égalité des chances et de transparence.

M. le président, il n’y a pas que les perceptions d’inégalité au niveau de l’éducation, de l’emploi et de l’allocation des contrats. Toutes les composantes de la population, sans exception, doivent se sentir adéquatement représentées à tous les niveaux de l’appareil d’État. C’est d’ailleurs une des raisons de l’existence des sociétés socioculturelles et religieuses qui s’aventurent dans le champ de la politique. Si les perceptions d’inégalités de chances et de représentation persistent, notre société pourrait un jour être livrée à tous les extrémistes qui, croyez- moi, savent en profiter.

Le peuple mauricien avait soif d’un changement profond, du fait que de nombreux maux et malaises rongent la société mauricienne depuis trop longtemps. À lire le discours-programme, deux éléments importants en émergent. Premièrement, l’actuel gouvernement y exprime son intention de corriger les nombreux écarts du précédent régime, tout en déclenchant également un nouveau miracle économique. Deuxièmement, il promet de mettre fin à tout ce qui nous divise depuis l’indépendance, soit les soupçons et autres malaises, réels ou perçus, que certains utilisent pour dresser les uns contre les autres, les diverses composantes de notre population arc-en-ciel.

Un gouvernement responsable, tout comme les principaux partis politiques qui alignent leurs candidats et cabinets ministériels fantômes ou réels, sur la base d'une telle représentativité s'efforcent de donner le sentiment à chaque composante de la population qu'elle sera adéquatement représentée à tous les niveaux de l'État et de la société. Ainsi, le discours-programme vise à promouvoir l'égalité des chances, y compris dans le recrutement des policiers.

Il faut mettre fin aux hypocrisies qui nous dictent que le sentiment d'inégalité et d'exclusion, au niveau de la représentation politique et parlementaire, devrait être dissocié de l'exclusion socio-économique. L'honorable ministre des Finances et du Développement Économique a tiré la sonnette d'alarme sur les conséquences qu'il dit '*explosives*' de l'inégalité socio-économique, laquelle est source d'une pauvreté abjecte. Mais le sentiment de l'inégalité est aussi dans les esprits. Et le peuple a approuvé par son vote une Alliance Lepep qui a refusé, à juste titre, de mettre fin au système constitutionnel correctif qui rassure toutes les composantes de la population sur le plan de la représentation parlementaire et gouvernementale.

Ce système ne fut pas introduit pour accentuer le communalisme, mais, au contraire, pour en atténuer les effets dans le sillage des campagnes électorales où tous les *front benches* et listes de candidats sont, et seront pour longtemps encore constitués, pour, comme on le dit tout haut et même officiellement, « rassurer toutes les composantes de notre population arc-en-ciel ». Et c'est absolument faux que de prétendre le contraire ou qu'il n'y aurait plus d'arc-en-ciel, qui, en vérité, est une magnifique structure naturelle, à la fois unie et plurielle et qui est, à juste titre, comparé à la nation mauricienne, elle aussi unie autant que plurielle.

M. le président, le pays au monde, où la majorité comme les minorités sont les plus protégés, est le Canada. J'y ai travaillé pendant plusieurs années. Dans les entreprises, une hotline est affichée pour toute personne qui se sentirait attaquée dans ses droits pour des raisons de discrimination sur tous les plans, race, qualifications académiques, culture, religion couleur ou genre. Ce pays recense fièrement toutes les composantes de son bel arc-en-ciel multiethnique, multi-religieux et multiracial. Sans ce recensement, il est impossible d'identifier légalement et continuellement les composantes de la population, majorité comme minorité, pour mieux les protéger, tous, sans exception, contre toute forme de discrimination, surtout dans le recrutement et l'emploi dans les secteurs public comme privé. Et, sur le plan scientifique, le recensement permet de mieux comprendre la sociologie du pays et même

d'aider aux recherches médicales concernant les facteurs génétiques des maladies chez différentes couches de la population. Ainsi ces recensements revêtent une importance cruciale.

Maurice est tout aussi multiethnique, multiculturelle, multi-religieuse et multiraciale que le Canada. Qui dit égalité des chances, dit aussi représentativité à tous les niveaux. Une femme noire venant de Haïti a été chef d'État du Canada au nom de la reine d'Angleterre. Le fils d'un immigré venu de Chine y a été gouverneur de la province d'Alberta. D'autres ressortissants nés dans d'autres pays comme l'Inde y sont ministres et députés.

L'honorable Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, a toujours affirmé qu'il adhère à un principe de représentativité équitable pour toutes les composantes de notre arc-en-ciel, afin d'éviter au pays de glisser dans une situation de méfiances mutuelles explosives. Nous partageons tous aujourd'hui, de ce côté de la chambre, cette même vision d'une protection électorale et postélectorale adéquate de toutes les composantes de la population. Une population dont feu Sir Kher Jagatsingh, un grand tribun travailliste, disait, avec raison, qu'elle n'est en fait composée que de minorités : « *We are all minorities* » avait-il un jour proclamé.

M. le président, il y a aussi l'écart entre les riches et les pauvres qui s'est creusé davantage durant les dix dernières années, et qui avait pourtant reculé durant le miracle économique des années 80, gravées dans l'histoire nationale comme 'les années Jugnauth'. Les chiffres officiels publiés par l'ancien gouvernement via le Bureau des Statistiques, ont d'ailleurs révélé que cet écart n'a cessé d'augmenter ces dernières années. Et c'est tout naturellement que le premier geste du nouveau gouvernement a été d'alléger la misère de ceux qui sont tout au bas de l'échelle socio-économique, et qui ne dépendaient que d'une ou deux maigres pension pour leur survie dans une Ile Maurice qui ne peut même pas leur offrir un repas décent chaque jour de l'année.

Un effort national considérable est nécessaire pour toute la nation pour assurer, comme le promettait Mao aux Chinois, un 'bol de riz' au minimum tous les jours à un milliard de compatriotes. Un miracle qu'il a réussi tout comme nous l'avons réussi dans les années 80. Le gouvernement et les entrepreneurs grands, moyens et petits, doivent tous contribuer à l'accomplissement d'un nouveau miracle économique.



M. le président, je résumerai nos taches gouvernementales prioritaires du discours-programme comme suit –

- Il nous faut appliquer avec diligence les notions de démocratie, la liberté de la presse, de transparence, de méritocratie, d'égalité des chances, d'unité nationale embrassant toutes nos populations de Maurice, Rodrigues, Agalega, et des Chagos.
- Il faut en finir avec ses relents de communalisme et de sectarisme dont les deux seules sources sont une perception d'inégalité socio-économique et une autre de sous-représentation à tous les niveaux de l'État comme de certaines sections du secteur privé au niveau des recrutements et des promotions.
- Il faut en finir avec des contrats publics alloués sans transparence, pour en finir avec la corruption, qui, en vérité ruine ce pays.
- Il nous faut créer un environnement urbain et rural durable dans un environnement naturel qui menace de disparaître à jamais, et faire face aux changements climatiques.
- Il nous faut une meilleure qualité de vie, que nous donnera aussi une renaissance économique nationale.
- Il nous faut la bonne gouvernance d'un secteur public et d'institutions paraétatiques à la dérive dans beaucoup de cas.
- Il nous faut une politique étrangère, qui préconise une action diplomatique au service des intérêts nationaux au plan du développement économique. Et aussi, *last but not least*, une politique qui vise la récupération de nos îles illégalement occupées de Tromelin et des Chagos.

Un mot encore sur la liberté de la presse, surtout lorsque je considère le «*balance of facts* » entre cette liberté, parfois abuser, comme c'est le cas même en France, d'une part, et la tentation autoritaire qui s'est manifestée à Maurice ces dernières années, d'autre part.

Je ne suis pas Charlie, mais je félicite le gouvernement pour avoir promis ceci à la page 57 du discours-programme concernant les membres de la presse –

“Journalists and media reporters in the exercise of their functions will no longer be arrested or jailed unless there is strong *prima facie* evidence of a conspiracy against them”.

Une autre des grandes décisions pour renforcer les libertés démocratiques et la destruction promise de données biométriques des détenteurs de la nouvelle carte d'identité. Il a été démontré que ces données peuvent être piratées - et l'ancien Premier ministre s'était lui-même abstenu de se procurer cette nouvelle carte et donc de soumettre ses propres données biométriques. On peut facilement imaginer ce qu'il pensait de sa propre décision -

« Fais ce que je dis, mais ne fais pas ce que je fais. »

Je vous remercie, M. le président, et je suis aussi reconnaissante envers la Chambre, Gouvernement comme Opposition pour l'attention réservée à mon premier discours prononcé à l'Assemblée nationale. Merci.

**Mr S. Rutnah rose and seconded.**

*At 4.48 p.m. the sitting was suspended for half an hour.*

*On resuming at 5.24 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**Dr Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate hon. Mrs Selvon for her speech. On 27 January 2015, the Government Programme was read by the President of the Republic, honourable Kailash Purryag.

This programme is, according to us, an almost complete shopping list, a *déclaration de bonnes intentions en vrac*. We obviously do not have a big quarrel with this programme and basically it is the same programme that we shared when we were partners in the past. I wish to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a few measures which we fully support.

- (i) The increase in pension payment and social aid as well as salary compensation.
- (ii) Introduction of a minimum wage.
- (iii) Doing away with the CPE and giving full subsidy on the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations.
- (iv) Setting up of a Utility Regulatory Authority.
- (v) providing alternative attractive location to the *marchands ambulants* to continue their trade;
- (vi) strengthening of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act;

- (vii) destruction of the databank containing fingerprints and biometric photographs of the new National Identity Card project;
- (viii) strengthening the powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission;
- (ix) putting an end to the abusiveness and arbitrariness of the present system of provisional charges, especially in case of journalists;
- (x) establishment of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a number of the measures announced will probably stay *lettres mortes* and we have serious doubts on their forthcoming implementation.

To start with, the Electoral Reform and the legislation on the financing of political parties, both issues were included in our Programme 2000-2005, Government of the MSM/MMM. A report was produced on the same subject and two Select Committees were presided respectively by Ivan Collendavelloo and Emmanuel Leung Shing.

The piece of legislation never managed to make its way to the Parliament for reasons that we all know. We only wish that history will not repeat itself in this case.

Furthermore, a number of issues and considerations have not been mentioned at all.

Nothing has been said about the CT Power project. The Medpoint case *brille par son absence*. What will happen to the Neotown and Jin Fei concessions? Idem for the Commission of Inquiry on the Mauritius Turf Club! What about the abuse of Special Funds in the Budget? *L'existence même de ces fonds a toujours été décriée par le ministre des finances actuel*.

What is the future of the Development Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank? Regarding the *l'Amicale* Case, will there be an amendment of the Human Rights Act? Will the culprits of the State Trading Corporation and Air Mauritius, responsible for the loss of billions due to hedging, never be identified and made to answer? Will the last Electoral Boundaries Report stay in a drawer in the Prime Minister's Office? There is no reference at all in the Government Programme to Tromelin.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have also taken note of changes which have taken place between the Electoral Programme and the Government Programme. With respect to ICAC, I quote from the Electoral Programme –

*«Dans le chapitre ‘Combat contre la fraude et la corruption’, il est question d’une ‘Financial Crime Commission’, ‘apex body’ qui englobera différentes institutions existantes, à commencer par l’ICAC. »*

But in the Government Programme, it is clearly stated that the Financial Crime Commission will only oversee the operations of ICAC, instead of replacing them.

Concerning the Police force, it was promised that Police officers will have the right to form a trade union. In the Government Programme, this has evolved to a right to syndicate, which to us does not have the same implications.

There are points, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, upon which we totally disagree. We note that Government expresses its concern about the lack of progress made to date to resolve the long-standing dispute over the Chagos Archipelago.

However, we had noted earlier that on 09 January 2015, Cabinet had expressed its appreciation of the previous Government’s action to bring the issue in front of the United Nations Arbitral Tribunal of the Law of the Sea and was looking forward for its decision.

Also, a lot has been said about our positioning on the African Continent. But it is very surprising that neither the Prime Minister, nor the President and not even a Minister was present on 15 January 2015 for the swearing in of the new President of Mozambique. Same for the OAU Summit of Addis Ababa on 30 January 2015.

Concerning the amendment of the Local Government Act, we strongly believe that an amendment to the Act is not appropriate, but instead it should be replaced by a new piece of legislation which, according to us, should go along the one voted in 2003 by the MMM/MSM Government.

We were also expecting that a firm commitment to facilitate the setting-up of private television should have been taken and not just a permission to allow private television broadcast.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have serious doubts that all the partners of this Government, I quote, ‘believe passionately in what has been presented and referred to as Innovative Socialism in the programme.’ Especially because as we all know that one of the partners in this Government was a Member of the previous Government from 2005 to 2014.

M. le président, pour le MMM, être dans une alliance est avant tout une question de programme quel que soit le partenaire. Nous avons voulu et nous voulons toujours faire de notre île un pays phare, un modèle d’unité dans la diversité. Un exemple de démocratie menant un combat sans merci contre la fraude et la corruption, en faveur d’un développement économique dans la justice sociale et le respect de l’environnement. Notre vision est celle d’un socialisme moderne, réaliste et responsable, avec un recentrage sur la réduction des inégalités. Nous ne pouvons tolérer l’exploitation de l’homme par l’homme. Il faut éliminer du subconscient collectif la discrimination entre les deux sexes. Le travail égal mérite un salaire égal. Il nous faut trouver un juste équilibre entre les droits des travailleurs, la sécurité de l’emploi et l’économie du marché. Les effets de la globalisation et du libéralisme doivent être freinés par un savant dosage de patriotisme économique. Il nous faut un système de démocratie parlementaire fonctionnelle et représentative. Une presse libre et indépendante avec des journalistes responsables et autorégulés, qui ne peuvent être influencés ni par le pouvoir du jour ni par les bailleurs de fonds; une politique énergétique et environnementale intelligente et le plus vert possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to end and conclude with a quotation adapted from the Tryst with Destiny -

“To the people of our country, whose representatives we are, we appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure of nation building. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build this noble mansion where all our children may dwell.”

It is from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the eve of the Independence of India.

I thank you for your attention, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have done.

(5.35 p.m)

**The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr A. Gayan):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to start with some good wishes to Madam Speaker and I wish if you could

convey to her my sincere congratulations on her election to chair our deliberations. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the confident manner in which you are presiding our deliberations. I also wish to congratulate for their maiden speeches, hon. Mrs Selvon and hon. Dr. Joomaye and I am sure that our House will be benefitting from their interventions in the future.

I also wish to say that I am very grateful to the Leader of the House, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for having entrusted me with the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. I can assure the House that in this capacity I will do whatever is in my power to ensure that our people have the best available medical services possible.

I would like to start by making some general remarks about the last election campaign. Just imagine for a minute that the alliance *pour la Modernité et l'Unité* had won the last elections. Just imagine that the former Prime Minister who was the Leader of the House was again the Prime Minister today.

On 27 January 2015, when his Excellency the President delivered his speech, we didn't know then what we know now and what we know now is really shocking. Shocking for all politicians, but even more shocking for a Labour Party that was gearing up to celebrate its 75 years of existence.

During the last election campaign, there were two alliances. One alliance led by the former Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the other one led by the present Prime Minister. We had a good election campaign and we were very fortunate in having an electorate that was sensitive to what we were saying; sensitive to our programme; sensitive to the quality of leadership that we are presenting to the people. But on the other side, what did we have, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We had arrogance. We had disdain which they displayed at every single stage for the people of our country. For our alliance, they said we were a '*camion saleté*'. It is good that we mention this for the sake of history because Hansard will stay for ever. And it is good that we recall these things because when we are sitting in this House, it is also good that the previous orator mentioned that we should have a debate which is fine and we should not get into a sort of acrimony. Fine! But history must record what went on with the last campaign and history will record also what was the main platform of the alliance that lost the elections.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know now that the former Prime Minister who was arrested on 07 February, had in his house and in his possession large amounts of money. There are only two possibilities. One, it is his money or it is the money of the Labour Party. If it is the money of the Labour Party, then how come it was in his house, how come it was in dollars and how come it was not in the party's account. I know that there will be heads being shaken on the other side, but I wish to say that I am within the Government Programme. I am going to, for the sake of clarity and for the sake of sticking to the speech of the President, refer to the introduction part, paragraph 8 –

“Government is committed to conducting business on the principles of discipline, transparency, accountability and exemplary governance.”

Exemplary governance must come from the head of Government and when the head of a Government who treated this alliance, to which we belong, as an alliance of ‘*camion saleté*’, I think they deserve to be told what they really are and this nation needs to know what they are and what they got people to believe in something that did not exist. They wanted *une alliance de modernité et de l'unité*. They wanted a Second Republic, a *modernité*. Of course, it may be modern for some to have millions and millions of rupees stacked in safes, but fortunately for our country and fortunately for history, we know that the people of Mauritius rejected that alliance. At the time they did not know that the previous Government was a Government of looters and plunderers. This is exactly what they were doing when they were in power. Other hon. Ministers will be speaking about the state of the roads, all the wastes that the people of Mauritius are paying for and will pay for, for the generations to come and this is why this kind of Government was rejected. And it was rejected overwhelmingly. There was a talk, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, about ‘*la démocratisation de l'économie*’. I wonder what it was.

(Interruptions)

Was it this *politique de petits copains-copines, de grands coquins, jouisseurs*? Was that ‘*démocratisation de l'économie*?’ And then, the coffre-fort which started with Rs4 m. The PNQ of the hon. Leader of Opposition, this morning, was about R4 m., Rs100 m., Rs200 m., Rs800 m., but never mind. The question that the people need to know and this House also needs to know: are we dealing with the amount in the safes and in the briefcases as being the tip of the iceberg or is it the whole amount that was in possession of the former Prime Minister? If the former Prime Minister were to be advised properly, he has a unique

opportunity to be a patriot. He can come clean and say to the people –“Yes, I messed up. But I am prepared to collaborate and to tell everything about the money I have, the source of that money and also the source of the dollars.” I can understand Mauritians contributing to a political party in rupees, but dollars, euros, sterling! We have a serious problem! Travellers cheques! Travellers cheques, I think they were a thing of the past, but it seems that they are still around. Anyway, what has happened and what the people know and what the people will come to know is already disgusting and shameful.

I wish to refer to what hon. Uteem mentioned this morning about the juridical cooperation between countries with regard to illicit gains and all these things. It is true that we have the legal means today to track all funds wherever they go. It is possible to do that. In order to avoid further shame on the former Prime Minister, I think it would be best for him to come clean and to own up to whatever he has done so that, at least, politics and politicians will regain a sense of dignity.

We have nothing to be responsible on this side of the House, but I believe that we, as politicians, also owe a duty to the generations that will come after us, so that they know that when something went wrong, people owned up, people came clean and they did something that was honourable and patriotic for their country. I hope he does it! Otherwise, he will go down in history as somebody who has committed the worst crime against democracy in this country. He will go down in history as a person tainted and gullied after having occupied the highest political office in the land. I think it is important that we bear all this in mind.

Although we do not want to go too long on this, I wish also to say that apart from the shocking nature of the revelations that are coming out, we need to do away with the arrogance of politicians. You will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, how we were treated. Two main parties coming together, 40% of the electorate, 80% and a 60 zero became inevitable! We can't do anything about it. What can you do? The people will vote for the 60 zero. 40 + 40. They had a former Minister of Finance who is very good with his computer and he did all the simulations.

But anyway, this is the kind of arrogance we were subjected to! What they forgot was that the largest party is the party of the people. This is the largest party! The people of our country are not stupid, they know what decisions to take when they have to do so..

You will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how people were treated not only as '*camion saleté*', but also as '*bourrique*'. Some people were driving a Rolls Royce and had that *classe*,



but we did not know they had cash as well! Or was it *la classe* of the cash dollars – because as a Prime Minister he could not deal only in rupees, he needed to have other hard foreign currencies for his other activities. But never mind, the point is that if it is not the tip of the iceberg, fine! But if it is the tip of the iceberg, then we have a serious problem. You will recall when we, in *l'Alliance Lepep*, said that we are going to increase the old age pension to Rs5,000, what was their reaction? You cannot pay, there is no money! And if only he had given the money in his safe, that would have been enough to pay the increase in the pension! Apart from all the insults that we were made to endure, we had a clear message which was accepted by the population and the message was to throw them out.

I started off by saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, just imagine for a minute that on 10 December 2014, the former Prime Minister was elected with a majority in the House, we would not know today what had gone on over so many years. All this would have been covered up, there would have been no enquiry in any of the money laundering problems and for seven years, Mr Deputy Speaker, he would have been the President. Now we understand the terms of the alliance that was sealed between the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Ganoo and the former Prime Minister. It is good that we remember the terms of the alliance. A President for seven years! Why seven years? Where is the logic? At a time when the whole world is reducing the mandate of political heads, we, in Mauritius, are going to Cape Verde to learn from their Constitution for a seven-year presidency, a President for seven years! Just imagine a President like Navin Ramgoolam for seven years!

*(Interruptions)*

He would have been President for seven years, he would be presiding the Council of Ministers, he would have under his direct control the Minister of Finance, Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, he would have the power to appoint the Commissioner of Police, the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius and the Senior Chief Executives in the public service, he would have appointed the Chairperson and members of the Serious Fraud Office. What an irony, Mr Deputy Speaker! Serious Fraud Office under the control of the President, Navin Ramgoolam! He would have appointed the Director of Audit, the Director-General of the MBC and he would have had immunity, absolute power, no accountability and immunity. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was right when we showed that ‘*vire mam*’ clip, he was listing out all the scandals and he ended by saying ‘*ena baisé là!*’

*(Interruptions)*

*Ena là!* Well, no wonder there was an overwhelming victory for *l'Alliance Lepep*.

I have now the duty, Mr Deputy Speaker, to say that all that is contained in the Speech of the President will be translated into measures, into laws and into action. No one should have any doubt about the commitment of this Government to translate into reality everything that is contained in the President's Speech. Whatever doubts anybody can have, please remove them, because this Government is committed to doing what is necessary for the best of our country and for our people. The commitment which we have to set the economy right after the misgovernance and the corruption of the previous regime is unshakable. We are committed to having a second socio-economic miracle, because that is what is going to propel our country forward.

The Government Programme 2015-2019, Mr Deputy Speaker, is based on social justice, equality and solidarity, as we need to pave the way for a brighter future for the present generation and for generations that are yet to come. The very title of the Government Programme is "Achieving Meaningful Change". We will, in fact, achieve a change that is meaningful for every single citizen of our country.

I have already mentioned the Rs5,000 increase for old age pension and for basic invalidity pension. We have also granted a uniform salary compensation of Rs600 to all workers and employees. We are committed to ensuring that all those who are unemployed will have hope of having a job in the nearest possible time frame. We are committed to creating 15,000 jobs every year.

In the Presidential Address, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, health is one of the key priorities. Government believes that good health contributes to the long-term sustainable development of people and the economy at large. For these reasons, health is being kept at the top of the five-year programme.

The priority for the coming years as far as my Ministry is concerned is to make significant investments so that the people have the best care possible and we have identified these areas. Providing a quality health service to the population at large is the number one priority and no effort will be spared to bring health services to the doorstep of the community. We are also determined to ensure that patients and their relatives who attend any public health institution are given appropriate attention in a conducive and health friendly environment.

Lots of representations have been made regarding *l'accueil* which patients get at hospitals and those who are particularly vulnerable are the elderly and those with disabilities. In this regard, arrangements are being made for the setting up of special counters in all regional hospitals and, in particular, at the level of the Accident and Emergency departments and at the Pharmacy to give due consideration to these patients. Such facility will also be extended to Mediclinics and Area Health Centres. The senior citizens with disabilities will, henceforth, be seen on a fast track basis and will not have to wait long for their treatment.

With a view to responding to these concerns, the Complaint Desks will be made fully functional with the posting of a permanent Officer to receive and hear patients and their relatives. There will be proper follow-up on each complaint and a feedback will be given to patients within a reasonable period of time.

Since I have assumed office as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, I have received representations as well regarding waiting time for surgery. I have been informed that emergency surgeries are already being carried out at any time during the night whereas cold cases, that is, non-emergency cases, are carried out after normal working hours only when they are required. This implies that while we have patients on the waiting list for a long time, we also have operating theatres that are not being fully used. In order to address this concern, in consultation with the specialists, my Ministry will come up with a policy to carry out routine surgeries in extra sessions at night and during weekends. The aim is to reduce the waiting list for any surgery to minimum levels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital was the only hospital providing eye surgeries for the past fifty years. The waiting list for cataract surgery has kept on increasing due to the high prevalence of diabetes and an ageing population. In order to address this issue of long waiting list and overcrowding at the hospital of Moka, my Ministry has decided to decentralise the ophthalmology services.

A new Unit has been set up at Souillac Hospital and is operational since 08 January this year and cataract surgeries are being carried out there. Outpatient clinics are also being carried out to facilitate patients residing in the southern region. To extend high quality services with vision problems and to meet growing demand for eye treatment, we are also proposing to put up another building at Moka.

With the prevalence of diabetes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the number of amputations in the country has increased. The need is felt to have vascular surgery services in the country in order to improve the care for patients suffering from diabetic foot and other complications. Dr. Jeetoo Hospital has the required facilities and we intend to house a Vascular Surgery Unit there.

Everybody knows that diabetes is a serious problem for Mauritians. Almost everyone knows someone in the family with diabetes. Diabetes affects a person's life drastically. The emotional and social burdens are compounded by an acute physical distress of hypoglycaemia or hyperglycaemia and by the chronic physical distress of diabetes-related complications. The burden is still heavier for those diabetic patients who cannot easily move to a public health institution for treatment. To meet this problem, my Ministry in consultation with my colleague the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions is finalising the modalities for the provision of glucose metres to persons with diabetes who are receiving home care. This will, no doubt, go a long way to improving the control of their blood sugar and subsequently the quality of life.

We all know that lots of Mauritians get involved in road traffic accidents and as a result of the accidents lots of them become disabled and are not cared for efficiently as proper rehabilitation services are not available. They are treated now by the Physiotherapy Departments in all regional hospitals. My Ministry will explore the possibility to have recourse to the expertise from other countries for the setting up of full-fledged rehabilitation centres in all regions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our primary healthcare system has been so neglected that the pressure at regional hospital level is increasing day after day. To ensure that primary healthcare becomes a linchpin of our national health system, a new Master Plan on Primary Healthcare will be formulated and implemented. This will be in line with the WHO recommendation for the Primary Healthcare approach to be adopted to address the issues of the rising burden of chronic diseases and the scarcity of resources. The existing services offered at primary healthcare will be reviewed and upgraded to attract more people to the Area Health Centres and Community Health Centres. Furthermore, all buildings housing the health facilities will be upgraded and equipped with modern facilities.

As a short-term measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is embarking on offering a 24-hour service to the community by having Mediclinics and Area Health Centres

opened every day of the week for 24 hours every day. All Mediclinics will be open 24 hours every day of the year. The practice today is that they close at 4 or 6 o'clock. But, people can get sick after 6 o'clock and they have to travel long distances, so we are taking this measure immediately.

My Ministry is also providing domiciliary healthcare services to alleviate the burden of patients who are bedridden or who have physical disabilities. These services are being provided by the Community Health Nursing Officers and these Officers visit the patients in their homes. We are also looking into having specialised nurses to treat diabetic patients and also psychiatric nurses.

With regard to new projects, the statistics show that the numbers of cardiac cases, cancer patients as well as eye-related patients are increasing everyday. We are planning in the Ministry to reinforce preventive measures regarding these particular diseases.

I wish to point out that in the year 2014, 671 cases were operated at the Cardiac Centre at Pamplemousses and the waiting list is still for about 200 patients and the waiting list keeps going up everyday. The waiting list is there because we also have inadequate space and because of the limited facilities in hospitals, other major operations are carried out at the centre. So, we are proposing to set up a new Cardiac Surgery Theatre and the Trust Fund for Specialised Care will be called upon to look into this matter.

As regards cancer, I have already announced that cancer which is a major health concern in our country, will have to be dealt with on a fast track basis. Government will convert the ex-Medpoint Hospital into a new Cancer Centre, with state-of-the-art medical equipment and logistics.

There is, in fact, the need to have a bunker to house all the radioactive equipment and materials. Action has already been initiated calling for expressions of interest from the major suppliers of such equipment. We are going to adopt a fast track approach to realise this project as soon as possible.

A PET/CT scan has already been installed at the Nuclear Medicine Department at Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital to introduce hybrid imaging to improve better diagnosis of cancer. We propose to give to our cancer patients the best possible technology for their treatment.

We are also looking into the problem of non-communicable diseases and the consequences of an ageing population in Mauritius are such that we need to address these problems in priority. Apart from diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, cancer, food hygiene, sanitation, we also have one problem which is becoming very acute and that is Alzheimer.

The National Prevention Programme will include sensitisation on Alzheimer because with an increasing ageing population, Alzheimer attacks that category of people. So, we need to have dedicated care and support for all those suffering from Alzheimer. I am sure that anybody who knows somebody suffering from Alzheimer realises the pain and anguish of all those around that person. So, this is becoming a serious problem for us with an ageing population. So, my Ministry will initiate action to provide services of Neuro-psychologists and other qualified staff to attend to patients suffering from Alzheimer.

We are also looking into health information, education and communication activities. So, all these will be an ongoing strategy to communicate in order to meet the challenges of adopting healthy lifestyles, practising physical activities and preventing diseases.

We also propose to initiate action for the setting up of a gymnasium in all Ministries and Government Departments as mentioned in the Government Manifesto.

On HIV/AIDS and Methadone, I wish to say that the fight against HIV and AIDS remains high on our agenda. Whilst on the one hand measures to prevent the spread of the disease will be reinforced, on the other hand, actions will be initiated to provide the appropriate and timely treatment to those affected and also to address the problem of stigma and discrimination against HIV patients. In this connection, a new HIV and AIDS Action Plan for 2015/2019 will be formulated. The plan will be elaborated with all the stakeholders including the civil society.

The Plan will also take into consideration the evolution of the epidemic in Mauritius and the response to the disease undertaken so far. All the weaknesses and gaps in the previous Action Plans will be addressed and we are going to have a proper policy regarding all the people living with HIV and AIDS, affected ones and also the population at large.

On Methadone, the House is aware that the Methadone Substitution Therapy Programme was introduced in Mauritius as a harm reduction strategy to curb down HIV

infections. At the end of December 2014, there were 18 Methadone dispensing points to cater for a population of 5,000 methadone beneficiaries.

This limited number of dispensing sites had resulted in a chaotic social situation. The main problems were over-crowding and loitering as well as violence and other social ills. I know this because in the Constituency which I represent, Mont Roches has suffered the most on a daily basis. 800 to 900 persons were going to take their methadone dose at Brown Sequard Hospital. So, we have addressed this problem. We have addressed it in this way. We have embarked on a programme of decentralisation for dispensing of Methadone. We started a pilot project in Beau Bassin and Rose Hill and after positive results, we are now extending the programme to the whole of Mauritius as from the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month, as from Saturday next. And I am sure that this policy is going to be accepted by the population and is going to be helpful to everyone concerned.

We are also embarking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on an e-Health System for Mauritius. Just to give you an example, the laboratory carries out over seven million tests every year. And all of these tests are put on paper. I think this cannot go on, we need to go for digital. This is why we are pressing ahead with the issue of e-Health.

The same problem exists with regard to x-rays and these have to be stored in bulky files of patients and we have problems of space, so, we need to look into e-Health as a matter of priority.

We will leave no stone unturned to implement a National e-Health Project as a priority and we will be getting the help of friendly countries for this purpose. Over the last years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there were media reports about essential drug shortages at hospitals and with shortages there was an inevitable impact on the delivery of health services.

I am informed that there is no institutional memory at the Central Supplies Division as to when the last physical stock count was carried out. I am also informed that at the Central Supplies Division, there is medication of the value of Rs1 billion and there is no stock taking. So, we propose to carry out a full drug quantification exercise and we need to have an Electronic Management System. Well, I am sure everybody in the House will appreciate why this is so.

*(Interruptions)*

I think it was just a strategy for people to get personal advantages from State assets.

So, to address this concern, we are setting up a special committee to ensure timely purchase of quality medicines and elimination of wastage in all public health institutions. I have also given instructions yesterday to have CCTVs installed in all the pharmacies in the hospitals and institutions because I hear lots of things about where these medications end up.

With regard to the purchase of drugs, we are reviewing the whole gamut of procurement procedures. So, new procurement methods based on e-procurement will be devised to improve the process of procuring medicines to make it more efficient and result-oriented.

Stringent criteria for the evaluation of bids are being worked out to ensure that the Ministry procures medicines of good quality, efficacy and safety, bearing in mind that value for money will be the guiding principle.

Let me now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, say something with regard to procurement, that I shall ensure that there is a level playing field with regard to all procurement for the hospitals and that includes everything. I believe that we need to provide an opportunity to everyone to be able to compete on a level playing field with regard to all procurement matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that we also propose to bring a legislation to reform the Medical and Dental Councils, the Nursing Council Act, the Pharmacy Council Bill. With regard to the Pharmacy Council I wish to say a few things. A Pharmacy Council Bill will be introduced in the House to provide for the establishment of a modern and appropriate legislative framework for the large number of practicing pharmacists in both the public and private sectors. The Bill will address the registration of pharmacists both local and foreign as well as the preregistration of trainees. It will maintain discipline and uphold the professional standards for the pharmacists thereby ensuring safe and effective practices of the pharmacy profession and also develop a code of practice regarding compliance.

My Ministry will also review the traditional system of medicines and homeopathy constituting alternative forms of treatment. In this context, appropriate amendments will be brought to the Ayurvedic and Traditional Medicines Act. I wish also to say that since the few weeks that I have been the Minister of Health, I have learnt that we have also African Traditional Medicines, Chinese Traditional Medicines and all sorts of traditional medicines.



So, this is an area that will have to be explored, but we need to be very careful about how we proceed.

We are coming up, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a new Bill which is the Health Professional Council Bill. This is a Bill which will provide for the establishment of a Council as well as Courts and Appeals Tribunal for certain professions which are allied and complementary to the medical profession. For example, psychologists today do not have any regulatory framework in Mauritius. We need to be able to regulate the spas or all the paramedical and all the other professions which are allied to the medical profession.

This Bill which was approved by Cabinet last week, has been put on the website of my Ministry and we are proposing to give one month to anybody who is interested to make representations and comments and suggestions before we bring the Bill to the House. This is available on the website of the Ministry. We are also proposing to bring in a Private Health Institutions Bill which will cater for the private institutions. No health service will be sustainable unless we have capacity building. So we are proposing to have a new school of nursing because the Central School of Nursing at Victoria Hospital is providing training to nursing students only to about 400 nurses and I think this is inadequate. So, we propose to open a new school of nursing and we will be training other nurses in the traditional training system, but also to cater for the disabled, for the elderly, Alzheimer patients, psychiatric patients and also cancer patients because I get lots of letters regarding the *accueil* of nurses. I can understand that people who are in the terminal stages need to get more care and compassion from nurses and doctors. So, we will have to look into that and ensure that, at least, they get all the comfort to accompany them in the last stages of their life. So, we are going to remodel the courses for nurses.

We are also going to pay special attention to continuous professional development. This is something which is very common in other professions. In our legal profession, we all have to do CPD, I think the doctors are a bit hostile to this proposal, but they will have to come round because I think it helps in learning about the latest methods and technology. So, CPD will become one of the central platforms of my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am confident that this Government, with the leadership of our Prime Minister, will be able to realise all these projects. I have just given a brief account of what I propose to do during the time I stay Minister of Health and I hope that we will be able to realise everything. It is, of course, natural that expectations of people are very high.

We will try to meet those expectations, but within the limits and constraints possible, we will ensure that our people get the best treatment and the best equipment for specialised care. I know technology costs a lot of money especially in the specialised care, but we are committed to having the best and we are going to get value for money. We are going to go to the countries which have the best possible support system because far too often I hear that specialised equipment gets broken. They break down in the hospitals and people have to go to the clinics for treatment. This is something that will not be sustainable in the future. We will need to have our own maintenance team to look at all the sophisticated equipment. So, I believe that we have chartered out a road map and I am sure that we will be able to complete the trajectory by the time we end this mandate.

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we proceed, let me thank the hon. Minister for his well-wishes and assure the hon. Minister that I will convey them to Madam Speaker as soon as I see her next.

**Mrs Boygah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr Abbas Mamode rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 20 February 2015 at 3.00 p.m.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun) rose and seconded.**

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

## MATTER RAISED

### SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER – DRAINS - UPGRADING

**Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank you for granting me the permission to raise the following specific matter at adjournment time. Specific matter which reads as follows: ‘the maintenance and/or constructions/upgrading of drains in the region of Le Morne, Baie du Cap, Bel Ombre and other areas in Constituency No. 14 Savanne and Black River which are prone to flooding’.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall try to be brief and precise in my intervention. The House will recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in 2002, the then MSM/MMM Government commissioned a study of the land drainage system of our island. The study was carried out by the consultancy firm GIBB (Mauritius) LTD. And in their final report, they did identify the flood prone areas and recommended measures to be taken to eliminate flooding problems in several areas in the country. The regions that I have highlighted form part of these flood prone areas, that is: Le Morne, Baie Du Cap, Bel Ombre, La Gaulette, Case Noyale and other regions in Constituency No. 14.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the recent heavy rainfall, my two colleagues and myself, Members of Constituency No. 14, we visited the regions affected by the flooding and we took stock of the situation. Several families suffered because of the heavy rains. In certain areas or villages, roads had to be closed due to potential risk of accidents. As such, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no drainage system, that is, the network of drains that are interlinked. There are drains, but no drainage system. That part of our island is drained by rivers and, in case of heavy rainfall, it is the rivers that drain the water naturally to the sea.

We are all aware that a number of hotels and real estate projects have been implemented in that region and, you will agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the natural flow rate of the rivers have been affected over the years and during the last decade there have not been many projects related to the construction of drains although the land drainage report had identified several projects in that Constituency.

It is also known that during the last years, at the level of local authorities, they have not been allocated the necessary funds to carry out the necessary maintenance work or implementation of drain works and it is for this reason, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am taking the time of the House to raise this issue as a matter of urgency.

I would, therefore, request the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to give due consideration to my request and allocate the necessary funds that are needful for the works to be carried out either at the level of local authorities or at the level of the NDU.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as Minister in charge of the National Development Unit, I have taken note of the issues raised by the hon. Second Member for Savanne and Black River and wish to make the following statement.

I am informed that the National Development Unit has already undertaken 15 drain projects since 2010 for a total cost of Rs70,687,365.58. They are in the regions of Chamouny, Bel Ombre, Flic en Flac, Cotteau Raffin, Chemin Grenier, Tamarin and Rivière des Galets.

Furthermore, the upgrading of roads and drains at Avenue Jacarandas, Tamarin is presently under construction. In this respect, the drain works have already been completed and the road works are due to completion by end of May 2015. The cost of the project is Rs22,469,720.63.

The project of upgrading and enlargement of bridge at Pierrefonds to the tune of Rs3,934,371.38 has yet to be started.

In addition, the National Development Unit during Financial Year 2014 also conveyed financial clearance to the tune of Rs10,527,400 to the Black River District Council and Savanne District Council for various drain works in the regions of Chemin Grenier, Bambous, Beaux Songes, La Gaulette and Grande Rivière Noire. Well, whatever remains to be done will be looked into.

*At 6.30 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 20 February 2015 at 3.00 p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### MAURICE ILE DURABLE COMMISSION - DISSOLUTION

**(No. B/10) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Maurice Ile Durable Commission, he will state if -

- (a) the Commission is still in operation, and if not, the reasons therefor, indicating which authority will now be responsible to carry out the mandate of the former Commission;
- (b) how our international commitments on Maurice Ile Durable will be met, and
- (c) if the Maurice Ile Durable Fund will continue to exist and, if so, in which policy context.

**Reply (Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management):** The MID Commission has been dissolved as from January this year. The mandate of the MID Commission which was to coordinate the implementation of sustainable development across key sectors of the economy has been fully integrated with the Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management and its implementation is being carried out by all relevant line Ministries.

With regard to part (b) of the question, this Government will continue to honour international commitments taken in the context of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and during international conferences on sustainable development through all relevant Ministries and Departments.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the MID Fund will now operate under the purview of my Ministry and appropriate amendments will be made to the relevant regulations in the forthcoming Budget. The Fund will operate within the existing legal framework with the overall objective of promoting sustainable development at all levels.

#### **NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION – L'AMICALE DE PORT LOUIS - INQUIRY**

**(No. B/15) Mr O. Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the inquiry being carried out by the National Human Rights Commission in relation to the case of arson of the gaming house, known as l'Amicale de Port Louis in May 1999, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to when the inquiry will be completed.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission that the inquiry it is conducting in the l'Amicale de Port Louis case is expected to be completed by mid-2015.

However, I wish to inform the House that the present inquiry by the National Human Rights Commission started on 14 July 2014 and was expected, as per provisions of Section 4A(3) of the Protection of Human Rights Act, to be completed, as far as practicable, within six months from the receipt of the complaint, that is, by 10 January 2015.

However, as the search for the existence of fresh and compelling evidence for the purpose of determining whether a reference should be made to the Supreme Court under Section 19A (4) of the Criminal Appeal Act, is a complex exercise, counsel of the applicants has been informed and has no objection to the extension in time.

### **RICHE TERRE - JIN FEI PROJECT**

**(No. B/16) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether in regard to the recent visit of the Vice Minister of State Oceanic Administration of the People's Republic of China, he will state if discussions were held regarding the Jin Fei Project at Riche Terre and, if so, the decision Government intends to take as a result thereof.

**Reply (Minister of Finance and Economic Development):** I shall reply, at the same time, to PQ B/16 addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and PQ B/46 addressed to me as they relate to the same subject.

As the House is aware, the Jinfei project is yet another failure of the previous Government. Ever since the lease agreement was signed in 2009, there has been very little development so much so that the Riche Terre area which is a strategic location has turned into a ghost town.

During the last electoral campaign, we took the commitment to revive this project and give it a new impulse. Ever since we assume office, we started intensive discussions with the promoters as well as the Chinese Authorities. In that context, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister took the opportunity of the visit of the Vice-Minister for State Administration of the People's Republic of China in January to convey his disappointment regarding the execution of the Jinfei project. Furthermore, the Prime Minister emphasised on the failure of the promoters of Jinfei to execute the project according to the agreed schedule.

Subsequently, a high-level delegation from the Chinese promoters of Jinfei, flew from China to Mauritius on 23 January 2015 to have discussions with appropriate authorities.

Several meetings were held where Government expressed its strong discontent on the state of affairs and I personally expressed Government intention of taking back the land.

The following proposals were made to them during the discussions -

- (i) to set up a joint venture company where Government of Mauritius will hold 80 percent shares and the Mauritius Jinfei Economic Trade Cooperation Zone Ltd 20 percent shares;
- (ii) the share of 20 percent allocated to the Chinese promoters of Jinfei represents their investment on onsite infrastructure amounting to some Rs 930 million and the 80% of Government shares represent the total area under the lease i.e 500 acres;
- (iii) the lease over the 211 hectares of land will thereafter be transferred to the new joint venture, and
- (iv) Government reserves the right to acquire the business centre, the warehouse and an apartment building already developed by the Chinese promoters of Jinfei at a price to be agreed between the parties.

The promoters of Jinfei left Mauritius on 05 February 2015 and we are now awaiting their response before deciding on the way forward.

Regarding part (a) of PQ/B46, I am informed that the total value of the onsite infrastructural works undertaken by the promoters of Jinfei amounts to some Rs 930 m. for 7.47 kms of roads together with electricity supplies, water, sewage and telecommunication. The contractors appointed by the Chinese promoters of Jinfei for the construction of these projects are Tianli Construction Company Ltd, Beijing Zhuzong Group Company Ltd and Beijing Construction Engineering Group Mauritius.

I am informed that the previous Government has invested some Rs500 m. in terms of direct offsite infrastructure including roads, electricity, water and sewerage. However, this amount excludes indirect potential investments estimated at Rs1 billion required to meet the water needs of the different business segments in the event that Jinfei attains its full development capacity.

As requested, I am tabling a list of works undertaken together with the names of contractors appointed by Government to undertake these works.

As regards part (b) of the question, the previous Government refused to compensate the small planters. It was only after strike and court case that the previous Government was compelled to pay a total amount of Rs70 m. as compensation to 227 planters who were

occupying plots of land in the Riche Terre/Terre Rouge land settlement area. Furthermore, some 106 planters were leased land to the extent of 10 perches each for residential purposes and 34 planters were granted one (1) *arpent* each for vegetable plantation.

Following the meeting I had with the small planters at Solitude on Saturday last, we agreed to set up a committee under the Chairmanship of the Financial Secretary and comprising relevant Ministries as well as the representatives of the relevant Cooperative Societies to look on how we may compensate the small planters for the very unfair treatment they had undergone.

With regard to part (c) of the question, Government signed two (2) agreements in September 2009, namely -

- (i) a lease agreement where 211 hectares of State land were leased to Mauritius Jinfei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone Ltd by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for a period of 99 years for the purpose of developing an Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone at Riche Terre, and
- (ii) a framework agreement that sets out the framework of cooperation between Shanxi Jinfei Investment Co. Ltd and the Government of Mauritius as well as the obligations of the promoters to develop the zone within a specific time frame in two phases, i.e Phase 1 from September 2009 to September 2012 and Phase 2 from September 2010 to December 2016.

A copy of the two agreements is being placed in the Library. The House may wish to note that the agreement was signed by the former Minister of Finance on one part and a private party on the other side. The lease was in no way a Government to Government agreement.

During the present discussions, the new Government is, however, taking care not to disturb the excellent diplomatic relations that exist between our two countries. In that context, I have been meeting the Chinese Ambassador in Mauritius on a regular basis to appraise him of all developments.

### **MILITARY ROAD, CITÉ MARTIAL – CANAL ANGLAIS – REPAIRS**

**(No. B/18) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in



regard to the “Canal Anglais”, behind the Military Road, Cité Martial, he will state if he is aware of the presence of cracks thereinto resulting into water leakage into houses during rainfall and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the urgent repairs and upgrading thereof.

**Reply (The Prime Minister):** I am informed that as far back as 30 March 2013, the scouring effect during the flash floods damaged the concrete bedding of “Canal Anglais”. Apparently, the detritus stuck on the damaged concrete bedding caused water level to rise and overflow the embankments thereby flooding the house of one inhabitant at Military Road, Cité Martial.

As regards the presence of alleged cracks resulting into water leakage into houses during recent rainfall, I have given instructions to the National Development Unit to cause a survey to be carried out and remedial actions, if warranted, to be taken.

I have also asked the Minister of Local Government, to intervene with Local Authorities to ensure that they maintain canals and drains properly.

### **E-JUDICIARY PROJECT – CONTRACT**

**(No. B/34) Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the E-Judiciary project, he will state –

- (a) the name of the company and/or private consultant to whom the contract thereof was awarded, indicating the names of –
  - (i) the directors;
  - (ii) shareholders, and
  - (iii) the beneficial owner thereof
- (b) if the contract thereof was awarded in compliance with the requirements of the Public Procurement Act and, if not, why not, and
- (c) if proper monitoring and internal audit regarding the implementation of the project is being properly effected, especially in relation to liquidated damages clause and, if not, why not.

**Reply (The Prime Minister):** In regard to parts (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that the contract for the E-Judiciary Project was awarded to Mauritius Network Services Limited.

The names of the Directors of the Board of Mauritius Network Services Limited are as follows –

- (i) Mr Mohammad OOZEER, Chairman;
- (ii) Mr Bhanu Pratabsingh JADDOO, Vice Chairman;
- (iii) Mrs Aruna Devi BUNWAREE-RAMSAHA, Director, and
- (iv) Mr Vedprakash AUCKALOO, Director.

The Mauritius Network Services Limited is owned by Maurinet which is composed of the following Companies –

- (i) Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry – 35% of shareholding;
- (ii) Mauritius Ports Authority – 22.5% of shareholding;
- (iii) State Investment Corporation Limited – 12.5% of shareholding;
- (iv) Mauritius Telecom, Port Louis Fund and Cargo Handling Corporation – 10% of shareholding each.

Insofar as part (a) (iii) of the question is concerned, the Master and Registrar has informed that the Judiciary is not in presence of such information.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court that the contract for the E-Judiciary Project was awarded in compliance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, under the Procurement Guidelines of the donor agency, namely, Investment Climate Facility for Africa.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court has informed that proper monitoring of the E-Judiciary Project is being effected ever since its inception by a Steering Committee chaired by an hon. Judge of the Supreme Court and the Judiciary Project Management Team.

Quarterly reports are regularly submitted to Investment Climate Facility and to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. In addition, an Investment Climate Facility team regularly visits Mauritius for the monitoring of the project.

The audit is being done at three levels –

Firstly, at the level of the internal control of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;

Secondly, at the level of the National Audit Office, and

Thirdly, by the Audit team of the donor agency.

In October 2014, an acceptance letter was delivered by the Judiciary to Mauritius Network Services Limited subject to the condition that certain changes be made to the system. The Mauritius Network Services Limited is currently working on these changes.

As far as the liquidated damages clause is concerned, I am informed by the Master and Registrar that the advisability or otherwise of applying the provisions of the latter clause will be considered in the light of the changes to be brought to the E-Judiciary System, as requested by the Judiciary from Mauritius Network Services Limited.

#### **CANAL DAYOT – FLASH FLOODS – CLEANING WORKS**

**(No. B/37) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the work being carried out at Canal Dayot, Grand River North West, he will state where matters stand, indicating if there has been any consultation with the inhabitants in relation thereof.

**Reply (The Prime Minister):** I am informed that, following the flash floods of 30 March 2013, the National Development Unit undertook the following under Emergency Procurement –

- (i) cleaning works in April 2013, and
- (ii) construction of rock revetment at Canal Dayot, Grand River North West in November 2013.

The works were completed on 15 August 2013 and 31 December 2013 respectively.

Consultations were held with the inhabitants.

#### **SABLE NOIR – DRAINS**

**(No. B/41) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to work

being carried out at Sable Noir, Grand River North West, he will state where matters stand, indicating if the inhabitants thereof have been consulted in relation thereto.

**Reply (The Prime Minister):** I am informed that the construction of the outlet drains from Industrial Zone to sea outlet, Bell Village and the reconstruction of existing drain to a bigger size at Sable Noir was effected by National Development Unit under Emergency Procurement as from May 2013 and was completed on 30 May 2014.

I am also informed that to further ease the evacuation of flood water, a new box culvert with greater cross sectional area is presently under construction at Sable Noir and is scheduled for completion by the end of May 2015.

In respect of both projects the inhabitants of the region were consulted. I am given to understand that it is upon the request of inhabitants and *Force Vives* of Sable Noir that the new box culvert is being constructed.

#### **MBC - FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL - LUMP SUM**

**(No. B/43) Mr S. Fowdar (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the former Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if he was paid a lump sum upon his resignation in December 2014 and, if so, will he state if the amount paid was in conformity with the terms and conditions of his contract and, if not, indicate the legal actions that are being taken in relation thereto.

**Reply:** I am informed that the former Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, was paid a net amount of Rs4,574,660.78 (after deduction of Rs786,014.74 as PAYE) after his resignation on 11 December 2014. The payment had initially been effected on 11 December 2014 through direct debit. The State Bank of Mauritius was instructed to process the payment on 11 December 2014.

However, in view of the fact that the former Director General was not entitled to payment of gratuity and of passage benefits, he was requested to refund an amount of Rs321,045.37.

With regard to the second part of the question, I am informed that the former Director General was paid a sum of Rs4,253,615.47 as compensation.

The compensation paid equivalent to eighteen months' salary is pursuant to clause x(e) of the contract of employment of the former Director General.

Clause x(e) of the contract of the former Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, which was drawn on 25 June 2014, states, I quote -

“Your appointment may be determined by you at any time when you consider that you cannot, in good conscience, continue to serve as Director-General, in which case you will be paid eighteen months' salary.”

The term of the contract of the former Director General with regard to termination is currently being investigated by the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms. Further action will be taken in the light of the findings.

### **PRIMARY SCHOOLS - SUBJECT TEACHING**

**(No. B/44) Mr S. Fowdar (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Science Research whether she will state if her Ministry is considering the introduction of subject teaching at the primary level.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **STATE LANDS - LEASE**

**(No. B/45) Mr S. Fowdar (Third Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the lease of State lands, he will -

- (a) state if his Ministry intends to come up with a more transparent set of procedures for the allocation thereof, and
- (b) table a list thereof from July 2005 to date, indicating in each case the -
  - (i) name of the lessee;
  - (ii) purpose thereof, and
  - (iii) extent thereof.

**Reply:** In regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that I have set up a dedicated working group, which I am personally chairing, to examine in-depth the whole process governing State land allocation. The exercise has reached quite an advanced stage already and, very shortly, a review of the Policy Framework would be made. I can inform hon. Members that the new system which will be put in place will very rigorously subscribe

to the principles of fairness, transparency and accountability so that we ward off once for all instances of arbitrariness and discrimination.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

### **JIN FEI PROJECT - INFRASTRUCTURAL WORKS**

**(No. B/46) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Jin Fei Project, he will state -

- (a) the total value of infrastructural works undertaken thereat, indicating the names of the contractors involved as at to date;
- (b) the compensation paid to the planters following their relocation and,
- (c) if an agreement was signed between the Government and Jin Fei and/or any other party, indicating;
  - (i) the conditions of the lease of the land thereof, and
  - (ii) (ii) if copy of the agreement thereof will be tabled.

*(Vide reply to P.Q No. B/16)*

### **EBENE - SICOM TOWER - LEASE AGREEMENT**

**(No. B/47) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to SICOM Tower at Ebène, he will state if -

- (a) the original lease agreement between the Business Park of Mauritius Ltd. (BPML) and Arushi Development Ltd. had been revised subsequently to enable commercial development thereat, indicating whether the decision was approved by the Board of Directors of the BPML;
- (b) tenders were launched by SICOM for the purchase of property at Ebene and, if not, why not and, if so, give details of the -
  - (i) list of bidders;
  - (ii) the name of the members of the tender evaluation panel;
  - (iii) the bid evaluation reports thereof, and
- (c) there are fixed and floating charges in the property currently known as SICOM Tower in favour of any other party apart from SICOM Ltd.

*(Withdrawn)*

**CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD - TECHNICAL COMMITTEE -  
COMPOSITION**

(No. B/48) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Technical Committee of the Central Procurement Board, he will state the -

(a) composition thereof, indicating the -

- (i) qualification;
- (ii) experience;
- (iii) salary and benefits;
- (iv) date of appointment and duration of contract of the members thereof, and

(b) scope of work thereof, indicating if Government intends to review the composition and functioning thereof.

**Reply:** I am informed that, in accordance with Section 11 of the Public Procurement Act, the Central Procurement Board sets up, as and when required, Technical Committees in order to discharge its responsibility for the award of major contracts in the public sector.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Board recruits engineers from various fields on contract basis and the latter are also called upon to be members of Technical Committees. At present, the following engineers are serving on Technical Committees -

- (i) Mr Amitsingh Raja Rai, Civil Engineer
- (ii) Mr Mooneedranathsing Jeelall, Civil Engineer
- (iii) Mr Neerunjunsingh Ujoodha, Computer Engineer/IT System Administrator

I am tabling the information requested in respect of qualifications, experience, salaries and other benefits of these engineers.

Regarding Part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Technical Committee is mandated to carry out due diligence exercise on evaluation reports submitted by Bid

Evaluation Committees. Due diligence reports along with the respective Bid Evaluation Reports are submitted to the Board for decision making.

Yes, Government is presently reconstituting the Central Procurement Board and once the new Board will be in place, it will review the composition and functioning of its Technical Committees.

### **TERRE ROUGE-VERDUN ROAD (M3) – GEOTECHNICAL REPORT**

**(No. B/49) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge-Verdun Road (M3), he will state –

- (a) the status thereof as at to date;
- (b) the content of the report of the Geotechnical expert of Mr P., indicating if a copy thereof will be tabled, and
- (c) if there has been any change from the original design and, if so, why.

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Terre Rouge-Verdun Road (M3) is a dual carriageway which was opened to traffic in December 2013. On 18 January 2015, cracks were observed on the fill area about 400m before Valton roundabout. A monitoring of the cracks revealed signs of a potential landslide and it was decided to close the section of road between Valton and Ripailles completely as from 21 January 2015.

The advice of experts namely, the Expert Team of the Japan International Corporation Agency, Dr. E Saldivar, Geotechnical Engineer of Geotechnical Services Limited (Mauritius), whose services have been retained by the RDA, and ARQ (South Africa), Consulting Engineer for Joint Venture Rehm Grinaker-COLAS, have been sought and they all share the opinion that the excessive accumulation of water to a high level in the embankment, resulting from the recent torrential rainfalls, has triggered the incident. In-depth investigations and tests will be conducted for the identification of the precise causes of the embankment failure and the appropriate remedial measures.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that Mr Plotto was an expert appointed by the Consultant, Egis International Ltd to prepare the geotechnical study at the project design stage. When the first signs of instabilities were identified in 2010, Mr Plotto carried out a visit and submitted a mission report on 06 July 2010 with some recommendations relating to slope stabilisation. Following new problems that cropped up



in the same region, Mr Plotto was called upon by the Consultant to field a second mission in December 2011. He made further recommendations for solving slope instabilities permanently using appropriate and more expensive technologies which included nailing, piling, shotcreting, retaining walls and sub-soil drainage to minimise risks of further landslides.

I am tabling a copy of each of the reports.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am advised that there has been no change in the original design of the road.

### **RING ROAD PHASE I - REPORTS**

(No. B/50) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Ring Road Phase I, he will state where matters stand as to the reports and the recommendations of the various experts thereon, indicating the amount of money paid to them.

**Reply:** I am informed that the Port Louis Ring Road project was conceived to be implemented in three phases under the Road Decongestion Programme. The contract for the construction of Phase 1 was awarded to Joint Venture Rehm Grinaker-COLAS, following an international bidding exercise. The RDA had recourse to Arab Consulting Engineering from Egypt for the supervision of the works.

The construction works for Phase 1 started in January 2010 and was substantially completed in January 2013. There was a defects liability period of 1 year.

Before the expiry of the defects liability period, part of the Ring Road collapsed. That part of the Ring Road was on a 'Design and Build' basis by Joint Venture Rehm Grinaker-COLAS. I am advised that the cause of the collapse is attributable to the fact that the sub-soil strata was too weak to support the fill and the reinforced earth structure.

As per the provisions of the Contract, the Contractor is totally responsible for its design and construction.

The Contractor has consequently appointed Messrs ARQ (Pty) Ltd Consulting Engineers from South Africa to carry out the reconstruction design and the supervision on its behalf.

The expert recommendation to overcome the slip which occurred consists of reinforcing the soil strata below using support piles up to bedrock and inclined tendons embedded therein prior to the actual construction of the reinforced earth wall itself.

The final reconstruction design has been reviewed and approved by the Geotechnical Expert of the Consultant, Arab Consulting Engineers.

The costs relating to the assignment of ARQ (Pty) Ltd Consulting Engineers are being borne by the Contractor directly whereas costs relating to the services of the Geotechnical Expert of Arab Consulting Engineers, to the tune of USD 5170, have been paid from the forfeited amount of the contractor's performance bond.

The services of an independent Geotechnical Expert from South Africa, has now been obtained and he is expected to be in Mauritius on 15 February 2015. He will advise my Ministry, inter-alia, on the efficacy and technical soundness of the remedial works proposed by the contractor. The cost of the assignment is around Rs1.6m.

#### **LIGHT RAIL PROJECT - FUNDS EARMARKED**

**(No. B/51) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Light Rail Project, which has now been shelved, he will state how the funds earmarked therefor by the Government of India will be allocated for other projects, if any.

**Reply:** The Mauritius Light Rapid Transit (MLRT) project was initiated as far back as 2011, through a Government to Government Agreement with the Singapore Government, through the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE). The project was conceived on a Design and Construct model and was to be partly financed by way of a line of credit obtained from the Government of India and partly through loans. The total cost of the project would have amounted to some USD 830 million.

In view of the huge investment required and the need to attend to other priority projects, this Government has decided to shelve the Light Rapid Transit project and to explore alternative solutions with a view to improving and modernising the transport system.

I am informed that The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is currently working on the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) and a priority list of projects will be announced in the forthcoming budget. Accordingly, Members of the House will be

informed in due course of the projects which will be funded out of the Line of Credit obtained from the Government of India.

### **RIPAILLES – SINOHYDRO – WORKS COMPLETION**

**(No. B/52) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the contract awarded to Sinohydro for the completion of works at Ripailles where landslide has occurred, he will state if works will continue to be carried out thereat in the light of the actual state of the M3 Road between Ripailles and Valton roundabouts.

**Reply:** I am informed that during the construction of the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road, landslide problems occurred in the cut section over 3km at Ripailles. Following an international bidding exercise, Sinohydro Corporation Limited has been selected for the slope stabilisation works.

As the House is aware, an embankment failure was identified in the segment of the Terre Rouge-Verdun Link Road at about 1km away from the cut section where the slope stabilisation works are currently being carried out.

With a view to identifying the cause/s of the embankment failure, it has been decided that in-depth geotechnical investigations and tests be carried out along the road segment in order to come up with an appropriate design for durable remedial works along the whole stretch of the road, wherever needed.

I have been accordingly advised that it would be more appropriate that the ongoing stabilisation works be stopped temporarily pending the completion of the geotechnical investigations and tests.

### **DOCTORS – PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINING**

**(No. B/53) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Pre-Registration Training for new qualified doctors, he will –

- (a) give a list thereof awaiting training, indicating in each case, the date of registration,  
and

(b) state when they will be enlisted, indicating the number thereof that will be enlisted

**Reply:** With regard to part (a) of the question, the list requested in respect of applications from newly qualified doctors together with the relevant information is being placed in the Library.

With regard to part (b) of the question, procedures are under way for the enlistment of 63 Pre-Registration House Officers.