



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2015

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THE CABINET**(Formed by the Rt. Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC)**

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, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	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, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin (Temporary Transfer to RRA)
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Badal, Mr Ramesh

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 14 of 2015

Sitting of 31 March 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)

PAPERS LAID

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

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

The Annual Report 2012 of the Private Secondary Schools Authority.

B. Attorney General's Office –

The Annual Report 2014 of the Enforcement Authority.

C. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection –

(a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No.3) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 34 of 2015).

(b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No.4) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 35 of 2015).

D. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions

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The Annual Report of the Probation and Aftercare Service 2013.
(In Original)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

AGALÉGA – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Agreement for the development of Agaléga which was recently signed between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India, he will -

- (a) give details thereof, indicating if it includes -
 - (i) any form of a Lease Agreement and;
 - (ii) the setting up of a Coastal Surveillance Radar Station on Agaléga and entails Mauritius joining India's Regional Radar Network or (joining) the trilateral India-Sri Lanka-Maldives Regional Security Cooperation set-up, and
- (b) lay copy thereof.

The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands (Mr P. Koonjoo): Madam Speaker, with your permission I shall reply to the PNQ addressed to the hon. Prime Minister.

As the House is aware, Agaléga has for too long been neglected in matter of socio-economic development, particularly regarding infrastructural development.

The existing jetty which is only 60m long was constructed in 1985. The jetty is in a very bad condition and it is most imperative that a proper quay be constructed. It is to be noted that repairs were effected to the jetty in 1992, 2003 and 2013 after the passage of cyclone Dumile.

This is the only facility available for loading and unloading of cargo and embarking and disembarking of passengers. M/V 'Mauritius Trochetia' lays in anchor at some 400m away from the jetty at the St. James anchorage, located at the reef-free area, where the depth is only 60m. However, during certain past voyages, M/V 'Mauritius Pride' and M/V 'Mauritius Trochetia' could not anchor and had to be kept on the drive for both disembarking and embarking of goods and passengers in the high seas due to bad weather conditions.

Another major shortcoming in Agaléga relates to the airstrip which badly needs upgrading. Presently, only small aircrafts like the Dornier can land in Agaléga.

Madam Speaker, it is comforting to note that in line with the longstanding Indo-Mauritius relations, the Republic of India has graciously signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mauritius during the recent visit of H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India. The MoU precisely addresses the infrastructural problems faced by Agaleans. The components of the MoU are -

- (a) construction of a jetty for berthing of ships;
- (b) rehabilitation and repaving of the runway over a maximum length of 4,000 feet, an apron for two aircrafts of size (ATR 42 type) and a taxiway;
- (c) installation of a power generation facility of approximately 300 KW;
- (d) setting up of a water desalination plant of capacity of approximately 60 tonnes a day;
- (e) construction of a National Coast Guard Post, including basic repair facilities, and
- (f) any other facility related to the project.

Under the MoU, the Government of India shall finance the projects to the tune of USD 18 m. in the form of financial grant and will also provide suitable personnel with necessary expertise and experience to assist in the implementation of the projects.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I would like to point out that the MoU between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the Republic of India does not include any Lease Agreement in whatsoever form.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, the reply is in the negative.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (b) of the question, in line with Government policy of transparency and good governance, I am laying a copy of the MoU on the Table of the National Assembly.

Mr Bérenger: Before I put some questions, of course, my PNQ was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister, but, at least, the situation is clear as far as any lease agreement is concerned. There has been a lot of talk, at least, that is clear. But is there any reason why the Minister has avoided replying to part (a) (ii), that is, whether the agreement between India and Mauritius includes the setting up of a Coastal Surveillance Radar Station on Agaléga and entails Mauritius joining India's Regional Radar Network or the trilateral India-Sri Lanka-Maldives Regional Security Cooperation set-up?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to the separate agreement, Article 3 of the MoU provides the possibility of drawing up and entering into other supplementary arrangements as may be required for the fulfilment of the pursuance of obligations of both

parties. In this respect, India did suggest a separate agreement; first, use of facilities being developed and to prevent use of facilities by party with interest initiated to the party. I must, here, point out in no uncertain terms that any agreement to be considered would have necessarily to satisfy the following conditions -

- it is of mutual benefits, and
- it will be in strict compliance with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr Bérenger: Well, if I heard the hon. Minister correctly, he said that the Indian side - we have very good friends - has suggested a separate agreement. Is there a separate agreement? Has there been any other agreement signed or circulated?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, as far as I know, I don't think I have seen any agreement of that sort in the MoU.

Mr Bérenger: I don't want to think about things like that! My question was addressed to the hon. Prime Minister. Has, at least, the hon. Minister - because he has chosen to reply; the hon. Prime Minister has asked him to reply - seen with the hon. Prime Minister whether there is this radar system dimension or even more because I'll quote from what both Prime Minister Modi and the Foreign Minister of India have stated recently which entails also suggestions that we should join this security arrangement for that tripartite Sri Lanka-Maldives-Seychelles already in existence?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I repeat again, the answer is no.

Mr Bérenger: The whole point - of course, Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. Prime Minister can understand that - is to clear the air completely. We have excellent relations with India and there has been a lot of rumours, a lot of *procès d'intention*, a lot of talk of loss of sovereignty and so on. So, the whole point was to give the opportunity to the hon. Prime Minister to clear the air completely and say where we stand exactly. So, can I ask again the hon. Prime Minister, is there going...

Madam Speaker: Not the hon. Prime Minister, you should ask the Minister who replied the question.

Mr Bérenger: Unfortunately!

(Interruptions)

Or fortunately for the country!

Can I ask the hon. Minister, therefore, to be more precise? Has the Indian side suggested a separate agreement that would bear on such matters: radar systems and security matters?

Mr Koonjoo: There is no request for that, Madam Speaker, as far as I know.

Mr Bérenger: As far as he knows! Has he talked to the hon. Prime Minister before taking the responsibility of replying to a PNQ that deals also with radar installations and security issues?

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, so far as security issues are concerned, I believe the Prime Minister's Office...

Mr Bérenger: That's why the question was addressed to him.

Mr Koonjoo: They are aware about that; I am not aware about that.

Mr Bérenger: I find that very sad. This was an opportunity to clear the air completely and to strengthen still further our excellent relations with India and we are missing it, Madam Speaker. I put the question clearly: Is there in the agreement or in the proposed agreement, the setting-up of a radar system in Agaléga?

Madam Speaker: You have the reply, hon. Minister?

Mr Koonjoo: I said, Madam Speaker, that, as far as I know, I don't know whether there is a radar system.

(Interruptions)

I don't know.

Mr Bérenger: I don't think it is worth...

(Interruptions)

It's an awful shame!

Mr Koonjoo: Madam Speaker, I said that there is no radar. I don't know. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has got any information, would he tell the House?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you have any other questions?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I understand that you don't have any further question.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am addressing you. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I understand you don't have any other supplementary questions?

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, can you please stand up and tell me whether you have any other supplementary questions or you don't have?

Mr Bérenger: I have already said that there is no use according to me to pursue the matter further and that, therefore, I am not going to put any question, wasting the time of this House with the Minister who does not know anything about the matter raised in my question.

Madam Speaker: Now I understand because from a sitting position, I can't take your statement. Thank you.

So, on Prime Minister's Question Time, hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions No. B/219 addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, B/239 and B/240 addressed to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. Yes, hon. Rutnah!

COIGNET, ROSE HILL - POLICE STATION

(No. B/200) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Police Station situated at Coignet, in Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he has effected a site visit thereat and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given for an upgrading of the working conditions of the Police Officers attached thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there is no Police Station at Coignet, Rose Hill. However, an old Government-owned building made of wood and iron sheets existing thereat was used as Police Quarters. After the Quarters were vacated by the occupiers in 2013, the building was left in an abandoned state.

I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the course of last year, the Western Divisional Support Unit and Divisional Traffic Police at Rose Hill Police Station were reinforced with some 125 additional Police Officers. In this context, the building at Coignet, Rose Hill was identified to offer additional office accommodation to these Officers from where they would operate on a shift system.

The building was accordingly refurbished and the compound rehabilitated to provide a safe and healthy working environment. Consequently, the officers of the Western Divisional Support Unit and the Divisional Traffic Police moved therein for operational convenience.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that he has personally effected a site visit at the Coignet building following reports from the Divisional Commander for the western region forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner of Police responsible for infrastructure regarding structural defects in the building. In view of the poor state of the building, he has taken the following measures with immediate effect -

- (a) the personnel occupying the building have been shifted to Rose Hill Police Headquarters Complex, and
- (b) a technical survey will be carried out at the earliest to assess the structural state of the building and determine whether any renovation works to the building would be cost effective.

In the event the survey reveals that the building is beyond economical repairs, it will be pulled down and a new building will be constructed thereat for eventual use by the Police.

Mr Rutnah: I am grateful to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for indicating the measures that have been taken, but would the Rt. hon. Prime Minister state to the House whether there are other Police Posts and Police Stations round the island which are housed in derelict buildings, which are not in conformity with health and safety issues and are not consonant with good governance and protection of the welfare of Police officers; whether in relation to all other Police Posts, the Commissioner of Police would carry out similar exercise in order to upgrade those buildings?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, I have to draw your attention - I don't know whether the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will reply - to the fact that your question relates to the situation at Coignet. So, you should restrict your question to that.

The Prime Minister: Anyway, a survey will have to be carried out.

Mr Bhagwan: I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister stating that the Commissioner of Police has effected a site visit and that the Police officers will be redeployed to the Rose Hill Police station. Can I draw the attention of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to the fact that the compound is in a very bad state? I would encourage hon. Minister Dayal to have a site visit and send his Environment Police there. There are wastes everywhere in the compound. It is dirty and it is causing a nuisance to the inhabitants of the region who have repeatedly sent requests to the ACP of Rose Hill Police Station to have matters redressed and at least to upgrade the yard and to prevent further nuisances.

The Prime Minister: The Commissioner of Police will take note of this.

Madam Speaker: Next question!

ARMS TRADE – ALLEGED CASES

(No. B/201) **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 the alleged cases of arms trade as revealed by Mrs K. A., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to whether it is proposed to call Mrs K. A. to provide further statements in support of the said allegations.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, as at 27 March 2015, no case of arms trafficking involving foreign nationals has been detected or reported to the Police for enquiry.

I am further informed that, upon the suggestion of the Director of Public Prosecutions, on 20 February 2014, Mrs K. A. wrote to the then Commissioner of Police about a possible criminal activity that she believed warranted an investigation without giving any detail on the criminal activity. She was also prepared to provide the Police with additional information required in connection therewith.

On 03 and 27 March 2014, the Police contacted Mrs K. A. through e-mail to know whether she intended to travel to Mauritius to give a detailed statement on the matter. But no reply has been received from Mrs K.A in this regard so far.

Mr Hurreeram: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his reply. Will the Government consider giving a safe passage to Mrs Austin for further enquiry?

The Prime Minister: Well, the lady is free to come here if she has any information that can help to reopen the enquiry.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the DPP has decided for no further action and if so, can we know when?

Madam Speaker: I have to draw the attention of the hon. Member again. According to Section 72 of the Constitution, the DPP is not answerable to any decision taken by him. So, please refrain from asking this sort of questions.

The Prime Minister: I can say that the DPP has taken a decision that there should be no further investigation or action.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, if Mrs A. K. was to provide fresh and new compelling evidence, would this case be reinvestigated by the new ICAC?

The Prime Minister: Well, she is welcome. If there is a new element, if there is new evidence that will warrant an investigation, certainly ICAC will proceed with an enquiry.

Mr Rutnah: Now that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has answered the question and the can of worm is open that no further action is to be taken, can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister probably tell us if he has this information as to the date on which this decision was taken?

The Prime Minister: Insofar as I am concerned, I do not know on what basis the DPP has taken the decision, but I suppose the DPP must have found that there was no substance, there was no evidence to proceed further and he decided that the matter be not proceeded further.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, the question is on which date did the DPP inform that there should be no further action?

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, I know, but I don't have the exact date right now. It is on 12 December 2014.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

TROU FANFARON - POLICE STATION - RELOCATION

(No. B/202) 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 the Trou Fanfaron Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he is aware of the derelict state thereof and of unhygienic conditions prevailing thereat and, if so, indicate if urgent remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto, indicating if the relocation thereof is being contemplated and if so, where to.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Trou Fanfaron Police Station is an old building which continuously requires proper repairs and maintenance in order to render the environment conducive for work. In this respect, necessary repairs and maintenance works have been regularly carried out by the Technical Team of the Special Support Unit since 2011.

In reply to PQ B/415 in June 2013, the House was informed about the proposal of the Police to construct a new building in the vicinity of Quay D to house the Police Station. However, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport stated that the site was inappropriate for the project due to problems of access and potential hazards for the public. Thereafter, Police came up with the proposal to construct the new Police Station adjacent to the existing building on the plot of

land which is currently used as parking space. Arrangements are being made for the vesting of the land in the Police Department in order to start the project.

The new Police Station will also cater for additional facilities such as cells for detainees and safekeeping of exhibits which are not available presently.

Madam Speaker, in the meantime, Police has initiated procedures for the relocation of the Police Station in a rented building near the Immigration Square, Port Louis with effect from 15 April 2015 once necessary infrastructural works are completed thereat.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, this question has been long debated in the House. As the hon. Prime Minister is aware, the state of the building is not good so that the Police can carry on with the work there. But now that the decision has been taken to construct a new Police Station, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to state clearly where is the site that has been identified? Just behind the Police Station, there is a place which was identified for hawkers, not a Hawkers' Palace, but it was identified to place all the hawkers of *Immigration* behind the Police Station. Is this parking that is being identified for the new Police Station?

The Prime Minister: Well, all that I can say is what I have just stated in the answer. It is the parking that is near the building that already exists right now.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesungkur!

COMMISSION FOR THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE ECONOMY – COMPOSITION

(No. B/203) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy set up by the previous Government, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to, since 2009 to 2014 -

- (a) the composition thereof;
- (b) the total remuneration paid to the Chairperson thereof, including fringe benefits, and
- (c) if it has submitted any report.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the composition of the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Prime Minister, but I think hon. Ameer Meea is questioning the Chair. Is the hon. Member questioning the Chair?

Mr Ameer Meea: I ask for another supplementary question. I have put only one supplementary question and I ask again for another supplementary question. Where is the problem?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, you cannot question the Chair. It is to the discretion of the Chair to allow your question or not!

(Interruptions)

Excuse me, but I will not allow any other Member to make comments on the Chair.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, are you insisting and are you making remarks on the Chair?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker...

Madam Speaker: You have to sit down when I am on my feet.

(Interruptions)

You have to sit down when I am on my feet.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, you have to sit down! When I am on my feet you have to sit down. Do not provoke me otherwise I will have to take action!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member is also making remarks on the Chair. I have told you...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, you sit down when I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

You know the procedure, but you cannot question the Chair. I am being fair and I do not want any comments on the Chair. I will not allow this!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, on a point of order! Is this the practice now that a Member cannot put a second supplementary question?

Madam Speaker: It is up to the Chair to decide whether you can put a second question or not. I am being very democratic in my approach and you cannot question or make remarks on the Chair.

(Interruptions)

Allow me to tell you this! Whether be it on a sitting position or whether you stand up! And if you continue, hon. Ameer Meea, I will have to order you out.

(Interruptions)

I will have to order you out!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I said order! Do not provoke me to take action! Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the composition of the Commission...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I am sorry, hon. Prime Minister, I will have to interrupt you again. I have heard remarks from hon. Bhagwan. Does he maintain these remarks?

Mr Bhagwan: I am making my remarks. When you were a backbencher, you were allowed to ask hundreds of supplementary questions.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, since you have said that and you are not allowed to, according to the Standing Orders, I order you out!

(Interruptions)

At this stage, the MMM and the Labour Party Opposition Members left the Chamber.

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Who is saying shame on me?

(Interruptions)

Out!

Hon. Prime Minister, please proceed!

The Prime Minister: I am informed that the composition of the Commission for the Democratisation of the Economy, until 05 August 2011, was as follows -

Chairperson : Mr Cader Sayed Hossen

Vice-Chairperson : Ms Nita Deerpalsing

On 19 August 2011, Ms Deerpalsing was appointed as Chairperson of the Commission in replacement of Mr Cader Sayed Hossen. The position of Vice-Chairperson was left vacant thereafter.

As regards part (b) of the question, the total remuneration paid to Mr Cader Sayed Hossen as Chairperson of the Commission for the period 01 January 2009 to 05 August 2011 was Rs1,166,967, including a sum of Rs232,129 paid to him as driver's allowances. Mr Cader Sayed Hossen was also provided with an official car from the Police car pool.

Ms Deerpalsing was paid a total sum of Rs1,733,875 as Chairperson for the period 19 August 2011 to 09 December 2014. This sum includes an amount of Rs332,973 paid to her as driver's allowance.

Ms Deerpalsing was also eligible for an official car from the pool and a cellular phone plus free calls up to a ceiling of Rs2,000.

With regard to part (c) of the question, there is no record in my office of any report submitted by the Commission. I note that in his reply to PQ B/711 on 18 December 2012, the former Prime Minister stated that it was not the practice for the Commission to submit formal reports and that the Commissioners only used to have discussions with him.

Madam Speaker, this perfectly illustrates the culture of the previous Government to pay generous allowances and fringe benefits without any well-defined deliverables and time frames.

CANAL DAYOT & SABLE NOIR - WATER DRAINAGE PROJECT

(No. B/206) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth 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 Water Drainage Project in respect of the region of Canal Dayot and of Sable Noir, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to where matters stand as to the -

- (a) proposal for additional works to be carried out in relation thereto, and
- (b) expected start and completion dates thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the NDU that the water drainage project at Canal Dayot, has been completed except for a part of the canal which could not be enlarged due to one of the owners having obtained a Court Stop Order for the enlargement of the canal over a stretch of about 75 metres.

This non-enlargement of the canal is preventing the free flow of water during heavy rainfall and causing flooding. NDU can take remedial action only when the Court case is disposed of.

Another aspect of the additional work is the extension of the existing bridge along the main road, and this is under the purview of the Road Development Authority. The Authority will be called upon to take appropriate measures.

As regards Sable Noir, I am informed by the NDU that the water drainage project has been completed and, moreover, the zonal contractor (Super Builders Ltd) is presently erecting a bridge to connect the existing road to Sable Noir Beach.

The works are due to be completed by end of June 2015.

I am also informed that NDU is presently seeking the necessary clearances from the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the construction of a new road from the new bridge to Sable Noir Beach. Works would start upon all clearances being obtained.

NOUVELLE FRANCE - INCIDENT - INQUIRY

(No. B/208) 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 incident which occurred, on or about Wednesday 12 November 2014, at Nouvelle France, in which tear gas was used, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as

to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto, indicating if any arrest has been effected in connection therewith.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, on 12 November 2014, one candidate of *L'Alliance Lepep* reported at the Nouvelle France Police Station that while he was presiding a private meeting on the premises of a supporter at Savanne Road, Nouvelle France, an object was flung from the roadside into the tent where the meeting was being held. The object discharged fire sparks and smoke inside the tent. The meeting was disrupted and those present were panic-stricken. Out of them, three persons complained of suffocation resulting from the smoke and they were conveyed to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital.

Police Officers of the Nouvelle France Police Station, the Emergency Response Service, the Special Mobile Force and the Divisional Supporting Unit attended to the case and identified the object as a hand grenade. Same was secured by the Police and photographs taken.

In its report dated 26 November 2014, the Forensic Science Laboratory highlighted the presence of active noxious substance and chemical agent in the grenade.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that nine persons have been interviewed and two of them have been arrested. The enquiry is still ongoing.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House for what reason there has been a delay to carry out the arrest?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't have the reason in the file. But we can draw our own conclusion that, had there been the same Government, there would have been no further inquiry, I am sure.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the Police Officer who was in charge of this inquiry had been transferred in the past and, if so, would he consider to ask the acting Commissioner of Police to bring back the same officer to carry on again this inquiry?

The Prime Minister: The Police Officer who was in charge of the inquiry at a certain time was removed, and I suppose that the way he was proceeding did not please the superiors in those days. I will certainly ask the acting Commissioner of Police to see whether he can be brought back to continue the inquiry into this case.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the Rt. hon. Prime Minister aware that the tear gas or the hand grenade just mentioned by him, which had been used by the accused, belonged to the SMF, and, if so, will he consider to ask the acting Commissioner of Police to investigate into this matter?

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether it belongs to the SMF, but I know for certainty that it belongs to the Police, and I will certainly ask the Commissioner of Police to inquire into it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Tarolah!

BEL AIR RIVIÈRE SÈCHE – LARCENY CASES

(No. B/209) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit whether, in regard to larceny, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of cases thereof reported at the Bel Air Rivière Sèche Police Station, since January 2015 to date, indicating the preventive measures, if any, taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, since January 2015 to date, 62 cases of larceny have been reported to Bel Air Rivière Sèche Police Station. The number of such cases for the corresponding period last year was 88.

I am further informed that a series of measures have been taken by the Police to tackle the problem of larceny not only in the region covered by Bel Air Rivière Sèche, but also island wide. These include -

- (i) intensification of strategic and concerted mobile patrol by different units of the Force;
- (ii) targeted stop and search operations;
- (iii) supervision of Habitual Criminals and close monitoring of prisoners released from jail;
- (iv) offenders profiling and strategies to prevent re-offending, and
- (v) use of *portrait robot* to identify offenders.

Madam Speaker, focus is also being laid on enhancing the partnership between the Police and the public in the fight against crime through Community Policing and setting up of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes. For instance, in the region of Bel Air Rivière Sèche, two Neighbourhood Watch Schemes have been set up at *Morcellement VRS* and *Morcellement St Michel* with the participation of the inhabitants of the areas.

Targeted awareness campaigns and field counselling are carried out by the Crime Prevention Unit. These campaigns cover such topics as Personal and Property Protection. The objective is to avail the community at large with relevant information, especially the elimination of factors which may favour the occurrence of crime. In this regard, since the

beginning of the year, seven meetings have been held with the members of the community of the Bel Air Rivière Sèche region.

Madam Speaker: Any supplementary?

Mr Tarolah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Rt. hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there will be an increase in the number of Police Officers as during the night shifts there are only eight Police Officers operating, whereas in the vicinity, according to my information, there are about 80 HCs found there?

The Prime Minister: I will ask the Commissioner of Police to look into it.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/234 addressed to the hon. Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands will now be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications. Parliamentary Question No. B/227, addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government, will now be replied by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities. The Table has also been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/218 has been withdrawn. Hon. Jhugroo!

STATE LAND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED – CAR - PURCHASE

(No. B/211) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the purchase of cars by the State Land Development Company Limited, since 2006 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, the list thereof, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) make and model thereof;
- (b) date of purchase thereof;
- (c) cost thereof;
- (d) purpose therefor, and
- (e) registration number thereof, indicating if personalized numbers were purchased from the National Transport Authority and, if so, indicate in each case, the –
 - (i) reasons therefor, and
 - (ii) amount of money paid therefor.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the Independent Commission against Corruption is already investigating into the alleged malpractices at the SLDC, including in relation to acquisition of motor vehicles.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – NEW TERMINAL - CONTRACT

(No. B/212) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the new terminal of the Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to –

- (a) if it is a design and built project contract and, if so, indicate the time taken for the execution of the design thereof;
- (b) if galvanized metal frames were used;
- (c) the thickness of the metal roofing;
- (d) the type of curtain wall glass fixed;
- (e) the amount of variation costs claimed and paid, and
- (f) table copy of the contract in relation thereto and, if not, why not.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer of Airport Terminal Operations Ltd. (ATOL) that *Aéroports de Paris* Group was appointed as the Airport Design Consultant for the new passenger terminal. The consultant advised ATOL to have recourse to an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract as per FIDIC rules and principles.

In such type of contract, the selected bidder carries out the Detailed Design, Procurement, Construction Activity and Testing and Commissioning.

The contract was awarded on 30 December 2009 to China State Construction Engineer Corporation Ltd. (CSCEC). The Contractor started the Detailed Design as from June 2010, and in such EPC contract the detailed design runs concurrently with the construction progress on site to meet the tight schedule.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the structure above ground of the building is made of steel.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the thickness of the metal roofing is composed of an external smooth, joint-free aluminium profiled sheets of 1.0 mm thickness finished with special coating systems.

In regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed that the curtain wall is of type Stick System. The typical thickness of the insulated glazed panel of the curtain wall is 48 mm, comprising four layers of tempered laminated glass.

In regard to part (e) of the question, I am informed that as at to date, variations to the tune of US\$ 9.9 m. have been issued to the EPC Contractor. A contingency sum of US\$ 8.9

m. was already provided in the contract. Therefore, the additional amount of US\$ 1 m. represents a net increase of 0.34% of the contract price.

I am tabling a copy of the EPC contract between ATOL and CSCEC.

Madam Speaker, at my request, Louis Berger Group, the Engineer responsible for design review and supervision of the structure and viaduct of the new terminal at the SSR International Airport, has submitted a report on 26 February 2015, certifying that the foundation, structure and viaduct installations and curtain wall are constructed as per approved design and are functioning well.

The roof of the new building was successfully tested according to British Standards and Centre for Window and Cladding Technology Standards prior to handing over.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the contract value and, as per contract whether variation has been entertained – like he said, to the tune of US\$ 1 m. – and whether this is not contrary to sections 4(1) and 5(a) of the contract?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the contract value was US\$ 306 m. I am tabling a copy of the contract for the House and the hon. Member will ascertain for himself whether it is or not and come back, if necessary.

Dr. Sorefan: I have a copy of part of the contract which is contrary, because variation is not allowed; it is section 5.8, the design. If you will allow me, I can read it, Madam Speaker. I quote without prejudice to the requirement of Article 5.2 –

“If errors, omissions, ambiguities, inconstancies, inadequacies or other defects are found in the contract document, they and the works shall be corrected at the contractor’s cost, notwithstanding any consent or approval under this Article 5”.

What it means is that no variation is entertained in a fully design and effectuation of the work. No variation should be allowed. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister look into it?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, certainly. Madam Speaker, I understand that the variations are also for additional works and changes. So, I will ask ATOL and its Legal Adviser to look at it with pleasure. No problem!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you have a question?

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware of whether any defects have been reported, so far, with regard to the structure?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am going to table the report of the independent engineer at the same time so that the House can have a look at it. According to them, the structures, etc. are fine. There are some defects to do with some leaking in the basement, etc. but they are not major defects.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister regarding the metal structure, since in his answer he said it is of steel, but the contract talks about galvanised steel work and, to my information, the contractor has supplied steel with painted zinc....

(Interruptions)

Whatever you call it, a variation just to minimise the cost. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister look into it, because galvanised steel give a longer lifespan to the airport structure?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I will look into it.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: With regard to what have been mentioned by my hon. friend, Dr. Sorefan, is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware that there exists much corrosion with regard to all these frames which have been used?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am told that there are some corrosion on some of the railings over there. This will be changed before the end of the contractual liability period. This is what I have.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I will allow the hon. Member a last question!

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister regarding the wind speed - this is very important in Mauritius, because of the cyclonic issue - whether the design has been according to the wind speed that has been maximally registered in Mauritius, and whether the lifespan is 50 years or 100 years for this terminal?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will have to take a quick crash course in engineering! Madam Speaker, I will pass on these remarks to the necessary authority and I will come back to the hon. Member concerning that. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – CONSTRUCTION – AUDIT TRAIL

(No. B/213) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will state if his Ministry will consider probing into the ACONEX website with the permission of the Officer-in-Charge of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport for an audit trail and follow-up of the documents filed in relation to the construction thereof and table copy thereof with a view to throwing light on the opacity or transparency of the project.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, I am informed by ATOL that ACONEX is a web-based project management tool which has been purchased by the main contractor, China State

Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd, and for which the cost was already included in the construction contract for the project management of the new airport terminal construction at SSR International Airport.

ACONEX was operational as from May 2010 for the whole duration of the construction at the new airport terminal. I understand from ATOL that all documentary information with respect to the construction, monitoring and evaluation of a new airport terminal has been stored on ACONEX and includes not less than some 100,000 project-related documentation, including correspondences and approvals at every stage of the project.

I also understand, Madam Speaker, that the ACONEX system provides an audit trail of all relevant construction contract-related documentation that has been uploaded.

In the event that an investigative review is warranted and my Ministry is vested with this task, all project-related information stored on ACONEX will be used amongst others to establish an audit trail and follow-ups made accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - RUNWAY - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/214) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the construction of the second runway of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) name of the contractor therefor;
- (b) cost of the project thereof, and
- (c) variation costs thereof, if any
- (d) if works have been executed in compliance with the terms and conditions of the contract, and
- (e) who certified the recommendations for payment in relation thereto.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Officer-in-Charge of Airports of Mauritius Ltd (AML) that the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport has only one runway. The Airport Master Plan 2004 makes provision for a second runway and this will be implemented whenever the need arises. AML has decided to construct a parallel taxiway which can also be used as a Runway in emergency situations and which required less land acquisition. The taxiway has also been designed to accommodate A380 types of Aircraft.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Member must be referring to this parallel taxiway.

In regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the contract for the construction of the parallel taxiway at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport was awarded to Joint Venture of Colas and Rehm Grinaker on 17 June 2011 for an amount of Rs1.943 billion inclusive of VAT. The variation costs amount to Rs105.26 m. inclusive of VAT, i.e. 5.4% of the contract value.

I am also informed that the works have been executed as per an alternative design proposed by the contractor for the base course for the airfield pavement which was endorsed by AML's Consultant, Jacobs-Gibb.

The Consultant certified all the recommendations for payment.

Dr. Sorefan: Madam Speaker, may we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether there was a tender and who were those listed, who quoted for?

Mr Duval: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, I don't have this information. I'll check that information.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, being given that the Deputy Prime Minister and I are both not engineers, can I know what is the difference between the parallel taxiway and the runway?

Mr Duval: It is not for taxis at the airport. The hon. Member must not worry about this.

(Interruptions)

A parallel runway is an additional runway. A taxiway is used by planes to move to the airport terminal. But this taxiway can also be used as an emergency runway.

STATE COUNSELS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/217) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to his Office, the Office of the Solicitor General and that of the Director of Public Prosecutions respectively, he will, for the period 2005 to date, state and obtain the list of State Counsels attached thereto and who –

- (a) sit on the Board of parastatal bodies, and
- (b) act as legal advisers of parastatal bodies, indicating in each case the -
 - (i) date of appointment, and
 - (ii) remuneration drawn.

Mr Yerrigadoo: Madam Speaker, in regard to paragraph (a) of the question –

- (1) Hon. Members will be aware that law officers and State Attorneys are appointed as members of statutory bodies either as ex officio members or as representatives of the Attorney-General, the Attorney-General's Office, the Solicitor-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions, as the case may be, or, in a few cases, following appointment by a Minister in the officer's personal capacity in view of his experience in a certain field.
- (2) Fees of Board members, whether the members are from my office or other Ministries, are either determined by the respective Minister responsible for the parastatal body concerned or its Board, in line with fees paid to other senior public officers on the Board and in conformity with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau.

In regard to paragraph (b) of the question –

- (1) Law officers and State Attorneys may, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Law Officers Act, be authorised in writing by the President of the Republic to practise as barrister or attorney, as the case may be, on behalf of a private party, that is, a party other than the State. This provision was to be found *mutatis mutandis* in the Law Officers Ordinance when it was passed in 1957.
- (2) In 1982, the then Government decided that parastatal bodies may continue to entrust their legal drafting and advisory work to law officers provided that the fees payable shall accrue to all law officers collectively, and, on the advice of the then Attorney-General, the then Governor-General gave his authorisation in writing for the law officers and Crown Attorneys to undertake the legal drafting and advisory work of parastatal bodies generally.
- (3) In January 1995, on the advice of the then Prime Minister and Attorney-General - our current Rt. hon. Prime Minister - authorisation was granted to the Solicitor-General "and any State Law officer or Attorney to whom he may delegate the duties" to undertake legal advisory work for drafting for companies where the State has an interest and to appear in Court or before any other quasi-judicial body or Tribunal for parastatal bodies and such institutions or companies where Government has an interest. Reference is made in the request for authorisation to the agreed Government policy to ask the State Law Office to act as legal adviser to parastatal bodies in view of the confidentiality of certain matters.

- (4) I am of the view that once a law officer has been authorised to provide legal services to parastatal bodies in his capacity as lawyer and not in his official capacity, it would be against professional ethics for me to enquire from him as to the quantum of fees he receives from those bodies. I note, however, that such work is normally done at the cost of several hours daily, usually after working hours, so that it does not impede on the work load at the Office.
- (5) It is the Board and management of such parastatal bodies which determine legal advisors' remuneration, and I am not accountable for the acts of those Boards. It is, of course, for the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) and the officers themselves to ensure that fiscal obligations are abided by.
- (6) The Office of the DPP has informed my Office that as at 30 March 2015, only one law officer advises the Board of Investment against payment for legal fees. The Director of Public Prosecutions or his representative, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, sits as ex-officio member on the following statutory bodies –
- (i) Law Reform Commission;
 - (ii) Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies Board, and
 - (iii) Council for Vocational and Legal Education.
- (7) As far as my Office is concerned, I am tabling the list of parastatal bodies and other statutory bodies, 33 in total, which law officers and State attorneys advise.

Mr Rutnah: I am grateful for the answer provided by my very good friend, the Attorney-General. However, I would like the Attorney-General to state whether he has information as to the number of hours that law officers of the State Law Office have worked and the remuneration because there is obviously fiscal implication and ethical implication in this matter. So, perhaps if my very good friend can ascertain ...

Madam Speaker: Your question is clear, hon. Member!

Mr Yerrigadoo: I can answer as far as my Office is concerned. I have made it a point with the Solicitor General that no such work impedes on the current work of the Office during office hours. So, I can assure the hon. Member that, at least, since December last year no such work is being done to impede current Government business or advice and all such work is done on week-ends and after working hours. I will find out the details as far as remuneration is concerned and I can table this. I cannot answer as far as the Office of the DPP is concerned.

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Attorney General inform the House who are the State Counsels who sit on the SICOM Board and what amount of money has been paid to each of them as remuneration since their appointment?

Mr Yerrigadoo: I would have loved to reply to the hon. Member. Unfortunately, SICOM does not fall under my aegis. I believe the question should be addressed to my friend, the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms.

Mr Rutnah: Am I correct to understand that the Director of Public Prosecutions has refused to answer the question in relation to or has refused to cooperate to provide information in relation to the remuneration of those officers attached to his Office?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, I don't think it is in order for you to question the prerogatives of the DPP. According to the Standing Orders, it is not in order. So, please refrain from asking these questions!

Mr Yerrigadoo: Madam Speaker, what I can answer to the hon. Member is the information I have been provided from the Office of the DPP as what I have stated, is as at date, I do not have any further details I am afraid.

ITALY - CONSUL OF MAURITIUS – OFFICE HOLDERS

(No. B/218) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the office of Consul of Mauritius in Italy, he will state the names of the office holders thereof over the period 2005 to date, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) terms and conditions of appointment thereof, and
- (b) town of residence thereof during the tenure of office.

(Withdrawn)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, I said at the beginning that PQ No. B/219 which was addressed to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport was to be answered by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. So, this is not in order now. So, that is why I am coming to PQ No. B/220.

PLAINES WILHEMS SEWERAGE PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/220) Mr A. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project awarded to the Joint Venture C. F. Thymian Holding GbR and Sotravic, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the -

- (a) original contract price for Lot 1A;
- (b) revised contract value thereof, and

- (c) amount of money paid, if any, for the delay in the implementation thereof, indicating the amount of the penalty fee paid, if any.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the contract was awarded on 19 October 2009 to Joint Venture C.F. Thymian Holding, GbR/Sotravic Ltd. for the price of Rs2.8 billion more specially, Rs2,842,498,362.59 (including VAT with a completion date fixed for 31 May 2014.

I am further informed that in October 2014, the Wastewater Management Authority Board approved that the contract value be revised to Rs3.9 billion, that is, one extra billion rupees more specially, Rs3,920,360,438.42 including VAT and to extend the project completion date...

(Interruptions)

to November 2017.

No penalty fee has been paid up to now. The House may be aware that the Director of Audit made adverse comments on this project in 2012.

I have to inform the House that, on Friday 27 March 2015, Government took note of this high cost overrun in this project and has decided that -

- (i) the Wastewater Management Authority should close the project in 2016 by completing works started in the northern part of the region covered by the project, and
- (ii) a full technical and management audit of all wastewater management projects be carried out with a view to improving project monitoring and supervision and most importantly, to avoid excessive cost overruns.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister explain to the House why such variation has been approved being given that, according to PPA, not more than 25% of the contract value for work variation is possible? Right now, we are having Rs1.1 billion which amounts to around 38%. So, how could they bypass the Central Procurement Board at that time?

Mr Collendavelloo: Of course, I cannot explain and I think it is beyond any logical explanation. So, they play with billions as if you know, you are playing with Rs1,000. That is how it was done, that is the method of Government which was adopted in those days. I am afraid I am unable to provide a satisfactory answer to the hon. Member on this. I hope that the

Management Audit, which we will set up, will be able to provide the answers and satisfy the hon. Member on that score.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe by now the hon. Vice-Prime Minister would have been made aware that most of the contracts undertaken by the Wastewater Management Authority has exceeded the cost price by more than 35% and, as it is under our legislation, that is the Central Procurement Act, whenever a contract value exceeds 35% of the total cost of the contract, we have to go for a fresh tender exercise. There was an enquiry ...

Madam Speaker: Put your question, please.

Mr Lesjongard: I am going to put the question. There was an enquiry and the General Manager, at that time, was transferred to the National Transport Corporation, don't you think that it is time - with all the contracts that have been allocated by the Wastewater Management Authority - that Government should set a Commission of Enquiry to enquire into all those contracts that have been awarded by that Authority?

Mr Collendavelloo: Following the Technical and Management Audit, perhaps the question of a Commission of Enquiry may become relevant, but, for the moment, I think it is premature to envisage any such Commission.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether any legal action can be taken in light of what we have heard today?

Mr Collendavelloo: All these matters obtained the clearance of the Board. This is magic.

(Interruptions)

There were magicians all over. So, they were able to do this. I am not a lawyer now so I would not be able to give legal advice on this. If appropriate, we shall seek legal advice.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Madam Speaker, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that several defects have been reported to the Wastewater Management Unit and, if so, can we know what action has been taken?

Mr Collendavelloo: Yes, there have been defects. There have been complaints of houses being cracked. There have been complaints with regard to seepage and all that sort of thing, but those are technical matters much more than matters regarding the Ministry. I am

sure the Authority will take steps to look into this matter. If they do not, we will direct them accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Yes, you have got a question, hon. Member!

Mr Rughoobur: Yes. We have been talking about laws, Procurement Act, but also, it is a question of who are those people responsible to look into this whole issue of management of these contracts. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister equally ensure that, in an institution like the Wastewater Management Authority where you have got millions and billions which are being invested in projects, it is adequately staffed; that the technical people who are in charge of these types of projects do their work; that they have the capacity to do those projects whether it is at a level of design, monitoring and, of course, afterwards carrying audit trails etc.?

Mr Collendavelloo: I will certainly try to do this.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

PLAINE SOPHIE WIND FARM PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/221) Mr A. B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Plaine Sophie Wind Farm Project estimated to produce some 30 MW electricity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to -

- (a) the name of the contractor therefor;
- (b) the date of award of the contract ;
- (c) the contractual completion date thereof, indicating if there is any delay in the implementation thereof and, if so, indicate the -
 - (i) penalty fee applicable, and
 - (ii) expected completion date thereof, and
- (d) if the Independent Power producer has satisfactorily submitted proof of his financial capability.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board as follows

-

- (a) the Contractor for the Wind Farm at Plaine Sophie is Consortium Suzlon-Padgreen Co. Ltd
- (b) the contract was awarded on 03 August 2012 following an open tender exercise for 20-30 MW plant using wind energy;

(c) the contractual completion date of the project was 03 August 2014.

According to information from the CEB, there have been delays in the implementation of the project due to -

- delay in obtaining the EIA licence and the execution of the Land Lease Agreement on account of some reservations by relevant departments;
- a Stop Order issued on 19 May 2014 by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix as clearance of the Forestry Department had not been obtained for felling of trees. The Stop Order was set aside on 18 November 2014, and
- delay in the obtention of the planning clearance from the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

No penalty has been applied because the delays were considered by the CEB to be beyond the control of the promoter. In accordance with the provisions of the contract, the contractor has declared "Force Majeure" regarding the planning clearance, which is still pending at the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

In case the Building and Land Use permit is issued, the project is expected to be completed in 2016.

With regard to part (d) of the question, I am informed by the CEB that the contractor has met all the financial criteria as outlined in the contract and has achieved financial closure on 02 May 2014.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House the site area that has so far undergone heavy deforestation and if geophysical studies have been carried out regarding the water reserves under this area?

Mr Collendavelloo: How on earth will I be able to answer that question offhand. I do not know. I have to look into it, of course.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/222, B/223 and B/224 have been withdrawn. Hon. Tarolah!

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL - HANDYMEN

(No. B/222) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of handymen attached thereto, indicating the conditions of employment thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS - ADVISERS/PRESS ATTACHÉS

(No. B/223) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)

asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Advisers/Press Attachés appointed by his Ministry, he will give a list thereof indicating, in each case, the -

- (a) qualifications held, and
- (b) terms and conditions of appointment thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PREVOCATIONAL SECTOR - DUAL MODE SYSTEM

(No. B/224) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)

asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the prevocational sector, she will state if the Dual Mode System is being implemented for academic year 2015 and, if so, indicate the modalities attached thereto and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

NEF - CIS HOUSING UNITS

(No. B/225) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of request/application received thereat, since 2010 to date for –

- (a) Corrugated Iron Sheet housing units, and
- (b) Corrugated Cum Iron Sheet housing units, indicating the
 - (i) number of request entertained, and
 - (ii) name of the supplier thereof in each case.

Mr Roopun: Madam Speaker, with respect to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that the information is being compiled and will be tabled. With regard to the name of the suppliers for CIS and CCIS, I am tabling the list as provided by the foundation.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of certain housing units that have been delivered to families without amenities like toilets and bathrooms?

Mr Roopun: Yes, in fact, Madam Speaker, I am aware that at a first stage a house is constructed without toilet and thereafter toilet is being provided once the septic pit is provided.

Mr Lesjongard : May I ask the hon. Minister whether consideration could be given so that when the housing unit is delivered, it is delivered with the toilets and the bathrooms because those families getting into those housing units will need toilets and bathrooms?

Mr Roopun: Yes. In fact, this is being looked into, Madam Speaker.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the corrugated iron sheets that have been purchased are according to the specifications because we have visited several houses where we found that the thickness is not according to the specifications and many of these iron sheets have got corrosion?

Mr Roopun: The manufacturing of CIS is being phased out and there are certain instances where the quality of the iron sheets is not to the standard.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, I have one last question with regard to the suppliers. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether we go through tendering procedures whenever we purchase those materials?

Mr Roopun: In fact, I am told that quotations are requested from five suppliers and selection from these suppliers is made region-wise. In fact, I should add that I am personally not satisfied with this procedure and this will be reviewed.

Mr Barbier: Concerning the criteria laid down for people who will be eligible to obtain such facilities - I think it is not clear for one and all - may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will be agreeable to the idea of tabling a list of criteria for those who are eligible for such services?

Mr Roopun: Certainly, Madam Speaker, this will be done. I may add that I am working in conjunction with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands and we are coming with a new scheme, with new designs and everything will, of course, be communicated to the members of the public.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House about the method being used to verify that the building materials which are delivered on site are according to specifications?

Mr Roopun: This is done by the employees of the NEF.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Tarolah!

MBC - URDU PRODUCER – POST

(No. B/226) Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the post of Urdu Producer at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to (a) if the vacancy which arose after the demise of late H. P has been filled and, if so, indicate –

- (i) when and
- (ii) if the post was advertised and, if not, why not, indicating who is presently responsible for the Urdu programmes.

Mr P. Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Mauritius broadcasting Corporation that following the demise of H. P. on 13 July 2004, responsibility for Urdu programmes on radio and TV were taken over by the other staff of the Urdu section, namely, Mr Swabir Goodur, Farooq Husnoo and late Abdool Salam Ahmadi. Subsequently, Mr Azad Hossene, Chief Technical Producer, was assigned the duties to coordinate and ensure the running of Urdu programmes on radio and TV.

Madam Speaker, as from 04 February 2013, the services of Mr Swabir Goodur, who was a freelancer, was retained on a fulltime contractual basis as coordinator of Urdu programmes. Mr Azad Hossene continued to ensure the running of Urdu programmes on radio and TV in collaboration with Mr Goodur until January 2015. Mr Goodur's contract expired on 03 January 2015 and was not renewed. Since then alternative arrangements have been made to ensure the running of the Urdu programmes by retaining the services of Mr Anwar Dismohamed and Mr Farooq Husnoo who are both freelancers and Ms Yasmin Bode who serves as producer/ programme presenter on a contractual basis.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Sesungkur!

SMALL PLANTERS - 2014 CANE HARVEST SEASON - COMPENSATION

(No. B/228) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the 2014 Cane Harvest Season, he will state if –

- (a) there has been -
 - (i) a fall in sugar production, and
 - (ii) delay in the harvesting of the sugar cane fields, in particular, those of the small planters, and
- (b) some sugar cane fields have remained un-harvested and, if so, indicate the -

- (i) extent of the sugar cane fields concerned therewith, and
- (ii) quantum of compensation, if any, being contemplated for the small planters who have been prejudiced as a result thereof.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that, according to provisional figures, sugar production for the 2014 crop is estimated at 403,603 tonnes and is short of around 21,000 tonnes since about 119,200 tonnes of cane were left un-harvested in the fields as at 02 February 2015.

Regarding part (a) (ii), I am advised that there were 17 cases where small planters have reported delays in harvesting.

As regards part (b), 5.7 hectares of sugar cane fields belonging to small planters and 1,424 hectares belonging to the corporate sector have remained un-harvested. I am informed that no compensation is payable for un-harvested fields as the Sugar Insurance Fund Act makes no provision for same.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, can the hon. Minister consider a compensation at the level of the Ministry, is it a normal situation to have such huge area of cultivation of cane not harvested and what action the Ministry is taking to avoid this kind of situation in the future?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member is probably aware that last year there was an industrial dispute between the JNP and the Mauritius Sugar Planters Association and that resulted in the stoppage of the milling activities. That lasted for about 10 days and because of that the crop season had to be extended up to the end of February. But given the fact that we had very bad weather conditions in the first few weeks of January, we could not carry out with the harvesting and these are the two reasons that explained the fact that so much surface areas of cane cultivation were not harvested.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Minister if he has information with regard to the decrease in sugar production over the past three years and what is expected as decrease over the coming years?

Mr Seeruttun: Well, it is a fact, Madam Speaker, that over the last five years the surface area under cane cultivation has been going down. In 2009, the amount of surface area that was under cane cultivation was about 60,380 hectares and for the crop year 2014, it has gone down to 50,693. So, it is something that is happening and based on that, obviously, the production of sugar is going downward. But we, at the Ministry, are doing our best to curtail that downward trend to encourage people to continue with the sugar production. But as we may be aware, the price is no more attractive given that we have no more the preferential

price with the European Union and with the effect of the Euro going down as well, the planters are not too keen to keep on with sugar production.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Sesungkur!

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, being given that the small planters have suffered severe prejudice with this kind of situation, is there any way for the Ministry, for Government or any other institution to compensate those small planters who are suffering a lot from bad financial situation, and what measures is the hon. Minister contemplating?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, as you may be aware, if we go through the Budget Speech, the Ministry of Finance has announced that cash compensation will be paid to all sugar producers and a special effort is being made for small planters producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar. Cash compensation of Rs3,400 is being paid to small planters per tonne of sugar produced.

Madam Speaker: The Table has further been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn: PQ B/233, PQ B/243 and PQ B/245.

I now suspend the sitting for one and a half hour for lunch.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

EX-PALMAR LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION UNIT - LAND - LEASE

(No. B/229) Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the plot of land, including the infrastructure therefor, devoted to the ex-paddock at Palmar, he will state –

- (a) if same has been leased to a private company or companies and, if so, indicate the
 - (i) extent thereof;
 - (ii) period thereof, and
 - (iii) rent payable therefor, and
- (b) how his Ministry proposes to optimize the use thereof, giving details thereof.

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, I am informed that the ex-Palmar Livestock Production Unit was closed down in April 2008, and 304 out of the 310 *arpents* were vested

in the Ministry of Housing and Lands for eventual allocation to promoters for implementation of tourism related projects.

The remaining six *arpents* was leased in April 2012 to Aksaye Enterprises Ltd, represented by Mr Doomeswarsing Gooljaury, for vegetables cultivation. The lease is valid for a term of 20 years, and the rental payable is Rs1,000 per *arpent* annually.

I am further informed that the lessee has not been paying the rental since 2013, and action has been initiated for the cancellation of the lease and the retrieval of the land.

Madam Speaker: Next question! Hon. Barbier is not there. Yes, hon. Lesjongard.

TRUTH AND JUSTICE COMMISSION – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/237) 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 Truth and Justice Commission, he will state whether the main recommendations contained in the report thereof have been implemented and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, indicate the reasons therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Truth and Justice Commission submitted its report on 25 November 2011. The then Government set up in December 2011 a High-Powered Committee comprising 11 Ministers to look into the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission. I was then appointed as Chairperson of the Committee.

The report contained 21 main recommendations concerning mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agaléga. The details of each action that should be implemented were also spelt out in the report. Since the implementation of the Truth and Justice Commission would require an enormous budget, the committee focused on those recommendations that could generate quick wins.

In the first instance, 19 recommendations were retained and were to be implemented by different Ministries.

As most of the recommendations cut across a number of Ministries and thus require close consultations, the previous Cabinet had, at its meeting of 22 February 2013, decided to set up a four member coordination team which was mandated to closely coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations and report on a regular basis to the High-Powered Committee. The coordination team has met on 32 occasions and had regular meetings with officials from relevant Ministries, statutory bodies as well as persons who

would contribute in the effective implementation of the project. The last meeting of the coordination team was in May 2014.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling a paper on the progress of the 19 recommendations. This Government has on 02 February appointed a new Ministerial Committee which I am again chairing and comprising four other Ministries to reconsider the recommendations contained in the report of the Truth and Justice Commission. The Ministerial Committee has already had its first meeting.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to inform the House out of the 19 recommendations that were identified, how many recommendations have been fully implemented until now?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me submit the document and the hon. Member can have a full feedback on what has been done.

Mr Lesjongard: One of the recommendations was the setting up of a Land Research and Mediation Commission. May we know where matters are as at today?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is something that the new committee will look into but, it was considered to be a priority area because of the number of disputes regarding land issues and the difficulty for individuals, especially poor individuals, to access information and to get the proper legal advice. This will be a priority of the new Committee.

Mr Lesjongard: Since the hon. Deputy Prime Minister himself was chairing that High-Powered Committee when it was set up at that time, can we know from him how many cases of dispossession of land have been solved until now?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam Speaker, but what I can say is that decision was taken, funds were provided for the recruitment of, I think, three persons; one surveyor, one lawyer and another person. There were some problems at the start to identify the correct candidates. The candidates were obtained and then I had already left Government. So, I am not able to say anything further to the hon. Member.

Mr Lesjongard: Madam Speaker, with regard to dispossession of land, one of the main problems that those concerned had to face was availability of funds for research purposes. May we know whether in the actual Budget certain amount has been earmarked for that Commission?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware, Madam Speaker. But, as I mentioned, the new Committee has met once and the matter has been discussed and this is an important area and we will look at it. As I mentioned, it is an expensive and time-consuming process

which is probably beyond the means of most people who are poor and that was the reason why we could consider Government giving additional help.

Madam Speaker: I come back to the question of hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I am sorry to be late. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come back to my question B/234.

BELLE MARE – FRENCH TOURISTS – DEATH

(No. B/233) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the recent death of two French tourists at sea in the region of Belle Mare, he will state –

- (a) the outcome of the inquiry, if any, carried out thereinto by his Ministry and the actions taken in relation thereto, if any, and
- (b) if his Ministry proposes to introduce new policies in relation to the nautical sports activities within our lagoons.

(Withdrawn)

PORT LOUIS HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – FISHERS – ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

(No. B/234) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the ongoing Port Louis Harbour Development Project, he will state the accompanying measures being taken, if any, to help the fishers of –

- (a) Bain des Dames;
- (b) Les Salines;
- (c) Grand River North West;
- (d) Sable Noir ;
- (e) Pointe aux Sables;
- (f) Roche Bois, and
- (g) Tombeau Bay.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Ports Authority (MPA) that it is enhancing its infrastructure in line with its objective to transform the port into a regional hub and to respond to the growing needs of the shipping lines and other stakeholders.

It is currently implementing a project for the extension of the quay by 240 metres and strengthening of the existing quay of 560 metres at the Mauritius Container Terminal at Mer Rouge to enable larger container vessels to call at Port Louis Harbour and to accommodate the increase in cargo traffic. This project which involves construction of bunds, marine and civil works and dredging works is expected to be completed by end of 2016.

In regard to parts (a) to (g) of the question, I am further informed that there are 278 registered fishers under the six landing stations within the port limits, namely –

- (i) Bain des Dames / Fort William;
- (ii) Grande Rivière Nord Ouest
- (iii) Pointe aux Sables I;
- (iv) Pointe aux Sables II;
- (v) Roche Bois, and
- (vi) Tombeau Bay.

At the start of the project, these persons have claimed compensation from the MPA. They are stating that the decrease in amount of fish catch due to affected water quality, is forcing them to move further away to obtain the same catch they were getting prior to works being carried out.

The MPA in a spirit of goodwill opened negotiations with the fishers and it was agreed to move for a mediation process, in the first instance, as a means to resolve the dispute between the two parties. A Mediator/Arbitrator was appointed with the concurrence of all the parties and a Mediation/Arbitration Agreement was signed on 07 July 2014 to examine and determine whether the works have caused or are likely to cause an impact on the fishing activities of the registered fishers, determine the compensation, if any, and the terms of relocation of the 15 fishers operating temporarily at Fort William. Several proposals have been examined and I am informed that no agreement has been reached between the two parties and the dispute will now be resolved in arbitration proceedings.

Madam Speaker, I am further informed that, following the start of the works, the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands has provided baits to the fishers in 2013. It has also extended the fishing areas for live baits beyond the district of Port Louis, namely to Black River, Pamplemousses and Rivière du

Rempart on a thrice weekly basis and limited to 5 fishers per day. Normally, bait year license is restricted to a particular district only.

Mr Barbier: Madam Speaker, as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister just stated, it is now maybe for more than one year that negotiation has started on a mediation basis where the fishers today are at Court level with the preceding to establish what is the impact that it will have on the fishers' activities. There is a feeling, Madam Speaker, that they are not being considered in all this development that is going on in the Port Louis Harbour area.

Madam Speaker: What is the hon. Member's question?

Mr Barbier: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he will make it a duty for him as Minister responsible for port development to see to it that all fishers from the region of Grande Rivière to Tombeau Bay, including all the other fish landing stations, be given due consideration while we are considering developing the ports area.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I must say that the MPA has taken this quite seriously and, in fact, no less a person than the ex-Chief Justice was appointed as mediator, and now, as arbitrator on this issue. So, it has been given the importance it deserves. Nevertheless, I take the point of the hon. Member concerning current and future developments and how this will affect the livelihood of everyone, especially when we talk about the prospective substantial port development. Certainly, we will look at some sort of mechanism so that dialogue can take place. But, also, Madam Speaker, there is a need for everyone to be reasonable and for everyone to understand that things have got to happen within reasonable parameters.

Mr Barbier: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister just to insist on a time frame so that the fishers may not feel as if they have been abandoned while we are developing the port area?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I understand now that we are going to arbitration and that the ex-Chief Justice wishes the works to stop so that he can fully assess that has been the loss incurred by the fishermen. I think it will be towards the end of the year that this will happen. As far as the future works are concerned, let me look into it and I will come back. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Barbier!

PAILLES - FOOTBALL PITCH

(No. B/235) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the football pitch situated near

the Pailles Police Station, he will state if he will use his good offices to facilitate the handing over thereof to the Municipal Council of Port Louis and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to the Parliamentary Question No. B/80 on this issue and wherein I informed that necessary arrangement was being made by my Ministry for the handing over of the playing field of the City Council of Port Louis for maintenance.

I wish to inform the House that a request has already been made by my Ministry to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the vesting of the plot of land in question in my Ministry and as soon as the procedures will be completed, the land will be vested in the City Council of Port Louis for the maintenance of the football pitch standing thereon.

ROCHE BOIS - THIRD LANE

(No. B/236) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the opening of a third lane at Roche Bois and Abattoir Road to traffic coming from the North, he will state the additional measures that have been taken to protect the inhabitants of Roches Bois, particularly in the region of the Abattoir and St Martin Streets.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, following the closure of the Terre Rouge/Verdun road as a result of the embankment failure on part of that road, there was an urgent need to alleviate the traffic congestion problem at the entrance from the North into Port Louis. Decision has thus been taken to open a third lane from Riche Terre roundabout enabling traffic to enter the city centre through Abattoir Road. This decision has been accompanied by a series of road safety measures to protect the inhabitants of that region as follows -

Apart from the setting-up of a pedestrian crossing along the Abattoir Road to enable pedestrians to have access to the bus stop along the motorway M2, the speed limit in that region has been reduced to 40 km per hour and handrails have also been fixed along Abattoir Road to channel pedestrians. A stretch of land has also been cleared just after Cocoterie roundabout to allow safe movement of the pedestrians outside the road. In addition, appropriate traffic signs have been fixed. Access from motorway M2 onto the Abattoir Road has been restricted to morning peak hours only and arrangements have been made for Police to be present all the time in that region from 07 00 hours to 10 00 hours on weekdays.

As regards the St Martin Street, it is essentially a residential road of about 700 metres and varying in width between 4.7 and 5 metres and traffic from the North using the third lane at Roche Bois and the Abattoir Road to reach the city centre does not pass through St Martin Road and as such does not have an impact on that road during the morning peak hours.

However, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will consider setting up the speed limit to only 40 km along St Martin Road as an additional safety measure.

Mr Barbier: Madam Speaker, I know that the traffic does not pass through St. Martin, but there are other traffic coming from St. Martin that cross the Abattoir road. This Abattoir road has not been operating for traffic for years now. This does not only concern the traffic and vehicles, but pedestrians also. May I ask the hon. Minister to see to it that adequate measures are taken concerning pedestrians of the region of St. Martin so that necessary care for the security of the pedestrians in this region is taken?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I will look into the matter and I believe that with the opening of the diversion at Terre Rouge/Verdun next week, we will have lesser traffic taking that lane, but I will look into the matter as regards the security of the pedestrians.

FASHION STYLE - STATE LAND

(No. B/238) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the State land situated in the vicinity of the Belle Mare Police Station, he will state if Mr D. G. of Fashion Style is the lessee of two portions thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) if the lease was converted from residential to industrial land and, if so, indicate when, and
- (b) the amount of rent payable -
 - (i) now, and
 - (ii) at the end of the lease.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, since April 2009, Mr D. G. holds a 60-year industrial site lease over a plot of State land of an extent of nine perches (380m²) being Lots 133/1 and 133/2 of State Land Belle Mare Village for the running of a commercial/guest house. In fact, Mr D. G. acquired, through two Notarial Deeds, the buildings together with the leasehold rights of both plots of land from the Nuttoo brothers who held residential cum commercial site leases over the two sites. The approval of the Ministry of Housing and Lands was sought and obtained prior to effecting the acquisition and transfer. Thereafter, upon the request of Mr D. G., a consolidated “industrial site lease” over both plots of land was drawn in 2009. The site is presently built up with a G+4 building being used for commercial activities.

In respect of part (b) of the question, the rental payable for the lease is Rs63,391.31 for period 01 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. As per Article 6 of the Lease Agreement, the rental for the succeeding years shall be computed from the rental payable for

the preceding year adjusted by reference to the cumulative inflation rate based on the Consumer Price Index during every 3-year period which shall not exceed 15.7 per cent in any case.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the lessee has not settled the rent for the lease since July 2012 despite having been sent several reminders.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to confirm whether those two plots, that is, 133/1 and 133/2 were lots that were regularised to those persons who at that time were squatting that plot of land upon a decision of the then Government, that is, the Government between 2000 and 2005 to regularise cases of those families who have been squatting land for quite some time?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, Madam Speaker.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he finds it normal that in the case where Government has regularised cases of those poor families that his Ministry gives the authorisation for converting those two residential leases into industrial and commercial leases?

Mr Soodhun: The case was referred to Court and there has been a judgment contrary to what has been done in the past. Mr D. G. was fined for the illegal procedure which has been taken up.

Mr Lesjongard: From what I understand from the hon. Minister, the rent for that lease has not been paid since 2012 and he has also mentioned that the rent is Rs60,000 per year. Does he find it normal that for an industrial lease where there is a building of about four storeys that the rent is Rs2,125 per lot, that is, for the two lots some Rs5,250?

Mr Soodhun: This has been the practice by the former Government as we know very well. They have already done what they used to do. But, in fact, we are going to implement the law as it is.

Mr Lesjongard: Since the hon. Minister is putting order in the Ministry there, I want a confirmation from him as to whether those two lots were used, if I may use that word, for pledging of rights for a bank.

Mr Soodhun: Madam Speaker, I do not have this information.

Mr Lesjongard: One last question. If he is looking into that, may he also verify whether that pledging of rights was on the name of that person, that is, on the name of Mr D. G. or on the name of the company, Fashion Style?

Mr Soodhun: On the name of Mr D. G.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/241 and B/242 have been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

VILLE NOIRE - HEALTH CENTRE

(No. B/241) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the policy of his Ministry to bring health services to the doorsteps of the people, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of setting up a community health centre/area health centre and/or mediclinic in the village of Ville Noire, situated in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

(Withdrawn)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SCHOOLS - TEACHERS

(No. B/242) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the long serving Teachers/Senior Teachers for General Purpose and Oriental Languages respectively who are presently seconded for duty in the Special Education Needs schools, she will state the number thereof in each case, indicating where matters stand as to their appointment to the permanent post of Educator for Special Education Needs.

(Withdrawn)

MBC – TELEVISION CHANNELS - PRIVATISATION

(No. B/243) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the two television channels of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if the privatisation thereof is being contemplated and, if so, indicate if –

- (a) a prior study has been carried out in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (b) any time frame for the implementation thereof has been fixed.

(Withdrawn)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – AIRLINES SERVICING - CATERING SERVICES

(No. B/244) Mr P. Jhugroo (Second Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications whether, in regard to the catering services for the airlines servicing the Sir Seewoosagar

Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the company which has obtained the contract therefor, indicating the -

- (a) contract value thereof;
- (b) terms and conditions of the contract, and
- (c) names of the directors of the company.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am informed that procurement allocation of contract for inflight catering services is carried out by the respective airlines under their own commercial arrangements.

I am, therefore, not in a position to respond to this particular question.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that there had been several complaints with regard to the quality of food supplied by the Company and served on board of the different air flights.

Mr Duval: That is a very general question, Madam Speaker. There have been obviously complaints in particular relating to food on Air Mauritius, but I know that our national airline is taking remedial action.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether tender procedures have been followed before allocation of this contract for catering services to this company?

Mr Duval: Madam Speaker, I am not aware of this particular issue, but if the hon. Member has any information that he would like to submit, with pleasure we will look at it.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Oree.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE COMMITTEE – CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/245) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Co-operatives whether, in regard to the appointment of Mr V. M. as Chairperson of the National Institute for the Co-operative Enterprise Committee, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Committee, information as to his -

- (a) qualifications;
- (b) address, and
- (c) terms and conditions of appointment.

(Withdrawn)

CHITRAKOOT - LANDSLIDE

(No. B/247) **Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the landslide problems at Chitrakoot, he will state the measures that are being taken by Government in relation thereto, indicating if his Ministry has considered a re-lodging plan for the aggrieved households whose houses have been severely damaged as a result thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I am informed that, following the landslide which occurred at Chitrakoot in February 2005, the services of GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd were retained by the National Development Unit (NDU) for a structural assessment of the 60 houses affected in the landslide area. The consultant, after assessment, informed that, out of the 60 housing units, only 14 were found to be structurally unsafe where damages were beyond repairs and recommended the relocation of the owners/occupiers.

Further, the NDU through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport sought the technical assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to mitigate disasters in the landslide prone areas. Consequently, that Ministry requested for land to be acquired for the construction of drains, as landslide counter measures.

In 2006, a plot of State land was identified at Le Hochet for the relocation of 13 out of 14 cases and at Bois Marchand for the remaining 1. The families were consulted and they consented to their relocation to the new sites proposed to them. Building site leases were granted on 28 March 2006 to each of the 13 families who were to be relocated at Le Hochet; and on 13 November 2008 the remaining one family was allocated a plot of State land at Bois Marchand.

In January 2015, Government set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee under my Chairmanship to monitor and address the problem of Chitrakoot. The situation to date is as follows –

- (i) in 4 cases, the families concerned have already vacated their houses which are now unoccupied;
- (ii) in 2 cases, the families are still occupying the damaged houses whilst their new houses at Le Hochet are under construction;
- (iii) in 2 cases, they have moved out but their houses are being used as stores;
- (iv) in 1 case, the family has moved out but the house is now occupied by the victim's brother;

- (v) in 1 case, the family has moved out but the victim has rented the house;
- (vi) in 1 case where the victim was relocated at Bois Marchand, he is still occupying the house at Chitrakoot and has requested for his relocation at Terre Rouge but no State land is available to accede to his request, and
- (vii) in the last 3 remaining cases, the persons concerned are old-age pensioners who are still occupying their houses at Chitrakoot. Given that these persons do not have the financial means to construct their houses on the sites allocated to them, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment has arranged for their registration under the Social Register to determine their eligibility to receive housing support under the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) housing scheme.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker. From what I understand the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has stated that there are cases where people were relocated, they were given land, they were supposed to move there, but they have built the houses, they have stayed where the landslide occurred but they are renting the house at the place where they have been relocated. Does he find it normal that people, who at that time should have moved from Chitrakoot, have stayed there and they are renting for years now those houses that they have built at Terre Rouge?

Mr Soodhun: I hope the hon. Member is not thinking to return back to Constituency No. 4. I agree with my good friend, but concerning land, according to my information, it is a private land, it is not a State land. This remains a problem it is not a State land.

Madam Speaker: No question! Okay.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(3.09 p.m.)

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

HORSE RACING - COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, my Government has taken a strong commitment towards the Nation to tackle the problematic issue of “*nation zougadère*”,

especially as it relates to addressing illegal activities and the serious and widespread concerns of corruption linked to horse racing in Mauritius.

The Commission of Inquiry on “Horse Racing in Mauritius” that was set up under the Chairmanship of Mr Richard Parry and his assessors Messrs Dennis Gunn and Paul Scotney, in the wake of allegations of corruption in horse racing in Mauritius, has submitted its Report to the President of the Republic.

The Terms of Reference of the Commission of Inquiry were wide-encompassing and, in the discharge of its duties, the inquiry team met with all the stakeholders in the organisation, management and administration of horse racing in Mauritius. Meetings were held with the Mauritius Turf Club, Gambling Regulatory Authority, the Police Force, the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Financial Intelligence Unit, the Independent Commission against Corruption, horse owners/trainers and jockeys. The Team also took evidence, both written and oral, from a wide spectrum of interests and also scrutinized documents and materials that were relevant for the purposes of the Commission.

The Inquiry Team has carried out a comprehensive and detailed examination of all the evidence placed before it. In its Report, the Team has made no less than 23 recommendations in order to combat the scourge of illegal betting, corruption in horse racing and the proliferation of betting in Mauritius.

The Commission has been damning in its criticisms towards those Institutions/ Authorities/Regulators which have been put in place to regulate and monitor this sector.

Let me start with the Gambling Regulatory Authority. The Commission has particularly noted the so far inefficient performance of the Gambling Regulatory Authority despite the fact that the Gambling Regulatory Act 2007 provides an excellent statutory backing for the authority to discharge its duties for the regulation of gambling activities in Mauritius. The Gambling Regulatory Authority requires a strong leadership and proper resourcing and I have already taken action to that end by bringing the Gambling Regulatory Authority under the aegis of my office and by appointing the right persons at the level of the Board.

As regards, the *Police des Jeux* whose role is to monitor betting activities and prevent and detect illegal betting, the Commission noted that the unit is under-resourced and lacks expertise in betting and financial matters. The Commission feels, amongst other recommendations, that there is an urgent need to step up the resources of the *Police des Jeux*

with the appropriate knowhow and skills in addressing the issues of betting and sports-related crime.

I can inform the House that even before the submission of the report of the Commission of Inquiry, actions were being taken at the level of the Police to remedy the situation and make of the *Police des Jeux* a powerful, uncompromising and efficient squad.

As regards the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Commission noted the measures it is taking to improve its tax collection responsibilities in respect of horse racing and betting. The Commission recommends that a Memorandum of Understanding be drawn up between the Gambling Regulatory Authority, the Mauritius Revenue Authority, the Police and others involved with the regulation and governance of horse racing in Mauritius to improve inter-agency working against tax evasion, money laundering and other corrupt activities connected with horse racing and betting.

As for the Mauritius Turf Club, the Commission noted, with significant concern, the serious problems in the management of the Club itself and found that it is a “fractured organisation” where there is maladministration bordering on “institutional corruption”. The Commission has concluded that the Mauritius Turf Club requires fundamental change in its organisation, management and administration. It recommends that a ‘separation of powers’, including a system of checks and balances within racing is necessary. The Mauritius Turf Club should divest itself of its regulatory and governance roles, so that it can concentrate on the organisation and management of race planning and the operation of race-days but withdraws from its current responsibilities of regulating and governance.

The Commission further lays stress on the abolition of the role of ‘Stable Manager’ which it qualifies as an “anachronism” and hits hard on instances of conflicts of interest within horse racing which it says is the root cause of many of the evils in the gambling industry.

Madam Speaker, taking into account the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and Government’s own assessment of the situation prevailing in horse racing and the gambling industry at large in Mauritius, bold measures have been announced in the 2015 Budget to do away with the ‘*nation zougadère*’ culture and to bring back the notion of responsible gambling in the true sense of the word.

Government is determined to combat the mafia in the gambling industry that has brought so much suffering to punters and the public at large. We are committed to do away with all the evils that have destroyed the good name of horse racing in Mauritius and to bring back absolute sports integrity into the industry.

Further to the budget announcements, the Gambling Regulatory Authority will issue guidelines and ancillary good practice directives to effectively implement the measures enunciated.

I am personally fully committed in the battle to eradicate the gambling mafia. No stone will be left unturned to achieve our objectives. In line with the budget announcements with regard to the non issue of new licenses, I wish to inform the House that in implementing this measure the Gambling Regulatory Authority will put into place a mechanism to autocorrect embedded injustices in the system with a view to establishing a level playing field wherever needed.

In the spirit of transparency that has always guided my actions and principles, I am tabling a copy of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Horse Racing in Mauritius.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(3.18 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILLS

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2015) BILL

(NO. III OF 2015)

&

THE APPROPRIATION (2015-2016) BILL

(NO. IV OF 2015)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2015) Bill (No. III of 2015) and the Appropriation (2015-2016) Bill (No. IV of 2015).

Question again proposed.

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, the population was waiting impatiently for this Budget, expectations were high. For the first time since 2000, we have a Government with a three-quarter majority. It was the time to take bold decisions; decisions which would tackle head-on the problems of unemployment especially among the youth and women, decisions that would reduce costs of living, decisions that would improve standard of living.

Expectations were high, Madam Speaker, because the duo was back – Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth as Prime Minister and hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo as his Minister of Finance. During the electoral campaign, creating the second miracle was a major theme. Expectations were high also because days after coming into Office, the Government lived up to its promise of increasing old age pension and gave a salary compensation increase across the board of Rs600. This was followed by the adoption of the Government Programme 2015-2019 with which we did not have any major qualms.

With this Budget, now was the time to turn words into action; now was the time for Government to deliver on its promises. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, this Budget has not lived up to expectations and I am not saying that it is a bad Budget. There are many good measures, popular measures. In classic hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo style, he ensured that after listening to the Budget everybody will go home feeling happy that, at least, there is one positive measure which would impact on his life. Series of small measures with little or no impact on Budget, but which generate a feel good factor. Some were relieved, for example, that there is no increase in tax on cigarettes and alcohol. SMS users welcome the decision to remove the tax on SMS which was levied by hon. Xavier-Luc Duval when he was Minister of Finance. Although now, with free applications like WhatsApp, Viber, most smart users had stopped using paid SMS anyway. Some were happy to get 6 cubic metres of water free. Many of them did not realise that, in fact, all of us pay only Rs45 for 10 cubic metres of water. So, now we will get 6 cubic metres for free, we will pay only Rs45 on the remaining 4 cubic metres. Rs45 is not big money, but still, everybody likes to have something for free. It's a feel good factor and people were left feeling that: yes, the Government is giving us free water. It is a feel good factor. People left feeling that, yes, the Government is giving us free water.

Environment-conscious citizens applauded the decision to ban plastic bags; a measure which was announced by the previous Government, but never really implemented because of the lobbies from the manufacturing sector.

The business community was also happy to learn that 70 permits and licenses would be abolished. The hon. Minister, of course, did not mention what permits will be abolished and how many businesses will be concerned by this measure. But, still, it was applauded as a landmark measure to facilitate business. Little do they know, this business community, that the hon. Minister of Finance has actually budgeted for an increase in the amount of licence fees to be collected in the coming eight months.

The 3,000 *gradués chômeurs* were also expected to feel happy that the Government will now pay the fees of up to Rs80,000 per student, per year, for them to follow a course that would apparently, and I quote –

“(...)improve their chances of getting a job.”

An expenditure, Madam Speaker, which could have easily been avoided if the Government had taken the bold measure of introducing career guidance services to students right from secondary school, because it serves little purpose to a graduate in History, for example, to be told that now he has to do a course in Accountancy or in Biochemistry to find a job, when he stopped studying sciences at Form III level and never actually did any accountancy work. Of course, still for parents who spend their time looking at their children sitting at home, doing nothing, writing hundreds of CVs, attending interviews, it was a positive feel good factor because they felt that, maybe, now, with the reconversion, their children will be able to get a job. Whether this turns out into reality, is a different matter, but, at least, for statistics purposes, the fact that the unemployed are now going to follow a conversion course would ultimately result in a reduction in the unemployment statistics because a student on full-time employment is not a *chômeur*.

Madam Speaker, the Budget is full of these little measures, popular measures; measures for public opinion management. But when we sit down and ponder on this Budget, when we analyse the Estimates and the Public Sector Investment Programme, the inevitable conclusion is that this Budget is not bold enough; this Budget is not ambitious enough; this Budget is not innovative enough.

Pour moi, c’est une occasion ratée. Une occasion ratée, Madame la présidente, parce que tous les ingrédients étaient réunis pour un budget de relance, un budget qui aurait pu et qui aurait dû...

(Interruptions)

... poser les jalons pour la croissance, pour le développement, pour la création d’emplois. Pourtant, l’honorable ministre, le grand argentier, avait une certaine marge de manœuvre. Avec l’effondrement du prix du pétrole sur le marché international, l’inflation était contenue. Les résultats des entreprises dans les divers secteurs d’activités, tant dans le secteur manufacturier que dans le secteur du tourisme, montraient une certaine reprise. Et puis, Madame la présidente, il ne faut pas oublier les fameux *special funds* tant décriés par l’honorable ministre des Finances au temps où il était le président de la Commission économique du MMM.

(Interruptions)

Selon les chiffres dans les *Estimates*...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Uteem: Selon les chiffres dans les *Estimates*, on nous apprend qu'au 31 décembre 2014, il y avait plus de R 8 milliards de réserves dans ces *special funds*. R 8 milliards ! Et la taxe additionnelle sur les produits pétroliers pour les 18 mois, jusqu'au 30 juin 2016, apportera un montant additionnel de R 3.7 milliards. R 3.7 milliards, sans compter le *windfall gain* de R 1.4 milliards de la *State Trading Corporation*. Donc, Madame la présidente, les caisses n'étaient pas vides.

(*Interruptions*)

Et une fois n'est pas coutume ! L'honorable ministre des Finances s'est bien contenté de ne pas critiquer la gestion de l'économie par ses prédécesseurs, pour des raisons évidentes ! Ses prédécesseurs étant aujourd'hui ses collègues dans le Cabinet.

(*Interruptions*)

Oui, les ministres des Finances étaient l'honorable Xavier Duval et l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth ces cinq dernières années !

(*Interruptions*)

Ces cinq dernières années !

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem : Les caisses n'étaient pas vides. La conjoncture économique n'était pas défavorable. On pouvait légitimement s'attendre à mieux, Madame la présidente. On savait que l'augmentation de la pension de vieillesse allait nous coûter au moins R 4 milliards additionnelles chaque année, mais on s'attendait à une gestion plus saine, plus efficace des dépenses publiques, avec une dose de mesures fiscales pour contenir le déficit budgétaire et la dette publique. Mais à notre grande déception, le grand argentier a préféré la facilité à l'audacité, et a sacrifié le budget de développement, le *Capital Budget*.

Madame Speaker, we are particularly disappointed when it comes to the Capital Budget. According to the statement of Government's operations found in the Estimates 2015-2016, Capital Expenditure for the six months ending June 2015 will only be Rs4.8 billion. Capital Expenditure for 2015-2016 will only be Rs12.5 billion. By way of comparison, the actual Capital Expenditure for 2013 was Rs15.2 billion. If we look only at figures for acquisition of non-financial assets, it is even worse. For 2015/2016, it will be only

Rs8.7 billion compared to Rs11.1 billion in 2013. In other words, a reduction of more than 22%. More than 22%!

What does that mean, Madam Speaker? Simply, the Government will not be spending as much as it should have on capital projects, on public infrastructure projects. For the next 18 months, the Government will reduce its spending on certain projects. It will spend nothing on other projects, and still on some projects, it will delay the spending for later years.

If we look closely at the Public Sector Investment Programme, we get a better indication of the projects that will not be carried out in the next 18 months. At page 4 of the PSIP, there is a list of projects for which financing is yet to be secured, meaning a list of projects that is not going to go ahead in the coming 18 months. And surprise, surprise, Madam Speaker! Highlands City! Yes, one of the smart cities on which the hon. Minister of Finance is relying as the investment rocket to generate growth and employment will not go ahead in the next 18 months! The construction of Ring Road, Phases II and III, will not go ahead. There is no financing, and yet people in my constituency, Vallée Pitot, are being harassed that they will have to evacuate their land because the Ring Road is coming. Construction of the bridge linking A1 Road at Coromandel to M1 Motorway-Sorèze; this was one of the measure *phare* announced in the Budget to reduce traffic congestion. But, again, in the PISP, we are told that we have no funds to carry it out. So, that will not happen in the next 18 months.

(Interruptions)

Same thing for the extension of the airport of Rodrigues; creation of the 100 Megawatt power generation project; remedial measure to address landslide in higher risk zones, etc, etc. The list is long, Madam Speaker. The list is long about projects which could have been going ahead, which should have gone ahead, but which will not be going ahead. So much for infrastructure projects for which financing is yet to be secured.

Now, let us take a look at the few projects for which there is funding, but not for the next 18 months. MPs from the South; hon. Maneesh Gobin will be happy to learn that no provision is made for the actual construction of Rivière des Anguilles Dam until after 2016. I am sure he will have a lot of fun explaining to his constituents why they are having water shortage problems.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! How they have water shortage problem when there is so much abundance of rainfall.

Why? Because this Government has chosen not to go ahead with the construction of the Rivière des Anguilles Dam in the south! Same thing for the upgrading of dams at la Ferme! The bulk of the work will be carried out only as from 2016/2017, which makes me wonder if it is because there are no MPs from the Government that this project is being penalised.

(Interruptions)

I was not in Government for 10 years!

For wastewater projects, out of the Rs7.4 billion worth of works identified only Rs1.4 billion will be covered in this Budget, whereas in my constituency, No. 2, nothing for sewerage works! We will have to wait until 2016 to get sewerage pipes being laid in Tranquebar area.

For public infrastructure projects, including road maintenance, Rs5.3 billion worth of project have been identified, but provisions have been made only for a third of that amount to be spent in the next 18 months.

Constructions and extensions of primary schools and secondary schools are also being sacrificed. For example, only 20% - and I hope the hon. Minister of Education is listening - of the project value for primary schools is being spent and the bulk of the expenditure on secondary schools such as constructions of various gymnasiums in various SSS will only take place after 2016/2017.

For pipe replacement programme, again, the project value announced in the Budget is about Rs19.5 billion to replace our damaged pipeline, and how much will be spent in the next 18 months? Only Rs1.1 billion! And this is substantially less than the Rs2.3 billion which Government will collect on the tax on petroleum products, otherwise known as Build Mauritius Fund. And we all know that this additional Rs2.3 billion tax was seen by the hon. Minister of Finance as being money put aside for replacement of damaged pipes. So, Rs2.3 billion out of our pocket, but only Rs1 billion will be spent on pipes. I can go on and on, and I am sure at Committee Stage hon. Members will have the chance to see for themselves the projects that have been sacrificed. I am sure that they will have a good time explaining to their electorates why these projects, which have been promised during the electoral campaign, will not be implemented anytime soon!

But the point I am making is that the hon. Minister of Finance is deliberately under-spending on Capital Budget. And yet, the hon. Minister of Finance is anticipating growth of

5.3% this year and of 5.7% next year. And I really hope, Madam Speaker, that we will achieve that rate of growth, because if we do not achieve this, there would not be any significant increase in job creation. But, Madam Speaker, I am sceptical. And God knows that I am not a pessimistic person. The truth of the matter is that growth does not come out of a stroke of a magic wand.

In a working paper published by the International Monetary Fund last year, entitled “Mauritius: the Drivers of Growth - Can the Past be Extended?” The experts considered various base line scenarios and said, and I quote:

“The results of the growth accounting exercise suggest that a target growth of 6 per cent is likely too ambitious and that, even to raise growth closer to 5 per cent, strong pro-active policies are needed, including –

- (i) improving investment and savings rates;
- (ii) labour market reforms;
- (iii) investment in education and education reform, and
- (iv) further reforms to reduce bottlenecks and increase productivity.”

According to the report, Madam, Speaker -

“Improving the investment rates would need to be accomplished through –

- (i) acceleration in the implementation of current investment projects – that is what I termed Capital Expenditure - and
- (ii) further measures to encourage FDI and domestic savings”.

We are told that we need to upgrade and expand the country’s infrastructure to achieve growth of 5%, Madam Speaker, and today the hon. Minister of Finance is doing exactly the opposite!

We are told that we need to take measures to encourage domestic savings, and yet, not a single word in the Budget to encourage domestic savings! In 2014, gross domestic savings stood only at 11.7 per cent of GDP, which is well below the 25% rate which is required to match the investment necessary to achieve a 5% growth rate!

The hon. Minister of Finance should have introduced fiscal measures to encourage savings. Two years ago, the then Government introduced new Private Pensions Scheme legislations to encourage workers to invest in private pensions. The hon. Minister of Finance

could, for example, have announced that any contribution to these private pension schemes could be deductible from taxable income of taxpayers.

We all know, Madam Speaker, that we have an ageing population. As time goes by, there will be unbearable pressure on the working population to sustain the universal pension. We have to encourage workers to save not only for the rainy days but also for their retirement days. And we are very disappointed that the hon. Minister of Finance has not announced a single measure in this Budget to encourage workers to save.

So, if we are slashing the capital budget, the public expenditure on infrastructure projects, if we are not taking any measures to encourage savings, then where will the growth come from? It will be from investment by the private sector and from Foreign Direct Investment. But unlike in the 1980s when growth was fuelled by Foreign direct Investment in the textile sector mainly by the people from Hong Kong investment in productive assets, today, the hon. Minister of Finance is banking on Foreign Direct Investment in Real Estate project. Real estate projects are non-productive assets and this is a big gamble, Madam Speaker. It is a big gamble, because we know how volatile investment in real estate can be. A number of IRS and RES projects licensed by the Board of Investment did not go through in the end.

And if any proof is required as to how ill-advised it is to bank growth, principally on real estate projects, one just has to look at Centrepoint in Trianon, at the towers of Meritt Ellipsis a few metres away, now both in receivership! This is the problem with banking on real estates.

And yet, the hon. Minister of Finance is relying on 13 Mega projects spread across the country. We are told that 8 of the projects will be designed as 'Smart Cities'. The concept is attractive. It has been tried elsewhere, in Korea, in Spain.

Shortly after taking his office, Madam Speaker, in India the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi also announced that he will build 100 "Smart Cities" - cities outfitted with high-tech communication capabilities - across India. He said, and I quote:

"Cities in the past were built on riverbanks. They are now built on highways. But in the future, they will be built based on availability of optical fiber networks and next-generation infrastructure."

Very well said, Madam, Speaker!

The problem, Madam Speaker, is that one year after Mr Modi's announcement, India still has not set up any smart city. Not a single penny has been used from the Rs7,060 crores allocated in the Union Budget last year to provide the necessary focus on smart cities.

This just goes to show, Madam Speaker, how difficult it is to set up Smart Cities. But let us come back to the 13 megaprojects announced last week. We are told that six of the projects are from the private sector. We are told that they are ready to go. But we are talking about private sector. If the projects are not profitable they will simply be shelved. If there is no demand, the projects will simply be shelved and if the projects actually do go ahead, it will be years before they can be completed.

The two other Smart Cities are Highlands City and Riche Terre Project. I have already indicated previously, Madam Speaker, that there is no funding available for Highlands City. So, even though it has been announced as a megaproject, we do not have the money to finance it. So, we are left with Riche Terre Project in the vicinity of Port Louis. Riche Terre Project! The hon. Minister of Finance is ashamed of using the word Tianli and *JinFei!* *Because that is what it is! That is what it is.*

(Interruptions)

Riche Terre Project is...

(Interruptions)

Riche Terre Project is Tianli, JinFei! We are told that thousands of jobs will be created.

(Interruptions)

But, that is exactly...

(Interruptions)

... that is exactly what Dr. Sithanen said! That is exactly what Dr. Sithanen told this august Assembly when he launched Tianli project and Neotown!

(Interruptions)

Where is Neotown? Where is Tianli?

(Interruptions)

Exactly! And today it is the very same project that this Government is proposing!

(Interruptions)

Riche Terre!

(Interruptions)

Millions of rupees of funds invested, hi-tech, latest state-of-the-art roads, 24/7 lighting, for what? For goats to graze? That was Tianli, JinFei! And today that is the project you have proposed again!

(Interruptions)

So, Madam Speaker, how can we take this Government seriously? How can we bet on Riche Terre to create more jobs?

The five remaining megaprojects concern five *technopoles*. They are hardly Smart Cities, *technopoles*! At best we are talking about ITC parks. The hon. Minister for ICT in a press conference has announced the creation of 20,000 jobs! 20,000 jobs! What type of jobs? Jobs for whom? Do we have 20,000 technicians in this country? Do we have 20,000 software and hardware engineers in this country? Do we have 20,000 children and students willing to work in call centres late at night? And yet, it was announced the five *technopoles* will create 20,000 jobs!

(Interruptions)

20,000 jobs! Of course, Madam Speaker, there will be short-term jobs for the construction industry. But, I remain skeptical about whether we will be able to solve our unemployment problems, especially the problem of joblessness among *gradués chômeurs* with these 13 megaprojects. Of course, I really hope that I am proven wrong. I really hope that these megaprojects will prove right but I am skeptical. And there is a track record in JinFei and Tianli to support what I am saying. The hon. Minister of Finance was more cautious than his colleague, he did not advance the figure of 20,000. He did not say 20,000 jobs. He only stated that he expected the unemployment rate to decline. He did not specify any figure.

Talking about employment, where are the fiscal measures which were promised in the Government Programme to be given to the private sector to actively participate in Government's unemployment alleviation mission? Where are the fiscal incentives to the private sector to encourage them to recruit unemployed people on a full-time basis? We just voted that Programme a few weeks ago! That was one of the *mesure phare* – 'we are going to give fiscal incentives to encourage private sector to recruit people.' And after the Budget, nothing! No longer a priority? *Pas presser!* But there are a lot of people sitting there at home jobless! There are a lot of distressed parents looking at their children jobless...

(Interruptions)

... and this Government is saying...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem: ...*pas presser!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem: *Pas presser!* This Government is saying *pas presser?*

(Interruptions)

And, may I ask if this Government is still thinking of creating 15,000 jobs this year as promised in the Government Programme? If the Government is relying on growth to create these 15,000 jobs, then allow me to ask them again how are we going to generate 5.3% growth this year? We are already in the month of April. How are we going to generate 5.7% growth rate for next year? With no measures to increase national savings, with limited resource to encourage private investment and FDI, where will the growth come from? The bunkering hub will take the time that it will take. The ocean economy will develop at its own pace. But, these are long-term projects which will not solve our unemployment problem at least in the short term.

The duty-free island, a project so dear to the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, seems to have been abandoned for the time being. So, where will the short term growth come from? The SME sector probably, I hope so. Making the SME sector the backbone of the economy has been described as the most ambitious goal of this Government, and so it should be, Madam Speaker. To this end, the Government is setting up an SME bank to provide seed capital to entrepreneurs without any need for personal guarantee. An amount of Rs10 billion has been earmarked, this is a welcome initiative and appeared in our electoral manifesto as well. But, we are yet to see how this new SME bank will operate in practice. Will it be another DBM? Will it end up like the Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank? A bank for *petits copains?*

(Interruptions)

A bank for *copines?* A bank where non-performing loans...

(Interruptions)

A bank where non-performing loans are perpetually rescheduled? What will happen to the DBM? When I asked the hon. Minister of Finance this question a few weeks ago, he was very evasive and he told this House that he will wait for the new board of DBM to be constituted and then they will decide what to do. The new board has been constituted and the Chairman is the father of hon. Minister Bhadain - a well-respected professional I have to add. But, up to now, the DBM Board has not announced what will happen to the bank and this is

creating a lot of confusion in the mind of the employees. Will the new SME bank take over DBM? Will it take over the staffing? Will it take over the portfolio of loans?

To add to the confusion, Madam Speaker, yesterday in a press article it was reported that the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, hon. Bholah, responsible for SME, stated that DBM will subsist. What will be the role of DBM if we have an SME bank? Will it continue to finance development projects? What will happen to its staff? Will the Government go back to the decision taken by the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval when he was then Minister of Finance to look for a new strategic investor? We know the new hon. Minister of Finance said that they are not going ahead with this but will the new board consider injection of fresh capital from a new strategic partner? These are things that I hope hon. Minister Bholah will have to enlighten us when he intervenes on this matter.

Coming back to the SME bank, Madam Speaker, we are told that it will be loan without personal guarantee. Fair enough! But will it ask for other collateral? Will it advance funds only to entrepreneurs who have repayment capabilities? Will it advance funds to only those projects which it considers to be viable or will it be ready to take the risk and bank on the enthusiasm of young entrepreneurs? Will this SME bank believe in the youth of today and give them their chance? Will there be a credit limit per project? Will the SME bank be subject to the same concentration limit as imposed on commercial banks by the Bank of Mauritius?

Will there be a credit limit per project? Will the SME bank be subject to the same concentration limits as imposed on commercial banks by the Bank of Mauritius?

We are told that SMEDA will act as one-stop shop and accompany the young entrepreneurs at all stages. This is music to our ears. But does SMEDA have the manpower and expertise to fulfil this mission?

Madam Speaker, I will be blunt. As a lawyer, I have assisted a number of young entrepreneurs to set up their own business and I must confess that SMEDA, in my experience, has been far from helpful. How many times have I seen entrepreneurs leave my office with a solid business plan full of hope only to come back a few days later with their dream shattered after meeting officers from SMEDA because the latter painted a picture of gloom and doom?

So, the Government should first start by training the staff of SMEDA. Then it should recruit mentors. I know of many retired entrepreneurs and civil servants who will gladly put the expertise and experience to help young entrepreneurs. We should encourage them. Many are even prepared to do so for free on a part-time basis. It is their way to give back to society.

Then SMEDA needs to identify the projects, the sectors, the market segments where there is a shortage of supply. They must work closely with Ministries and agencies such as the Board of Investment and Enterprise Mauritius to share information, identify opportunities and monitor progress and implementation.

Madam Speaker, banking only on the SME sector and especially on young entrepreneurs to generate growth is a risky challenge, the more so when we know the rate of failure in new business ventures. This being the case, Madam Speaker, then why has the hon. Minister of Finance decided to slash the capital budget which would have catalysed growth? Why has he slashed down capital expenditure? I am not sure, Madam Speaker. I have through the past week been trying to think why? Why will a Government at the beginning of its mandate - a strong Government - decide to sacrifice popular investment in infrastructure projects?

Madam Speaker, is it the obsession of the hon. Minister of Finance to present a ‘no-tax’ budget? Madam Speaker, in my speech on the Government Programme a few weeks ago, I had alluded to how back in the eighties, the hon. Minister of Finance would prepare the population psychologically to the inevitable taxes only to declare a no tax budget during the Budget speech. Zorro is here!

It would appear that twenty-five years later, the hon. Minister of Finance has not changed an iota.

Madam Speaker, a few days before the Budget, on 18 March 2015, after meeting with the trade unionists, the hon. Minister of Finance reportedly stated and I quote –

«L’augmentation de la pension de vieillesse, des veuves et des orphelins coûtera R 4.7 milliards à l’État. Absorber une telle dépense dans le budget sera bien difficile. Il est nécessaire, avec une telle dépense, d’augmenter les taxes.»

Again, the same psychology –

«Il est nécessaire, avec une telle dépense, d’augmenter les taxes »

And then on Budget day, the hon. Minister of Finance proudly stated “the first Budget of this Government is a no tax Budget”. And everybody applauded. The magician was back, except that this time his trick does not work. He has been uncovered. He has been unmasked. Because, Madam Speaker, this is far from being a no tax Budget. It is a hidden tax Budget. A hidden tax Budget! That is the hard truth. Over the next 18 months, the hon. Minister of Finance intends to collect Rs2.3 billion in additional tax from petroleum products under the guise of Build Mauritius Fund thereby depriving road users of the benefit of the

drastic fall in the price of petroleum products on the world market. Had he instead of imposing this additional tax passed on the benefit of the reduction in price of petroleum products on the world market to consumers there would have probably been a reduction in the price of bus fare? There would have been a reduction in the cost of production. There would have been a reduction in the production of goods and services. Our products would have been more competitive. It would have been a real boost to our export sector. But, instead he chose to tax. He chose to fleece the consumers.

Madam Speaker, notwithstanding what the Members on the other side are saying, I maintain it is a hidden tax Budget. It is a hidden tax Budget because when we looked at revenue estimates - and figures don't lie Madam Speaker - and when we compare the 12-month period June 2015/2016 with that of 2014, we will see that hon. Minister of Finance intends to collect Rs8 billion more in taxes than was collected in 2014. Rs8 billion more from the taxpayers pocket and he dares call it a no tax Budget. That is a magician saying no tax and then taking Rs8 billion from people's pocket. This is what he referred to as *fiscalité légère*. We are taxed and we don't know it.

The hon. Minister is expecting to collect Rs2 billion in additional VAT. Yes, Madam Speaker, Rs2 billion in additional VAT. Revenue from VAT will be Rs28 billion for 2015/2016 compare to Rs26 billion in 2014.

Pourtant, Madame la présidente, at paragraph 18 of the Government Programme it was clearly stated and I quote –

“To further alleviate people's financial burden, Government will eliminate VAT on a number of food products.”

The manifest electoral was even more specific:

‘Abolition de la TVA sur les produits alimentaires comprenant les jus de fruits sans sucre ajouté, les céréales, les produits végétariens ainsi que les couches de bébés.’

Promesses non-tenues, Madame la présidente. Where are the reductions in VAT on foodstuffs?

Madam Speaker, I spoke of hidden tax because there appears to be a deliberate policy of this Government to allow our rupee to depreciate against major currencies. The exchange rate today for one dollar is about Rs37. By way of comparison in December 2014 around election times, according to the Bank of Mauritius website, the exchange rate for one dollar was about Rs32. Rs32 in December; Rs37 in April! In the space of four months, a

depreciation of 16%. If we did not have a floating rate that is what we would have called *dévaluation de notre roupie. 16%!*

The STC is no longer purchasing its foreign currency requirement from the Central Bank, Madam Speaker, thus creating a shortage in available foreign currency on the market which is pushing up the price of foreign currencies even further. Unlike in the past, the Bank of Mauritius does not seem to have intervened in the market to support and stabilise the rupee, which leads me to believe that this Government is deliberately allowing the rupee to depreciate.

Being given that most of our imports are paid in dollars, a depreciation of our rupee effectively means that our imports in rupee terms will be higher. Higher cost of import will result in higher revenue for the Government in terms of custom duties, excise and VAT. But the weak rupee, Madam Speaker, means more expenditure for families who have children studying abroad. And with a weak rupee, the price of the very basic commodities that we import will go up.

In an article published only yesterday, one of the biggest importers and distributors of foodstuff has already warned that, in the weeks to come, there will be an average increase of between 5% to 10% on foodstuff. Already the prices of pulses have increased dramatically and so have prices of biscuits and staple food. I know what I am talking about, Madam Speaker, because only during the weekend I did my groceries. I know that prices are already up.

One of the greatest disappointment of this Budget, Madam Speaker, is that it fails to adequately tackle the issue of increase in the costs of living. The hon. Minister of Finance expects inflation to remain “subdued”, this is the word he used. This may be true at the macro level when we know the weight of petroleum products in the basket of commodities used to determine inflation rate. Even then, it is a risky bet because how long will the price of petroleum products remain stable. Experts are already projecting an increase in the price of petroleum products due to the instability in the Middle East. That is inflation at the national level. But when it comes to the household basket, it is a different ball game. The weakening of the rupee will inevitably impact on the disposable income of household and yet this budget fails to tackle the issue of erosion of purchasing power.

In its electoral manifesto, it has promised to abolish VAT on foodstuffs and it has not done so. It has promised to introduce a minimum wage policy, another broken promise. The only measure which seems to have been announced in the Budget which may impact on purchasing power is the reduction of the maximum interest rate on hire purchase from 19% to

12% and penalty rate from 5% to 2%. Of course, Madam Speaker, we welcome this initiative, but it is not sufficient.

First of all, this measure is unlikely to apply to existing goods that have been purchased on hire purchase. I have not heard the hon. Minister speaking of retrospective application of this measure. From a legal standpoint, I doubt if he can make this measure retrospective anyway. So, this measure is unlikely to apply to existing goods that have been purchased on hire purchase. Then, this measure is unlikely to have the full desired effect if the merchants do not play the game. With a reduced profit margin, the merchants and financiers may be more selective in granting credit facilities and granting them only to consumers who have repayment capabilities. Proper legislation therefore, Madam Speaker, should be introduced to ensure that hidden costs are not passed on to the consumers by unscrupulous profitminded merchants and financiers.

This measure, however welcome, Madam Speaker, may not be sufficient to solve the problem of *surendettement du consommateur*. The Government will also have to review existing legislation relating to the Protection of Borrowers. The threshold for eligibility of the loans should be reviewed upwards. More powers should be given to the Commissioner for the protection of borrowers to better protect borrowers from abuse by lenders and to deal with hardship cases.

Madam Speaker, we welcome the decision to establish the office of the Ombudsperson for Financial Services. This was the subject of a PQ that I asked earlier this month. We also hope that the Bank of Mauritius will use its powers vested under section 6 of the Bank of Mauritius Act to impose limitation on the quantum of fees and charges imposed by financial institutions. The law was amended as far back as in 2012 and the task force has already published its recommendations since June 2014. So, we are more than 9 months later and I hope these measures will be implemented soon because the hon. Minister of Finance did make a *sortie en règle* against banks and financial institutions.

The hon. Minister of Finance also announced that a special committee has been set up to examine the report of the Commission of Enquiry on sales by levy. Again that was the subject of a Parliamentary Question which I addressed to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister earlier this month and I was shocked to learn that the Commission had, in fact, submitted its report as far back as August 2014, but it is only after I asked the question that it was discovered that the report was missing from the Prime Minister's Office and a new copy was then asked from the President.

Now, I understand that a special committee has been set up. I am really looking forward to the recommendation of that special committee and I hope that they are diligent because every week dozens of households are still losing their homes at the bar.

In the Government Programme, it was announced that to protect financially distressed people, legislation will be enhanced to prohibit, for a period of two years, the sale by levy of the only house of a worker who has been made redundant on economic grounds. I hope that this would be one of the measures which the Committee will recommend. I think that we should go further and recommend that matrimonial home should be *insaisissable* except in cases where the house is given as a security for a housing loan because it is not fair for a person to save all his life, build a home, then take a loan and if the business goes bust, he loses his matrimonial home.

The hon. Minister of Finance did not say anything about the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund which was supposed to help victims of sale by levy. Will this fund be revived? He spoke about sharing. Maybe this is one of the cases where those who benefit from the lacuna of the present system could be made to contribute a percentage of the acquisition price that they pay when they acquire a property through sale by levy at the bar and this money can be put in a special fund to then compensate the victims of the system.

As we are on the topic of housing, we, of course, welcome the decision to increase the grant for casting of roof slabs and the eligibility criteria for household to benefit from the scheme. However, Madam Speaker, when we take into account the increase in the cost of construction materials and labour cost, this Rs10,000 increase is in real terms quite negligible. But we are very disappointed, Madam Speaker, that only 1000 low-cost housing will be constructed and only 700 housing units will be constructed under the National Empowerment Foundation and this over two years.

(Interruptions)

This is what is announced in the Budget.

You will have the time to contradict the hon. Minister of Finance ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't interrupt the hon. Member! You will have the opportunity to

...

Mr Uteem: You will have the opportunity to contradict. This is one of the direct consequences of the slashing of the capital budget by the hon. Minister of Finance.

Madam Speaker, answering a Parliamentary Question from hon. Ganoo earlier this month, the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands stated that there are 39,573 households who

have registered themselves at NHDC for a housing unit. If we build only 1000 to 1500 houses every year, how will Government live up to its promise of constructing 10,000 social housing units as announced in the Government Programme?

The Government could have come with a scheme as it exists in other countries where the more vulnerable members of societies, those at the lower end of the ladder, are given rental vouchers to cover the whole or part of their rent. There is much more that the Government could have and should have done to alleviate the housing problems of poor people, squatters, refugees and those who live in precarious habitat, very often in subhuman conditions with no amenities and in appalling hygienic conditions.

We are also disappointed that no measures have been announced, Madam Speaker, to cater for the construction of houses for this 5000 or so households with monthly income exceeding Rs15,000 which has been registered with the NHDC. The Government has announced the creation of smart cities, but the ordinary Mauritians will not be able to afford the housing units in those smart cities. The Government could have set up a scheme to encourage private builders to cater for this market segment for those who earn more than 15000. I am talking about those thousands of young couples who cannot afford a decent house or an apartment.

The Government could have introduced measures to boost the rental market. The Government could have given fiscal incentives to private builders to construct housing units which are decent and affordable.

Madam Speaker, the Government has announced a Marshall Plan against poverty. The Marshall Plan was named after the US Secretary of State George Marshall, and this was an American initiative to provide economic support to European countries after the Second World War. Marshall Plan inevitably involved injection of funds. But as I have demonstrated, the Government is actually slashing its Capital Budget. The Government is not spending more than it is already spending to alleviate poverty. So, how can we talk about a Marshall Plan?

The Marshall Plan which the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development is proposing is nothing more, Madam Speaker, than an appeal to the private sector to shoulder their corporate responsibility. The hon. Minister is appealing to their generosity to alleviate poverty, and it is only after the Budget, we are told, that he will start meeting with major companies to participate in this national initiative.

This is not serious, Madam Speaker. We are privatising alleviation of poverty. *C'est ni plus ni moins qu'une démission du gouvernement face à ses responsabilités.* Indeed,

instead of increasing the budget for alleviation of poverty, the Government is simply passing the bucket onto the private sector. And the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has identified 38 *poches de pauvreté*. What a joke! 38 *poches de pauvreté*!

In 2011, the National Empowerment Foundation identified 229 *poches de pauvreté*. Now, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development will have us believe that, out of the 229 *poches de pauvreté*, there are only 38 *poches de pauvreté* left! Now, by a magic wand, this number has been reduced to 38! Real magician! When questioned about this, hon. Roopun who is the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment simply stated, and I quote -

« *Je ne sais quels paramètres ont été utilisés pour identifier cette liste.* »

Le ministre de tutelle ne sait même pas comment l'honorable ministre des Finances est arrivé au chiffre de 38. C'est ça le sérieux de ce gouvernement ! C'est ça leur façon de combattre la pauvreté!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Uteem: Madam Speaker, the next component of this so-called Marshall Plan will be to remove all restrictions on how a company would spend its 2% Corporate Social Responsibility Fund. I will readily concede, Madam Speaker, that the existing guidelines for the CSR system are too restrictive and approval system too cumbersome with the inevitable result that several laudable projects by NGOs never received the necessary funding.

But should we because of its current shortcomings do away completely with the guidelines? Is not this going to open doors to all kinds of abuses? What would prevent, Madam Speaker, a company henceforth to spend its 2% CSR on private projects to benefit a privileged few? What will prevent them to spend all the funds on projects which have no significant public benefit? This will no doubt, Madam Speaker, be a severe blow to NGOs who rely on CSR fund for their day-to-day activities, and there is no transition period. Project beneficial to society may have to be abandoned overnight for lack of funding. It is not for want of trying. We all know that if companies are not compelled to spend on social projects, many will not do so. Therefore, I will humbly ask the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development to freeze this decision until he has received all the necessary assurance that there will be no abuse, and that the CSR fund will indeed be used for charitable purposes.

Madam Speaker, let me come to the "*nation zougadère*". We fully support the measures taken by the Government to discourage gaming and betting. Increasing gaming

licence fees and taxes, banning gambling advertisement, banning scratch cards, freezing all new gaming and betting licences, relocating gaming houses are all very good initiatives. But will these measures have the desired effect? I am not convinced.

When we look at estimates, Madam Speaker, the revenue from taxes on national lottery, betting taxes, gaming taxes will actually increase; not reduce. It would actually increase. This in itself is an *aveu* that the measures announced will not deter people from gambling, from betting. I heard someone the other day on radio, Madam Speaker, congratulating the hon. Minister of Finance for foregoing, for sacrificing betting revenues on moral grounds. This is certainly not true. Despite the measures announced, there would be little or no impact on the “*nation zougadère*”.

Let us face the truth, Madam Speaker. The gambling industry is a flourishing industry where billions of rupees are involved. We all know the proximity which certain major players in the gaming industry have with certain politicians. It will be no surprise if those major players actually financed the electoral campaigns of various MPs. So, we should not underestimate the lobbies at work.

Let's take Lottotech. In February, the hon. Minister of Finance called a press conference to discuss the issue of Lottotech. Then, not a word on Lottotech in the conference. When queried by journalists, the hon. Minister of Finance is reported to have answered, and I quote -

« *Trop boner pou koz sa. Nous ankor en diskisyon.* »

Discussions with whom? Discussions about what? We have in this House people who have horses! We have people who don't hesitate to show themselves in public with major players! Is this the image we want to give to the public that we are combating “*nation zougadère*”? No specific measures in the Budget on lotto. Short of banning lotto, the Government could, at least, have reduced the number of drawing lots, *le nombre de tirages*. Instead of having a weekly draw, we could have a fortnightly draw. That, at least, would have reduced the gambling habits slowly. This is why, Madam Speaker, when we look at the measures announced by this Government, we feel that it is not far-reaching enough and will not have any real impact on the “*nation zougadère*”.

Madam Speaker, we are disappointed with this Budget because it does not provide clear policy statement for several Ministries. In my short career as parliamentarian, never have I seen any Budget where the hon. Minister of Finance merely state the budgetary allocation without elaborating on what the funds will be used for.

There seems to have been a lack of concertation among the various Ministries during the preparation of the Budget. For example, we are told that Rs442 m. will be provided to support the manufacturing sector, but we are not told how it will be supported, what will happen to the manufacturing sector, what is the vision, what is the new product, what is the new market. Nothing! We are just told that Rs442 m. are being provided. Similarly, we are told that the Budget for MTPA will be increased to Rs560 m. But, again, we are not told what these additional funds will be used for.

No wonder, Madam Speaker, that there have been so many press conferences by various Ministers before and after the Budget explaining the policies of their Ministries. Sometimes, in these press conferences, Ministers even contradict what is said in the Budget. We have just heard hon. Soodhun from a sitting position saying that more houses will be constructed that's what has been announced in the Budget. We have heard hon. Roopun challenged the figures of pockets of poverty. We have heard how hon. Bholah seemed to contradict the hon. Minister of Finance as to the future of DBM. Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun went even further and refused to comment on the nine-year schooling which was announced by her colleague in the Budget Speech.

Hon. Sinatambou who is not here, is busy chasing millionaires. According to his own interviews that is what he is doing, looking after millionaires. But, maybe, the time has come for him to come forward with a coherent and holistic Africa policy. Maybe, it is time for him to explain how Mauritius would be positioning itself on the international scene, what role will Mauritius play regionally. Maybe, he should start by ensuring that career diplomats serve our country as Head of mission instead of jobs for the boys and the girls.

We are told that a Financial Services Promotion Agency will be reactivated and, according to Estimates, a budget of Rs75 m. will be allocated to the promotion of financial services. This is a welcome initiative, Madam Speaker. For one, I have inside and outside Parliament, been always a strong supporter that we needed a special agency to look after the promotion of financial services. But again, it would seem that this item has been added in the last minute of the budget, at the eleventh hour. Otherwise, how can we explain that the amount for promotion is allocated directly to the Ministry? Shouldn't we have a separate corporate body to undertake promotional services just like we have MTPA for tourism; just like we have Enterprise Mauritius; just like we have Board of Investment? Is that proper governance that the hon. Minister will now be concerned with promoting a sector where he will be called upon to also regulate that sector? Is that good governance?

Madam Speaker, before resuming my seat I would like to comment on what has been termed the fourth main objective of the Budget which is to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance. This has been a recurrent theme, Madam Speaker; a whole chapter in the Government Programme was devoted to good governance. We have a Minister dedicated to good governance, but when week after week we look at the nominations approved by Cabinet, can we really talk about transparency? Can we really talk about meritocracy? Is that good governance? I am not saying that the people who have been appointed are not qualified to occupy the posts. They may well be, but so are the hundreds of professionals out there. Why should a Mauritian be favoured over another Mauritian just because of his political affiliation? We need the competence of all Mauritians, Madam Speaker. We cannot afford to discriminate.

Madam Speaker, several hon. Members sitting on the other side were with us in the Opposition only a few months ago. Week after week we denounced and objected to all practice of nepotism, cronyism, and favouritism.

(Interruptions)

Week after week, our good friend...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Uteem: Week after week, our good friend hon. Mahen Jhugroo would question the Rt. hon. Prime Minister on ‘*Madame là*’, on the partner of ‘*Madame là*’ who has since shamelessly shifted allegiance.

(Interruptions)

Week after week! And I don’t see anyone laughing anymore! Shamelessly shifted allegiance!

(Interruptions)

Madame so partner Gooljaury!

(Interruptions)

Gooljaury! I am talking about Gooljaury!

Madam Speaker: Please, don’t talk among yourselves!

Mr Uteem: We talked about SICOM Tower. How many questions we asked about SICOM Tower? How many questions we asked about Airway Coffee?

(Interruptions)

Where is Mr Gooljaury today?

(Interruptions)

Gooljaury is the star witness!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: The star witness being in the VIP circle!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Uteem: Week after week, hon. Mahen Jhugroo - you would recall - would question hon. Dr. Bunwaree on MITD and on the famous 'masseuse', and now you are in Government, look at the list of appointment approved by Cabinet since the election.

(Interruptions)

There is no 'masseur'

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem: But you have women who have shared chambers with Members of this Cabinet.

(Interruptions)

Take a close look at that list! Take a close look at the list and ask yourself how different are you from the previous Government? Nepotism, cronyism, favouritism! Is this the inevitable fate of this nation? This is the real plague affecting our nation and it serves no purpose talking about good governance, talking about meritocracy, until and unless, by action, this Government stops this objectionable practice of favouritism, cronyism and installs meritocracy.

Madam Speaker, when I listened to the Budget Speech it reminded me of these Bollywood movies that are released during Diwali and end of the year. Before the movie is released, there are teasers. You have actors and actresses come and tell you how great the movie will be. You have songs which are released and then there is all a hype and people go and watch the movie. Of course, there are a few good songs here and there, but when they come out, what is the reaction? All of this for this film! Fans will always see the good thing in a movie, however bad the actors perform and it is the same thing with this Budget.

(Interruptions)

You will always have people...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: You will always have people to praise this Budget.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Uteem: You will always have people to praise this Budget. But, Madam Speaker, this Budget will be no blockbuster and I say it with a lot of regret: “*Quelle occasion manquée!*”

Merci.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the session for tea for half an hour.

At 4.26 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.02 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Mr S. Bhadain): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his Budget.

This is a Budget that the people of Mauritius trust and have confidence in, because it is from a Government which is on their side. Everybody is aware of the sincerity, the seriousness and pragmatism which have guided the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his team in the preparation of this Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a healthy democracy like ours, the Opposition need not agree with everything this Government does, but they should be able to understand its purpose and to appreciate why it will be for the long-term benefit of our country. The budget presented by the hon. Minister marks the beginning of a new era. This Budget sets the scene for the future, the basis for social justice and an all-inclusive society where the confidence level of young Mauritians is being rebuilt after years of doom and gloom.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after listening to my good friend, hon. Reza Uteem, the first Member for Constituency No. 2, venting his spleen on the budget, I can only conclude that hon. Uteem has been expressing his master’s voice. Now, it is unfortunate that his master is not around, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have just heard that there are three councillors of the MMM who have just resigned, probably he is attending to that. Hon. Uteem stated that this Budget is not bold enough. ‘*Une occasion ratée*’, he says. Disappointed he is. *Il est déçu. Heureusement qu’il n’est pas ému comme son Leader.*

(Interruptions)

Now, that is absolutely true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

In fact, the only budget that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has ever praised was in 2006 when he said publicly that he agrees totally on the fundamentals of the Sithanen Budget, a highly capitalist and ultra-liberal budget that brought absolute poverty to this country. Now, had this demonic second republic gone ahead, had they won the general elections, then it would have been Dr. Sithanen who would have been sitting here and my friend, hon. Uteem would have been applauding!

The third Member for Constituency Stanley and Rose Hill, hon. Bérenger has also given all sorts of epithets to this budget, namely: ‘*décevant*’, ‘bad joke’, ‘bluff’, ‘*mal foutu*’, ‘*décousu*’, ‘*massacre*’. Apparently, this is the worst budget he has seen since 1976, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Absolutely! He is an *éternel insatisfait*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir and this is no way to describe a work of art. The stock market’s reaction to this budget was, in fact, the litmus test. On Wednesday 25 March 2015, the day following the presentation of the Budget, ‘*Le Défi Media Group*’ reported *inter alia*, and I quote –

« *Effets post-budget : La Bourse en ébullition.*

L’allocution du ministre des finances, Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, aura eu le mérite de faire revenir les investisseurs en force sur le marché. »

This is the acid test. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, banks, hotels and construction companies, all benefited from increased share prices and in one case it went up to as much as 5%. It was further reported, and I quote –

« *Les investisseurs étaient en mode d’attente jusqu’à fin de la semaine dernière. Le signal fort du gouvernement, visant à doper la croissance, les ont ramenés. »*

Not bad at all, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allegedly the worse budget since 1976! Similarly, four days later another economist expressed his views and I quote from ‘*L’Hebdo*’ of 29 March 2015 –

“*C’est un Budget qui répond aux promesses électorales des premiers 100 jours et qui promet une relance économique. Globalement, c’est un Budget catalyseur.*

C'est un Budget qui tente de tout rassembler sous un même chapiteau afin de s'acheminer vers une croissance de 5,7 %.(...) Et au bout, ce Budget fait miroiter le deuxième miracle économique. »

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even a member of the bureau politique of the MMM had positive comments to make and I quote from 'L'Express' of 29 March 2015, Mr Steve Obeegadoo –

“Je me contente de relever l'inspiration militante de certaines propositions. La place de choix accordée aux PME, l'interdiction des sacs en plastique, le plan Marshall contre la pauvreté, l'offensive contre les jeux de hasard, la transparence dans l'octroi des terres de l'État. Ces propositions sont aussi celles du MMM, je suis ravi de les voir dans le Budget. »

How many MMM do we have today? One sitting on that side, one sitting over here, some of them walking away from the Municipal Council of Port Louis! So many MMM!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, silence!

Mr Bhadain: If we had to define 'mal foutu'...

(Interruptions)

This member of the MMM 'politburo' even added, and I quote –

« Le MSM a été notre allié de 2012 à 2014, nous avons défini des positions communes, c'est logique qu'elles ressurgissent. Il y a aussi quelques nouvelles mesures très intéressantes, comme le soutien à l'agriculture bio. »

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MMM no longer speaks in one voice and yet, they want this House, they want the population at large to believe them, to trust them and to have confidence in them! At least they were united this morning when they all walked out together!

(Interruptions)

And with the Labour Party, I must add!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please silence! Please remain silent!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this regretful state of affairs is further exacerbated by what this Member of the *bureau politique* of the MMM says next and I quote

–

«C'est une question de vie ou de mort pour le MMM. Si l'on ne prend pas le taureau par les cornes, l'hémorragie des départs va continuer. La direction doit réaliser que la défaite de 2014 n'est pas un accident de parcours. Ce n'est pas une... »

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, sorry to interrupt you. Can you please confine your observation to the Budget speech!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Budget is all about confidence it brings and about leadership and before getting into the specific measures of the current Budget, I will have to address these two issues because it is this Budget which is going to bring overwhelming confidence back into our nation and it is this Budget which is going to show that we are led by a living legend and the other side is led by a living deception!

(Interruptions)

It goes on to say –

« La direction doit réaliser que la défaite de 2014 n'est pas un accident de parcours, ce n'est pas juste la faute du Parti travailliste. Le mal est plus profond et exige une remise à plat totale. Le MMM a un fonctionnement vieillot, ses structures sont sclérosées, ses pratiques désuètes et ses méthodes décrédibilisées. Avec ça, nous allons dans le mur. »

To add insult to injury, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the spokesperson of the MMM further stated and I quote –

« Le MMM et son leader ont une image de gens arrogants, imperméables à la critique, sourds aux attentes de l'électorat. »

And these are the people who are coming and lecturing us about whether this Budget is good or not good for our country! There we have it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is there any need to say more? I ask the question: where is the bad joke? Who is the joker? Where is the bluff? Who is the bluffer and who is being massacred and by whom?

Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this situation reminds me of a scene in Act 1, Scene 4 of *Le Cid* of Corneille which describes a predicament similar to that of the Leader of the Opposition and the MMM today. The monologue of Don Diègue starting with –

*“Ô rage! ô désespoir! ô vieillesse ennemie!
N'ai-je donc tant vécu que pour cette infamie?
Et ne suis-je blanchi dans les travaux guerriers.
Que pour voir en un jour flétrir tant de lauriers?
Ô cruel souvenir de ma gloire passée!”*

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the price to pay...

(Interruptions)

... for double standards! This is the price to pay for hypocrisy! This is the price to pay for betrayal! Not only for having put a piece of birthday cake in the mouth of Sir Anerood Jugnauth but for days later breaking the Remake 2000. This also reminds us, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act V Scene 1 and I quote –

“All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten thy little hand.”

And I may add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that with regard to that deceitful hand which fed that piece of birthday cake, all the perfumes of Dufry worldwide...

(Interruptions)

will not sweeten...

(Interruptions)

that treacherous hand. “Fair was foul, foul is fair!”

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that piece of cake was the bad joke! That was the bluff and the bluffer is now being massacred and butchered by his own kind. Some may call this poetic justice I call this divine justice. Happy birthday Rt. hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today with this first Budget of *l'Alliance Lepep* Government we stand at a defining moment of our history. Once more we are confronted with the task of cleaning the Augean stable and restoring good governance and the rule of law at all levels within our society. This is reminiscent of a situation in the aftermath of the 1982 general election. Many will remember that the country was in ruins, dilapidated by years of Labour Government. The rupee had been devalued. Hon. Uteem is talking about depreciation of the rupee today...

(Interruptions)

by 50%, absolutely!

(Interruptions)

And the country barely had reserves to afford the import of basic commodities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Many had simply lost hope and were legitimately skeptical of any possibility of turning the tide. How many times have we heard that word today ‘skeptical’ again, after so many years, quarter of a century? In the face of such adversity rose a man determined to rise to the challenge and to show to these cowards and traitors his inherent capability to lead a nation and address the concerns of his fellow citizens!

It will be remembered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that Sir Anerood Jugnauth put this country back on the rails of economic progress, saw to it that employment opportunities were created at the doors of those looking for jobs and reversed the trend of labour surplus economy to one of labour shortage economy where workers were imported from India, China, Bangladesh, Philippines, Madagascar and so on.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the current Minister of Finance stood by him as he was convinced that he was the man of the moment. The scenario has not changed and we still have those familiar faces around. Even the speeches are the same. We have heard hon. Uteem today and his master’s voice! So are the challenges, save that they have scaled up in nature and dimension. Some from the other side of the House think that we are not capable of meeting this challenge once more. Well, I tell them think again! From 1983 onwards it was under the able leadership of the present Prime Minister that the country underwent an unprecedented economic transformation thus setting the base for economic prosperity.

This country was freed from the yoke of the dicta of the IMF, of the World Bank. It will be recalled that these international funding agencies had simply predicted that Mauritius would fail. Mauritius was written off from the charts and was in the league of failed nations! At each and every Budget presented by the current Minister of Finance, the Leader of the Opposition, in his usual style, *fidèle à lui-même*, would criticise the measures proposed and use a vexatious language to freely distribute certificates of incompetence to Members of the Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I have said is history and now history is repeating itself. Even after a quarter of a century the mindset is still unchanged and so remains the survivors who cling to the Leader of the Opposition. It is really dramatic however that, at the time when our economy is at the crossroads, our own nationals and no less than the Leader of the

Opposition and hon. Uteem are again attempting to instil doubts and negativity to dampen the spirit of our fellow citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, those in the Opposition tend to forget that this country was being run for the last 10 years by cronies of the Labour Party and they wanted to go to bed with them and had as associates a number of scoundrels nearly *une association de malfaiteurs* who have bled this country up to the last drop and it is only now that we are finding out the extent of everything. Every single day, every single file you look at, you see the extent of that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in our move to restore public order and good governance we faced numeral obstacles and threats but with public support we have been able to prevail. Today the result of the scoreboard is undisputed. It is in favour of this Government. Betamax! Neotown! JinFei! Mauritius Duty Free Paradise! The State land saga! All speak volumes in terms of our achievements for the first 100 days of our mandate to instil ethics, good governance and transparency at the highest level of public administration.

Never before, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has the tone at the top been so clear to promote good governance and to do away with immoral decision making as was the case under the Labour regime. The very same regime which the then and now hon. Leader of the Opposition has been vehemently defending during the last electoral campaign and is still defending.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard my friend, hon. Uteem, referred to the nominations in the public sector. *L'Université de la vie!* Can this be compared with what was happening under those ten years of the Labour Government? People who have no qualifications, no experience whatsoever were put at the Head of the CEB. *L'Université de la vie* is now closed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and even the lecturers have been kicked out. Now, when we look at the way that this Government has been operating, there are a number of decisions which have already been taken. At the level of my Ministry, Cabinet has decided that there is going to be a performance evaluation of all the Boards, parastatal bodies and State-owned enterprises. We have said that we are going to conduct reviews in terms of the performance of the Chairperson, the Chief Executives of organisations; we are going to set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we are going to conduct self-assessment, get self-assessment questionnaires prepared and we are going to appraise themselves which is known as 360 feedback. All of that is a process to bring transparency and good governance.

Now, a Minister who has a vision and wants to go and implement that vision, he has so many institutions which are basically under his portfolio. If he has got to appoint a

Chairperson, who is he going to appoint? Somebody who is going to fulfill that vision or somebody who is not going to even understand what he wants to do! When he puts somebody there, he takes the responsibility for it. Tomorrow, he is going to be judged on the performance of that institution and that Chairperson who is leading that Board. Similarly, we said in the case of Chief Executives, where possible we are going to advertise. This has been done. I, myself, I have advertised for the post of Advisors in my Ministry and even for the *Attaché de Presse*, I have advertised where I can. They talked about the Director of FIU. Only to tell you one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last week, there was an ESAAMLG Conference in Arusha, Tanzania. The Director of FIU represented Mauritius with some of the officials from the Ministry. When he went there, they wrote a letter to him only yesterday to tell him that they have been so impressed with his technical expertise on (AML/CFT) Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism and that they have appointed him on the panel of experts of the European Union to represent Mauritius and Africa over there. Now, this is the same person, when I read the papers today, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying: *un bébé de 30 ans a été nommé a la FIU*. Now, which is which? I believe the European Union and I do not believe *un éternel insatisfait*. I believe in youth. I believe that these people have got professional capabilities to lead those institutions and do the best they can for their country.

Other nominations have been mentioned. My question is: so what? Chairpersons! We know what Chairpersons do. They chair the Board. When they chair the Board, there are policies which are going to be implemented; it is going to be implemented by the Chief Executive. We know that this Government has relooked at the whole structure and decided that Chairpersons are not going to avail themselves or vote these millions of fees they were being paid. Only in SICOM, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rs28 m. has been paid as Board fees in one year to Executive Directors and Rs8 m. to non-Executive Directors, that is, Rs36 m. in one year. The question was put this morning to the hon. Attorney-General. He said that SICOM falls under my Ministry, now I am going to say it. There are people from the DPP's office who were sitting on the Board of SICOM Financial Services Ltd and they are talking about independence. Is that good governance?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Ministers of Finance are judged on the performance of the economy during their tenure. We should all accept that the current Minister of Finance has displayed great belief in a much improved performance of our economy in anticipating a substantial increase in economic growth from 3.5% to 5.7%. Overwhelming confidence, as I

said, is now returning. And I can say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that he deserves a great deal of credit for paving the way to the second economic miracle of this country.

Let us remind ourselves that Governments do not create wealth. They provide the necessary conditions and environment to pave the way for wealth creation. This is what hon. Uteem has not understood. This is exactly what this Budget is aimed at achieving, paving the way for wealth creation. A lot has been said about the private sector, smart cities, smart partnership with the private sector to create wealth and this is what Government does.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget is again urging and appealing to the private sector to play its role, to make Mauritius a better place for the good of one and all. The smart cities, the creation of technology parks and the adoption of selected villages is a step in this direction. Contrary to what hon. Uteem has been saying - because I also have an iPad now and I did some research on the Internet - I can say that in India, the major corporate houses have already shown the way. This concept establishes a smart partnership with the private sector for the establishment of small cities and techno poles.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government is not abandoning or abdicating its role. No, not at all! Rather it is opening avenues for smart collaboration between the Government and the private sector becoming partners for progress as it has been in the past. Employment opportunities will abound both to local residents and neighbouring areas.

Just like the factory buildings which were put up in the 1980s and 1990s, in the North, South, East and West parts of Mauritius which created thousands of jobs, this smart partnership will reinforce the economic drive for better jobs and opportunities. It will bring productive jobs for our young generation entrepreneurs and raise their hope that this country is on the move and we are going forward and not backwards. More importantly, there will be jobs at their doorsteps. The difference between the villages and the towns will be completely eliminated. This has other benefits, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is going to reduce the time lost in travelling long distances. It will provide more time and leisure in terms of the number of hours which these workers can spend with the family. Of course, there will be no traffic congestion in terms of people having to travel long distances to go to their jobs and also less accidents on our roads.

Similarly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the actions aimed at improving the quality of life in the identified poverty-stricken pockets will go a long way towards improving living conditions, employment and health. Government cannot bite more than it can chew, to answer hon. Uteem: why is not everything being done in one go? It has only been three months for God's sake! This is our first Budget. We have got five years to go. If we have done all these

in three months, imagine what's going to happen in five years' time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If we embark at one go on improving all the areas characterised by extreme poverty, at the end of the day, we will create mass dissatisfaction and nobody will be happy. Some people tend to forget that we have more than four and half years at our disposal to improve conditions in those poverty-stricken areas. The experience obtained in the current identified poverty-stricken areas will guide us for the future projects that will come next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has not been any echo from any Member of the Opposition at all to condemn the abuse made by the former Prime Minister, his accomplices, his close friends. The world was shocked. Well, I am informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that hon. Alan Ganoo and the hon. Leader of the Opposition went four times to the house of Mr Rakesh Gooljaury to negotiate the Labour/MMM alliance. Four times to his house in Quatre Bornes!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, interruptions, please!

Mr Bhadain: The world was shocked...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, interruptions!

Mr Bhadain: The world was shocked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to witness the seizure of millions of....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem, please allow the hon. Minister to continue!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I am on my feet! Please allow the hon. Member to continue. I will allow no interruptions. You do not have the floor. Allow the hon. Minister to continue.

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the world was shocked to witness the seizure of millions of rupees, US dollars and other currencies at the residence of the former Prime Minister. It is as if we were watching the movie "*Il faut sauver le soldat Ryan*". Well, they may have to save Navin, Nandanee, Frank, Laurent, Dawood. I don't know so many more; all of them together maybe, and decide whether the risks associated thereto is commensurate to the advantages if any. The taxpayers, on the other hand, need to know the agenda of the Opposition. It is indeed a real mystery, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why there is so much sympathy shown by the MMM to the former Prime Minister. The leader of the Opposition

has a duty to explain his stand to the population. Maybe, again, it is a question of chemistry, or even body chemistry this time.

(Interruptions)

Be that as it may, he cannot continue to sit on the fence.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *le Budget présenté par l'honorable ministre des Finances est un budget fédérateur*. It brings confidence and trust to the population, to investors and to other stakeholders. We are at the crossroads, and this Budget will generate accelerated growth and employment through an integrated contribution of the public, Government, and also the private sector. Unlike the Labour regime's Budget, which was full of *effet d'annonce*, the success of this Budget resides in readily implementable mega projects; a boost to the development of the port as one of the most important regional ports in this part of Africa; improvement in business facilitation to bring efficiency and reduce costs of doing business in Mauritius and, of course, the promotion of SMEs to tackle the challenges of social equity and also of job creation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the needy of our society, this Budget provides for better and fairer distribution of wealth to our citizens, especially the vulnerable ones, in contrast with the previous Labour Government whose leader publicly acknowledged that he preferred eating the cake all by himself. This singularly contrasts with the *esprit de partage* of this caring Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the country will experience an investment of Rs20 billion over the next eight years to change defective water pipes as well as provide six cubic metres of water free of charge, which will drastically improve access to water supply and alleviate the pain of the vulnerable ones in our society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposed acquisition of hundred semi-low floor buses to provide better and safer public transport will benefit students, the old age, as well as the working population. We all know the recklessness with which the previous Government had exposed the lives of hundreds of thousands of passengers with buses which were not road worthy at all.

We have also seen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provisions for the expansion of existing healthcare facilities with a new cancer centre and ENT hospital along with the recruitment of 100 doctors on a full-time basis, with 1,400 new supporting medical staff to bring marked efficiency and improvement in the provision of healthcare to our population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget also provides strong measures to curtail gambling excesses, to promote a culture of principles, of hard work, and to do anyway with the '*nation zougadere*' mentality and the desire to get rich quickly which has plagued our nation, and greed on top of that, which has seriously impaired morality in this country over the past 10 years under the Labour reign.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us also not forget the special measures to cater for the housing needs of low and middle income group with the construction of low cost housing units provided for in this Budget. Here again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while this Budget is conscious about creating value to the needy ones, we can see a clear contrast, '*une rupture*' with the previous Labour Government where State land was shamelessly gifted to *ti copines et gros copins*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, SMEs feature prominently in the 2015 Budget with Government aiming to make them the backbone of our economy and also promote growth. The Budget's focus on SMEs has its merits as a mechanism to tackle unemployment and also to drive growth.

Currently, SMEs contribute to around 41% of GDP and 50% of employment in Mauritius. This currently indicates potential inefficiencies and lack of untapped opportunities. Providing finance of Rs10 billion over the next five years with the setting up of a dedicated SME bank will unleash the potential of our fellow Mauritians to become a nation of entrepreneurs, address current inefficiencies, and promote productivity and also competitiveness. This Government has gone a step further, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In addition to providing finance to entrepreneurs, the current Budget provides a series of targeted initiatives to provide the right tonic to the SME sector. Entrepreneurs will also obtain appropriate advice on how to start their businesses.

Small companies registered with the SMEDA will be exempt from corporate tax for a period of eight years, thereby providing immediate financial relief to companies. Another innovative step, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the introduction of a simplified tax system for income tax and VAT filing based on cash rather than the accrual system, further reducing the compliance burden on taxpayers.

The setting up of a one-stop shop to provide support, financing, information, permits and licences, and the creation of seven SME parks across the country will ensure that the development of SMEs reaches all regions of the island and benefits the population at large. This is what you call real democratisation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - not what we have seen in the past - unlike democratisation under the Labour reign with the Betamax, the MDFP, the

Dufry, the Frydu, the BAI empire. And we have also seen now how Labour democratisation has filled in the coffers of ‘Mr Banker’ with the assistance of ‘Mr Shark’.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reduction of the amount payable upon an objection to a tax assessment from 30% to 10% has been a much awaited measure by the business community, SMEs and individuals alike. I was surprised to hear hon. Uteem say today that, as a lawyer, he was advising people on how to go to the SMEDA and get their businesses set up. As a lawyer, most probably he has gone to the Assessment Review Committee as well after having advised clients at the MRA. This is *un soulagement total* for so many people in Mauritius, where this rate has been lowered down from 30%, when you have to object to a tax assessment, to 10%. This was stifling business before ...

(Interruptions)

They were availing themselves of that discretion because they had good ties with the Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

This will greatly relieve the financial burden on taxpayers.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please address the Chair!

Mr Bhadain: This will greatly relieve the financial burden on taxpayers awaiting finality on tax disputes. The renewal of the Expeditious Dispute Resolution of Tax Scheme is another step, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to accommodate taxpayers who cannot afford an objection to an assessment. Also - and this is not in any court judgement - the statutory period for raising tax assessment will now be three years instead of five years, thereby further reducing the burden on taxpayers. Maybe this part of the Budget was not read by hon. Uteem.

In short, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget aims at promoting sectors seen as future pillars of the economy through fiscal incentives and also seeks to alleviate the compliance burden on taxpayers – *ils sont soulagés*.

This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, creates the conditions for growth. The 13 Mega projects will usher Mauritius into an era of modernity with intelligent cities making use of ICT. These projects will create the much needed jobs for our youth and opportunities to entrepreneurs paving the way for a modern Mauritius.

Coming now to my Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2015-2016 Budget introduces a number of fundamental measures which will radically transform the whole architecture of the financial services sector in Mauritius. These measures seek to improve the

sectors' contribution to GDP over time and scale up its activities to match those of well-known international financial centres like Singapore, Hong Kong and Luxembourg. I have said it before, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I will say it again, we can be for Africa what Singapore is for Asia and what Luxembourg is for Europe.

This Budget underscores the need to revitalise the secondary market for Government securities and the setting up of an active secondary market for benchmark Government securities through the Stock Exchange of Mauritius to replace the current Over-The-Counter (OTC) trading of Government securities long overdue.

It is my firm belief that a functional secondary market will constitute a first step in the process of constructing a yield return in Mauritius, which will contribute to the emergence of a fully integrated financial sector. The stock market, the banking and insurance sectors, though not operating in total isolation, do not display currently the level of synergy and the degree of integration observable in more developed markets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, paragraph 99 of this Budget constitutes another measure which clearly shows this Government's determination to scale up the activities of our Financial Services Sector to another dimension. The Fund and Asset Management Industry in Mauritius is still largely a domestic business comprising essentially of local operators.

While the current structure of the industry has well served the needs and objectives of Mauritian investors over the years, it is evident that it requires a major overhauling and a fundamental transformation to attract international Fund Management, Asset Management and Wealth Management players to relocate their front-office operations to Mauritius. However, given that the previous Government did little to set up a financial ecosystem of substance that matches that of Singapore, Hong Kong or London, it was important that this present Government adopts a specific Financial Sector Incentive Scheme to attract International Asset/Fund/Wealth Managers, who have Assets under Management of a meaningful size to relocate their front-office operations in Mauritius and use Mauritius as a platform to service African countries.

My Ministry will actively work on the details and specifics of the Financial Sector Initiatives Scheme together with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, including the fiscal incentives that may be needed to attain our objectives. The successful implementation of this important Budgetary measure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will not only help our Financial Services Sector move up the value chain of services, but will certainly generate high value-add jobs for the present and upcoming generations and improve the

overall living standards of our citizens from the associated multiplier and wealth-effects common to well-diversified international financial centres.

The reactivation of the Financial Services Promotion Agency (FSPA), under the aegis of my Ministry, is a must for our country. It is essential for us to emerge as a leading Financial Services Centre of the region and beyond.

Now, again, I heard hon. Uteem say that the budget of Rs75 m. is allocated to the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms. But, this is why the FSPA is being set up. They should take the trouble to go and read the proposed Finance Bill. It's all in there. And, at the end of the day, the FSPA will be operating under the aegis of the Ministry. I am not going to take Rs75 m. and put it in my pocket or buy a safe and put it in my house.

(Interruptions)

A revitalised FSPA will not only be involved in the promotion of Mauritius as a ground-breaking financial jurisdiction of substance, but it will also help carve out the future of our internal Financial Services Centre in terms of new product development and also the search for new prospective markets, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This Budgetary measure is a concrete illustration of this Government's determination to take our Financial Services Sector further to its next stage of development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, paragraph 101 of the Budget also refers to the setting up of a Financial Services Institute to provide specialised training courses that focus on the actual needs of the industry. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the election campaign when we were doing the *porte-à-porte* and meeting people in our Constituency, how many people did we meet who were young graduates who had a degree in law, in management, in finance but were sitting at home and did not have a job. There is a need for these people to have hands-on experience, for these people to be trained, but just having the qualification is one thing. Most of them, they were getting their parents to go and borrow money, get a loan to go and do a Master's degree. And where did they end up? In places like EILM University, D.Y Patil and all these '*universités marrons*' that we have seen, and that did not make things any better for them! But, we have to create this environment and get these people the experience as well as the qualifications that they have to be able to go and work, and this is what we are trying to do with the Financial Services Institute. Taking our Financial Services Sector to the next level of its development phase in terms of higher value-added services and greater focus on front-office operations definitely requires specialised human resource skills and capabilities which are currently not fully available.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the setting up of the Financial Services Institute will definitely help in addressing this resource gap and create an enabling environment conducive to the graduation of well-trained financial sector specialists, capable of bringing their contribution to the development of sophisticated financial products and activities in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the world of financial services is dynamic and innovation plays an important part in maintaining interest of stakeholders. The legislative framework will be reviewed along with other associated legislation which complement the work of the Financial Services Commission, the Financial Intelligence Unit and, of course, the ICAC. I have in mind here, the setting up of the Financial Crime Commission which we have talked about before.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the failed record of the previous Government is now historical. We must not let our people forget what they promised when they came to power. They told the people of this country that they will change our lives, but they failed and instead change the size of their coffers and their bank accounts - onshore and offshore.

This Government will put money in the pockets of the Mauritian people, not in the safes, not in suitcases, not in offshore accounts of flamboyant mistresses whether from Switzerland or even Carreau-Lalienne.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just for the sake of making comments, some hon. Members have stated that this Budget is just a catalogue of good intentions in which the poor and vulnerable will not benefit anything, or comments that the measures announced are simply *effets d'annonce*. One former Member of this House, known to have a sharp tongue, and normally wanders the streets of Quatre Bornes, has stated that the management of poverty is being privatised. Well, the measures announced in this Budget will materialise. We take the solemn commitment to live up to the expectations. This is our commitment to the nation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, still today accountability rests with those who form part of the previous Labour Government. They have to explain how they have spent billions of rupees contracted as loan from international funding agencies. They have to explain why, in spite of such unprecedented scale of borrowing, there have been no improvement in the infrastructure of this country and no improvement in the quality of life of our fellow citizens. They also have to explain why the infrastructure constructed are now collapsing and falling apart, like the MMM. They have to explain the state of the dereliction we have as legacy today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to triumph over an uncertain future with honour, decency and courage. This country belongs to all of us and all of us have the same rights irrespective of our origins. Politics have, so far, proved to be a divisive element in our society. It is our duty to give as legacy to our children and the younger generation a country with a sense of patriotism, a country where the sense of brotherhood and fraternity prevail.

Though, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bringing a convergence of views is not within my remit, I would appeal to the Opposition to give priority to reason. In his book, 'Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny', Noble Laureate, Amartya Sen, narrates the story of Akbar, the Great Mughal who was born a Muslim and died a Muslim, but insisted that, and I quote -

“Faith cannot have priority over reason, since one must justify – and if necessary reject – one’s inherited faith through reason’.

In reply to his detractors, Akbar replied as follows, and I quote –

“The pursuit of reason and rejection of traditionalism are so brilliantly patent as to be above the need for argument.

If traditionalism were proper, the prophets would merely have followed their own elders (and not come up with new messages).”

In the words of Amartya Sen, I quote –

“Reason has to be supreme, since even in disputing reason, we would have to give reason.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these words, the Budget before this House should, therefore, stand the test of reason and nothing else.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Sewocksingh!

(5.53 p.m.)

Mrs M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I intervene on the budget, I would like to seek your permission to present my sincere condolences to the shattered family of Keshnee Purmasing who passed away in a very tragic way a few days back. I present my deepest sympathy to the family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

I would, first of all, like to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his Budget Speech delivered on 23 March 2015. I also congratulate hon. Bhadain for his good governed speech.

The overarching message in that budget was that our country was at a crossroad, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And when we speak of crossroads, it is important for everyone in this House to realise that, never before, has our country been in such a situation. When Sir Anerood Jugnauth took over the country in 1982, he took the helm of the country at its lowest point post-independence. Our coffers were empty. We were a country at the brink of bankruptcy and not far from being failed State. We were not far from proving James Meade's predictions in 1961, that I quote –

“An independent Mauritius would fall into a Malthusian poverty crisis.”

Put into simple terms, in 1982, Mauritius had nothing to lose, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The situation today is different. In the last 35 years, our country has known an economic miracle, making us the envy of many a nation. We have had good times and bad times under various Governments, and being an open economy, we have to weather the storms of global economic crisis, tourism industry crisis, following outbreaks of pandemics like SARS, rising unemployment in our main export markets, and the ending of preferential treatments under the Sugar Protocol. But overall, we have been on an upward trend since 1982. I need not go into detail and identify who were the leaders who did most for our country during that period, and who were those who prevented this country from rising to even greater heights, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I need not do so, as the population proved it on 10 December 2014.

Today, we are at the crossroad because contrary to 1982, a lot is at stake. We have a diversified economy and many Mauritians enjoy a decent lifestyle. However, the drawings on the wall, or should I rather say the cracks in the building are visible.

There is rising unemployment, especially among the young and among women. We have over 3000 '*gradués chômeurs*'. Law and order is getting out of control. When we see Policemen who take an oath to serve and protect, acting like thugs and beating the lives out, there is something wrong in our society. And here, it is important to pay tribute to the large majority of Policemen who do a great job at keeping us safe, while putting themselves in harm's way.

When we see pockets of poverty like in Cité Anouska found in Constituency No. 17, where people live a life of extreme poverty, not knowing where their next meal will come from and while at the same time, there are thriving companies and individuals making

millions not far away - and here again I would like to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there is something wrong somewhere.

When we see politicians being caught with vast unexplained amount of wealth, and their inner circle making billions, it is the Mauritian taxpayer who is footing the bill indirectly. And I frankly do not understand to this day, how some otherwise very so-called competent people from the ranks of today's Opposition still associate themselves with the human symbol of an era that will go down in history for its unmatched levels of nepotism, abuse of power, vulgarity and disrespect for women. But we are in a democracy, and people are free to exercise their rights of judgment and association.

This is precisely what this Government has done through the Budget 2015-2016, presented by our *grand argentier*, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo. As a team, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have exercised our collective judgement in consulting with all stakeholders. And the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has come up with a budget that has Mauritians at the centre-stage. That is, putting our people first. A budget full of ambitions.

Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend this Budget for the following reasons –

1. We promised that the increase in pensions would be delivered without an increase in taxes. This Government stood by its word. We said that we would finance the increase first and foremost through a reduction in wastage of public funds. The salary compensation of Rs600 also counts. Since then, everyone knows about the scandalous deals and expenses where the past Government had been terribly *cavalier* at the best with public funds. Money that this Government will save and use to pay out the increase in pensions.

I would now like to talk about the budgetary measures designed to curb unemployment. There are 13 megaprojects which have been identified in the budget; 8 smart cities and 5 technopoles. It is clear that Government has sent a strong signal to the private sector. They will need to rise up to their responsibilities. These projects will provide an immediate boost to employment in the construction sector, but also in the peripheral industries. With the rise in disposable income that will naturally follow, people will have the ability to spend more on their needs and leisure, and hopefully save some money for the future. This will help overcome the retail slowdown in this country. The local shops, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, restaurants, and all sorts of small businesses would automatically benefit from this. It will boost economic growth, and, at the same time, give meaning to democratisation of the economy. It is

also important that I point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this budgetary measure has a vision well-aligned with the one hon. Xavier-Luc Duval presented in his last budget speech for the financial year 2014 when he was Minister of Finance. The vision was then to invest for development in infrastructure, geared towards better traffic flows, efficient, safe public transport and regular supply of water and electricity. And thus, the smart cities will help achieve this vision. Imagine a city producing its own energy from renewable sources, having the areas for work and play side by side. Imagine schools, hospitals and shopping malls all within walking distance. This will improve the quality of life as well.

In fact, if we judge by the official reaction of the private sector, we note their strong support of this approach. A support in stark contrast with the comments we just heard from the other side of the House.

The other measure that would curb unemployment and democratise the economy is the whole package provided to SMEs.

While shaking hands with the Minister of Finance after his speech on last 23 March, the phrase that I told him was that: “Hon. Minister, I am very pleased to go back to work into my business again.” Indeed, as hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo put it, the philosophy of this measure is that the Government is putting trust in Mauritians, especially the younger generation. This will create the conditions for true economic democratisation. We could also consider to integrate as condition within the 13 mega projects a request for the promoters or lead builders to use a certain percentage of SME providers within their value chain. This prescriptive approach, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the surest way to guarantee success for those SMEs. Naturally, these SMEs will need to deliver on quality and I am sure that the Government will leave no stone unturned to make sure that they deliver quality.

I would further suggest that we allow established companies participate in the share capital of such SMEs to a maximum of 49%. Government could then support the entrepreneur by advancing the funds making the remaining 51% of the capital. This should help promote a more inclusive and collaborative culture in business. And it would in the interest of the more established companies to succeed in the venture, resulting in tax free profits for the next 8 years.

It is in that spirit that we would have to look at mechanisms to prevent abuse, but I believe the Government will put all the gears together to promote SMEs; therein lies the second economic miracle.

As regard measures for the tourism industry, being myself an entrepreneur in the sector, I welcome the increase in the budget of the MTPA to Rs560 m. this year. In this country, as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Xavier-Luc Duval has several times said: “*Quand le tourisme va bien, tout va bien.*” This shows how important the tourism industry is for our economy. It is one of the largest employers, largest foreign exchange earners, and will play a key role in making Mauritius the Regional Hub we want it to be. Some days back, the Minister of Tourism announced that there is a keen interest from China to increase regular flights to Mauritius, and this could prove an ideal transit point for Far East travellers to access Africa. Air access has long been an issue, and this Government is going further by ensuring airlines exercise their access rights. The increased connectivity between the Far East and Africa is what will take our country to the next level. This will increase the attractiveness of Mauritius as a Financial Services Hub where it would make sense of Far Eastern multinationals to set up their Regional Headquarters.

The project for classification of hotels will encourage *hôtelières* to keep maintaining, modernising and upgrading their products.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now talk about CSR. In my maiden speech, I laid emphasis on the Corporate Social Responsibility and I am glad today that it did not go “*dans l’oreille d’un sourd*”. The changes proposed in the budget are bold and have been welcomed by the private sector at large. We need to understand a few things here. The private sector will still have to contribute 2% of its taxable profits to CSR activities. However, we have found that substantial sums of money do not get invested in CSR, but rather get paid over to the MRA and end up in the Consolidated Fund. There is no question that the CSR framework has been largely ineffective in alleviating poverty. By removing the regulations, we enable companies to make a more direct impact.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some *poches de pauvreté* are found in our Constituency - Constituency No. 17 - Curepipe/Midlands. At long last, the Marshall Plan will make us able to work together with the corporate world in a true apolitical partnership, with the sole focus of improving the lives of those most in need. I will recommend that a framework be put in place to clarify the parameters within which companies can perform their CSR activities. This

is important, as we would not want the increased freedom of companies to result in MRA actions and assessments resulting from difference in appreciation as to what constitutes CSR and what does not.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I salute the measure proposed by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development geared towards increasing the ratio of renewable energy by 35% and above by 2025; a measure where households would be able to deduct the purchase value of their solar energy units from their chargeable income. This will give a boost to renewable energy consumption, and alleviate the pressure on our economy and environment. It will also give a boost to the photovoltaic industry in Mauritius with the associated job creation. In itself, it will help democratise the economy. I, therefore, hope that the CEB will quickly invest in the distribution grid to allow household to sell back their excess electricity to the CEB.

Last but not least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bold measures have been taken in the budget, for example, to ban usage of plastic bags in Mauritius; no to the '*nation zougadère*' culture, the six cubic metres of water free of charge. All this shows the determination that this Government has to bring a brighter future for our country.

We are particularly happy, proud and at ease today with this Government team we have formed, a team called '*Lepep*' which is by '*Lepep*' and for '*Lepep*'. Not only are our visions broadly similar, but we speak as people of action.

The roads might differ, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but the destination is one. Our country is at a crossroad. We have a chance ahead of us to make history, and by 'we', I mean hon. Members from both sides of the House. There will be criticisms from the Opposition and rightfully so. It is their role to keep Government accountable. But more importantly, let us criticise and offer alternative solutions. There has been a deep shift in mentalities on the ground. People are conscious that they all need to chip in and help take our country forward. It is up to us elected officials to make sure we serve in the best interests of Mauritius. Inclusiveness and social justice, strong institutions and good governance are the ingredients that will make the country a model to follow.

The times ahead are challenging, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Together we turn our sleeves and change the fate of our country for the better.

This is a feel good factor Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Thank you.

(6.11 p.m.)

The Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management (Mr R. Dayal): Mr Deputy Speaker, despite the legacy of a difficult economic situation left by the previous Government, the Minister of Finance has managed to craft a budget that lays down the foundation of a sustainable society for a brighter and more prosperous future where meritocracy, democracy, transparency, good governance, social justice, safety and security, peace and prosperity prevail. This Budget reflects the expectations of the nation.

We have to congratulate the Rt. hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Leader of the House; hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo and all those who are involved in the crafting of this budget for their wisdom and vision in presenting an inspiring, caring and courageous Budget. The hon. Minister of Finance has presented this Budget in a context where the country was facing a very high debt where almost all sectors of our economy reached alarming level and were suffering; where investors were losing trust and hesitated to invest to boost the economy.

Specifically where the former alliance declined to offer a reasonable financial support to workers of the Sugar Industry and to Senior Citizens, handicaps and all those benefiting social aids a time where majority of Mauritians were unable to obtain a budget for their daily basic needs. Unemployment was at its peak at all levels of the society including professionals like doctors, dentists, engineers and graduates. Social and economic fabrics were disturbed at alarming levels.

In spite of supporting all Mauritian families for a total subsidy for examination fees and without eliminating and disturbing the fabric of the welfare state, the hon. Minister of Finance, through his Budget, has strengthened the trust of the people for better days, coming with gigantic efforts for the eradication of social and economic injustices, preparing a youth for future challenges and building a brighter Mauritius through the creation of wealth and opportunities for prosperity with sustainable development whilst protecting the environment.

As regards Law and Order, the advent of a Police Academy will pave the way for much institutional reforms in the Police force. I have to reiterate that I had advocated the creation of a Police Academy as Commissioner of Police as far back as 1995. Since then, the population has been waiting for a Police Academy to upgrade policing knowledge and skills through the process of lessons learnt. I am pleased to note that most dimensions of

sustainable development have been spelt out in this Budget, contrary to what the Opposition believes!

This Budget has also created the enabling conditions to foster the quality of development that will benefit all in an equitable manner and can indeed be referred to as a Budget for a “*projet de société*”. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are now beyond ‘wake up’ calls and ‘talks’. This Budget is in fact, calling us to engage into immediate action. Allow me to highlight some of the bold measures announced -

- (i) On the economic front, this Budget will stimulate the economy through investment and creation of employment in key productive sectors. In this vein, valorising SMEs as the backbone of a robust and resilient economy will empower our people, create jobs and give Mauritius the competitive edge that it requires to face globalisation.

The creation of 13 mega projects is rightly commendable as it will additionally support the creation of employment in highly productive sectors, ensure employability and bring Foreign Direct Investment. In addition, the transformation of Port Louis harbour into a regional hub will be an all-encompassing facility which will create employment, develop our ocean economy, promote tourism and be a show case in the region for a modern and state-of-the-art port.

- (ii) On the social front, this Budget has left no stone unturned. The House will agree that a healthy population is a *sine qua non* condition for sustainable development. Rightfully, with an investment of more than Rs9 billion in the health sector, this Government will considerably improve the quality of health services for the benefit of our population and subsequently on the development of our country. Likewise, a highly educated, skilled and well informed population is imperative to sustain our efforts for economic development. I, therefore, applaud the high investment made in the education sector at all levels including support for capacity building. Environmental issues in connection with the 60th celebration of the Earth day was at the seat of the Royal College Curepipe with the full support of the management and student alike will definitely increase the versatility of our youth.

- (iii) On the environmental sustainability front, I am particularly impressed by the bold measures that are indeed breakthroughs in environmental planning, never heard before! The smart city concept will bring a total revolution in the way we live. These smart cities will enable us adopt sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption

patterns. They will provide the proper setting for waste minimisation and recycling, composting, rainwater harvesting and modern communication technology. They will generate their own resources in terms of energy and water; promote modern and sustainable mobility and reduce traffic congestion across the island. After so many years of procrastination on the issue of plastic bags by the previous Government, this Government has been bold enough to outright ban plastic bags. Thank you, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo! Hazardous waste management was rarely addressed in previous budgetary exercises. Again thank you! We are squarely addressing the sensitive issue of hazardous waste management. Third thank you! We will equally deal with the longstanding problem of asbestos in public buildings. I will continue thanking him.

(Interruptions)

But, I better stop here. For the past decade the water sector was always neglected. However, it is a fact that water scarcity periods are becoming more prolonged and causing serious inconveniences to numerous families. The sustained provision of Rs20 billion over the coming 8 years under the Public Sector Investment Programme bears testimony to the firm intention of this Government to address both water demand and supply. This Budget is also investing massively in renewables for the solar water heaters in households and SMEs as well as other equipment to optimise use of natural resources.

- (iv) Last but not least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without equity, sustainable development will be a vain word. The Marshall Plan announced in the Budget will be the decisive enabler to tackle poverty and social exclusion. The vision of this Government is to address the root cause of poverty by investing in sustainable solutions and empowering the vulnerable group so that the latter can in turn contribute to the development of the country. In this endeavour, Government will harness the support of both the civil society and the private sector to do their share of Corporate Social Responsibility. I am convinced that by effectively addressing the poverty issue, we will not only reduce the many ills of society but we will also solve a number of environmental problems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now speak on the measures that have been put forth to enable my Ministry to better manage our environment. I am pleased to note that this Budget has charted the way for a cleaner, greener and safer Mauritius.

First, this Budget has shown the highest level of political commitment for environment and sustainable development through the revival of the National Environment Commission (NEC) which is the pivotal body under the Environment Protection Act. The House will note that environment is a cross-cutting sector and environment-related issues fall under the purview of different institutions. So far, there has been inadequate high level policy coordination to unlock difficult and challenging issues. The NEC, which is chaired by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, will, therefore, provide firm policy orientations and directives from the highest level to ensure coordination, synergy among all stakeholders and achievement of set national environmental targets.

Pollution Control & Prevention

Pollution prevention and control is at the heart of the protection of our environment. With the emerging environmental challenges, the existing enforcement and monitoring mechanisms in place need to be strengthened. My Ministry, in this Budget, will thus -

- review the Environment Protection Act, and a number of relevant regulations and stricter control will be applied;
- empower enforcing agencies to act promptly, and
- strengthen the capacity of the National Environmental Laboratory of my Ministry with additional recruitment, by acquiring modern equipment to enable better monitoring of the state of the environment and for timely decision-making.

Economic instruments to manage the environment

Government will also have recourse to economic instruments to enhance the management of the environment. In this context -

- the scheme put in place for collection and recycling of PET bottles will be revised based on the financial incentive provided in the Budget, and
- similarly, we will closely follow up on the new Carbon Dioxide Levy/Rebate Scheme which aims at mitigating air pollution and climate change impacts.

Environment Impact Assessment as an environmental planning tool

We all know that urbanisation leads to a growing demand for resources, energy, potable water, and efficient transport. The development of new cities requires an integrated environmental management approach to meet social and economic objectives without adversely impacting on the environment. My Ministry, through the EIA mechanism, will

ensure that the smart cities are designed accordingly as per the spirit of the Ministry of Finance and the Leader of the House.

The smart cities will thus be environment friendly, generate their own resources in terms of energy and water, promote eco-friendly practices such as waste minimisation, reuse, recycling, composting, energy efficiency, renewable energy, green building practices and rainwater harvesting at the project design stage itself.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

The coastal zone of Mauritius is a key resource. Intense pressure from sea and land-based activities is degrading the coastal environment and threatening to prevent its full economic potential from being realised.

Additionally, sea level rise and wave surges are putting coastal areas at stake and are a threat to coastal inhabitants. One of the most visible impacts is the accelerated rate and magnitude of beach erosion - our beach erosion.

With a view to addressing this acute problem, the Budget provides that my Ministry will be undertaking, on a continuous basis, a coastal rehabilitation programme to restore the beach shoreline. Protection comprises both hard and soft measures. Sites for coastal protection are being selected on a priority basis depending on the gravity and urgency of works required based on the recommendations made under different expert studies.

Coastal protection and rehabilitation works have been undertaken at many critical eroded sites, namely Grand' Baie, Pointe aux Sables, Poudre d'Or, Cap Malheureux beach adjacent to the cemetery, Quatre Soeurs, and Grand River South East. Currently, works are on-going at Baie du Cap and Bain Boeuf. In addition, soft measures consisting of beach nourishment and flexible revetment have been carried out at other eroded public beaches in order to rehabilitate and maintain sandy beaches. Additionally, this year, works will start at Le Morne village, La Prairie, and La Preneuse public beaches.

It is, therefore, encouraging to note that the sum of Rs116 m. has been earmarked in the 2015-2016 Budget for the rehabilitation of our beaches affected by erosion and additionally making them more appealing for tourists and local beach users.

Climate Change

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now address Climate Change. All the latest global observations and reports on the climate change confirm that the indicators are in red, with new records being reached fast. We are in a global urgency to deal with climate change.

My Ministry is already implementing a number of activities in relation to climate change, namely through -

- (i) the formulation of a Third National Report to mainstream climate change issues into relevant social, economic, scientific and environmental policies, programmes and strategies;
- (ii) the formulation of a Low Carbon Development Strategy and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions to mainstream low emission development, and
- (iii) formulation of a Climate Change Bill to better address adverse effects of climate change in terms of adaptation and mitigation. This Bill will honour our obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, and provide the framework to make Mauritius a climate change resilient country and achieve a low carbon economy.

This Budget has sent a very strong signal regarding the commitment of the Government to further our actions and enhance our resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The new impetus given to the energy sector through the setting up of a Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency will significantly help increase the share of renewables in the energy mix to 35% or even higher by 2025 and reduce our dependency on coal. Likewise, the promotion of green technology equipment through an accelerated income tax depreciation provision for green investment will contribute to climate change mitigation.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

The House will agree that our current mode of consumption and production are fast depleting our non-renewable resources. The pollution and waste generated are also exceeding the planet's carrying capacity.

In this regard, my Ministry will ensure, in this Budget, that sustainable consumption and production patterns are mainstreamed across key sectors of the economy.

The following actions will be undertaken -

- fact sheets on sustainable consumption and production will be disseminated to various target groups to encourage environmental stewardship;
- SMEs will be encouraged to adopt resource efficiency through the Switch Africa Green Initiative, which aims at greening the manufacturing, agricultural and tourism sectors by promoting resource use efficiency and supporting local green entrepreneurship in starting up and developing business avenues, and
- the current national programme on sustainable consumption and production will be reviewed to align itself with the new framework of actions proposed by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Environmental Education and Awareness

Our ultimate goal is to make the citizens of Mauritius adopt more sustainable, environment-friendly and healthy ways of living for an improved quality of life.

To this end, my Ministry will improve its outreach programmes on pertinent environmental issues. More training programmes with community/social leaders, youth, women and NGOs will be conducted across the island to transform the population into an ecologically responsible nation. The sensitisation campaigns are carried out, using various communication tools such as delivery of talks; development and distribution of materials such as pamphlets, posters; setting up of exhibitions.

Furthermore, in line with our pledge to foster a Cleaner, Greener and Safer Mauritius, my Ministry is also conducting sensitisation of the 360,000 households of the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues on the sound management of household chemicals and good environmental behaviours. In this spirit, some 50,000 pamphlets will be distributed in this Budget, and the House is in presence of, at least, one of it.

My Ministry is also involving all stakeholders, including the public authorities, the private sector, schools, hotels, industries, the civil society and the public sector on an island-wide embellishment programme "*Embellir Maurice*".

Upgrading physical environment

The ambition of this Government is to maintain a healthy environment for a healthy population. In this context, we will intensify cleaning campaigns, greening and embellishment of strategic sites to maintain a healthy living environment for our citizens. To restore the pristine state of our environment, not only trees will be planted and green spaces created, but I also intend to create endemic gardens and '*parcours de santé*' in public areas to inculcate respect for our biodiversity. And with CSR, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 20 such projects will be launched in this Budget itself in all the 20 Constituencies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not forgotten what hon. Uteem said. Hardening of targets for all landslides prone areas are in the pipeline in this Budget itself. I will now address the issue of Solid and Hazardous Waste Management. The subject of solid waste management is one that has, so far, been dealt with in a linear manner, that is, goods are produced or imported, consumed and then disposed of, and we start all over again. Collectively, we are generating around 450,000 tonnes of solid wastes annually which require

an extent of nearly 3 hectares of land at an average depth of 20 to 25 metres for landfilling. This leads to loss of useful land and materials and also generation of gas and leachate that will have to be managed for many years to come. The quantities of wastes are increasing annually at a rate of nearly 2 %, and a Business as Usual scenario will lead to the waste quantities reaching 500,000 tonnes by year 2020.

This will require more land and more funds to collect, transport and dispose the wastes generated. If we want to prevent this scenario, we have to bring drastic changes in the way we are managing our waste. Acting for the future is a change journey that should start now. And in this Budget we are starting! The change journey starts with a complete shift in our mindset from simple waste disposal to waste avoidance and prevention. Here, I wish to quote Benjamin Franklin who once said that ‘An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure’. This is why, I am putting a lot of emphasis on waste minimisation, recycling and composting based on this budget allocation.

- i. The banning of plastic bags is one of the many bold decisions that Government is taking to the cause of waste prevention and avoidance. Plastic bags are convenient, but they have a cost to society and the environment as they pose serious risks to ecosystems when discarded haphazardly in the open environment and they are also filled with additives that do not have a safety record. Banning of plastic bags will open a window of opportunities for the production of alternative long-lasting bags. I am convinced that entrepreneurs will take full advantage of the incentives provided in this Budget for SMEs to engage in the production of alternatives to plastic bags.
- ii. We also have a potential of recovering 250,000 tonnes from the wastes being disposed for recycling and production compost. However, this will only happen with adequate infrastructure, enabling factors such as legislation, economic instruments and through trial testing phases. The first phase of this ambitious waste diversion programme will be in the Vacoas-Phoenix region
- iii. with the setting up of a Material Recycling Facility to service this Municipality and the Municipality of Curepipe. After assessing the outcomes of this first phase, the project will be extended to other regions of the island and this is in this Budget.

While this will initially require capital investments, they are insignificant in comparison to the costs of doing nothing which can have serious environmental

consequences. Furthermore, savings in transportation and landfill costs will far outweigh the initial capital investments in the years to come.

- iv. As a small island, we are also very concerned with hazardous wastes being generated. The quantities generated are not sizeable to invest in an on-site treatment and disposal facility. We are thus going ahead with the setting up of an interim hazardous waste facility whereby such wastes will be characterised, packed, properly labelled, stored and exported for treatment. It is expected that this facility will be operational in April 2016. The interim storage facility will provide waste generators with an outlet that will be safely controlled and managed. My Ministry is currently revising the regulations pertaining to hazardous wastes and also working closely with hazardous waste generators to ensure that these wastes are safely stored pending the coming into operation of this facility. Budget allocation has already been made in this Budget itself.
- v. The problems associated with end-of-life electric and electronic goods have been globally recognised in the past few years. In 2012, a total of 25,000 tonnes of Electric and Electronic Goods were imported in Mauritius. The amount of electric and electronic-waste in Mauritius ranges between 7,000 and 8,000 tonnes per annum. However, only a small fraction (2 to 5 %) of it gets dismantled and treated and/or landfilled, about 0.4 %.

Presently, we have reviewed the existing legal frameworks and institutional set-ups to formulate first recommendations on policies and strategies as well as economic instruments and financing mechanisms. Pending the finalisation of this National E-Waste Policy, my Ministry is planning to collect e-wastes at household level for recycling purposes. This will clear the backlog of e-wastes currently being stored by householders.

In order to sensitise the public about the household E-wastes Collection Scheme to be carried out with the collaboration of Local Authorities, my Ministry proposes to conduct an awareness campaign through media and through distribution of about 300,000 flyers to householders via the Local Authorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to the management of public beaches, I have noted with concern -

- Only 55 out of 112 public beaches are provided with toilet facilities.
- There is inadequate security, lighting and safety on the beaches.

- There is a problem of easy access to our beaches or in some cases access is being denied to beach users.
- Presence of stray dogs on beaches, which is a nuisance to both Mauritians and tourists.

In this Budget, my Ministry will take various measures to make sure that our beaches are more attractive and safer for all beach users. The following will be implemented -

- Preparation of a Beach Management Plan to ensure an integrated approach in the management of beaches.
- Provision of toilet facilities in the remaining 57 public beaches - where such facilities are not available - in a phased manner, starting with some 15 in this financial year 2015-2016.
- Enhancement of surveillance and enforcement on public beaches will be enhanced with the support of qualified lifesavers from the Police Force, *Police de l'Environnement* and the National Coast Guard. In this context, Vigilance Towers and hotlines will be set up on some highly frequented public beaches in the first instance.
- There is a proliferation of commercial activities such as transacts and hawking which reduces space capacity for optimum utilisation of our beaches by the public and tourist alike.
- Review of the legal and institutional framework of the Beach Authority to respond more effectively to the new challenges and opportunities facing development on public beaches. Removal of obstacles and obstructions on the public beaches so as to allow a free access at all times to beach users.
- Relocation of unnecessary structures in the beach front to dedicated areas.

Past events as well as future threats demonstrate the need for a multi-hazard approach to disaster management in the Republic of Mauritius. We have taken commitment towards a comprehensive and integrated approach to risk management.

Give timely warning and alert to the first responders and the general public against hydro-meteorological events.

The NDRRMC will also closely align its actions based on resources provided in this Budget on the outcome of the 3rd United Nations World Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan (also known as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

2015). In fact, I participated in this Summit. And I must, because of time constraint, skip to the concluding part of my address.

Let me say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the pursuit of sustainable development requires that attention be paid to the interactions between the environment, society and the economy. As a result, every small step towards sustainable development should be of value and needs to be assessed in relation to the scale of the long-term challenges.

We are in a state of urgency. We need now to ensure that all our efforts are streamlined so as to be more proactive and efficient; we need to optimise on our scarce resources, manpower, natural resources, infrastructure and energy. This only will enable us sustain the development that we need for our fellow citizens, without jeopardising our legacy to the future generations.

Thank you.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gobin!

(6.43 p.m.)

Mr M. Gobin (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the hon. Minister leaves the House, I will seize this opportunity to thank him on my own name and also on behalf of the constituents of Constituency No. 13. Hon. Minister, I have had the opportunity of telling you that outside the House, I will seize this opportunity now to say it here officially. I know you have been physically elected in Constituency No. 7, but spiritually you were elected in Constituency No. 13.

(Interruptions)

I see that you have not omitted to include Constituency No. 13 in your Budget Speech. This takes me to the very first issue I want to talk about. I don't want to talk about the former Government because otherwise I will have to speak volumes about it. Let me speak about what we proposed to do in this Government. We are a Government of action. The past is the past. Of course, we are going to clean up the mess. Certainly! What I wanted to say is that the number one priority - and I see Constituency No. 13 is on that list - is the question of poverty alleviation. Out of the 38 *poches de grande pauvreté* listed in the annex to the Budget Speech, two are in Constituency No. 13. That is, EDC Camp Diable and EDC Batimaraïs. Only a visit to those two places will show the harsh reality which the citizens of Constituency No. 13 face, and I am sure it is the same harsh reality in all the 38 places listed.

As a Government of action, it is not only a question of Budget Speech. In the first three months, there was a clean-up campaign spearheaded by my learned friend and hon. Minister Bhadain. We are all with you, hon. Minister in this clean-up campaign, because it is a huge mess. The more we dig, the more we find. But also, parallel to the clean-up campaign, there is a personal commitment of the hon. Ministers in Cabinet on poverty alleviation. In three months, we have had in Constituency No. 13, the visit of three hon. Ministers and I seize this opportunity here to thank them, hon. Mrs Perraud, hon. Sawmynaden and hon. Roopun.

(Interruptions)

And a fourth one added to the list, hon. Collendavelloo, yesterday. They were not courtesy calls; it shows the personal commitment of Members of Cabinet to address the plight of our citizens and I want to remind hon. Members and also the public at large, through this august Assembly, how do you explain to a worker of the tea industry in Bois Chéri who earns Rs7.90 for every kilogram of tea leaves plucked? Rs7.90 in 2015! That's not enough even to buy a morning newspaper. This is still the situation. How do you explain to those workers about the millions of rupees squandered? When we heard hon. Collendavelloo this morning, 35% variation, a variation of Rs1 billion on one contract, I have never heard of that! How do we explain to all those citizens of this country? How are we going to improve their lot? And this is the very first difficulty that this Government has faced.

We were faced with 10 years of a rotten Government. From the double taxation issue with India to the *briani* seller in Quatre Bornes! Nothing done! There was a gentleman, a Member of the Labour Party elected somewhere, I think, in Flacq and he was saying that publicly on a private radio station, they wanted to amend the PSC regulations to recruit their friends and then, when he was caught up in an inquiry, he invented some sort of an explanation and he got away.

That was the difficulty this Government had to face. With a public debt reaching 61%, I am laying the context in which this Budget has come and after reading this Budget Speech, I can only congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and, of course, all the Members of Cabinet who have participated in the drafting of the Budget Speech for coming up with this plan to improve the lot of our citizens.

As regards poverty alleviation, how do you tackle this question of poverty? That worker from the tea industry, he is most probably not the owner of any plot of land himself, not the owner of the house, he lives in rented properties. How do you give him a loan to empower him? No financial institution will ever help such a person.

This is why I come immediately to that number one fundamental announcement: the creation of the SME bank. We lay a lot of emphasis on this and we have very high hopes on the performance of the new SME bank and this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we firmly believe, will empower the citizens of this country. I spoke, the last time I was on my feet in the House, of the paradigm shift. This is precisely the paradigm shift where we transform a jobseeker into a job provider himself. If his enterprise succeeds, he will become an employer himself. I'll come back to that Cité EDC Batimaraï. We have seen, there are living examples where citizens have on their own private initiative between family and friends, gathered some money and started a small business; some pack 'samoussas' and sell, some do it with some 'sev', as we say it. They need some minimum capital just to buy a refrigerator or a refrigerated vehicle to transport and sell to the supermarket, but they cannot find the capital. This is where the SME bank will provide them with a solution and I thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Government, more particularly the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, for having brought such a measure in the Budget.

With the SME, poverty alleviation and the creation of the SME bank show how we have put such emphasis *sur l'entrepreneuriat*. There is not only the question of the SME bank now. What comes next? Once you have the bank, and then, what? Should the entrepreneur run around and find that he has to get the licence from the Local Authority, Municipality or District Council, then the Fire Services, the Police Department, his neighbours and then the Registrar of Businesses in Port Louis? He has to file the annual returns, to queue up in January to pay his Rs2,500 to the Registrar of Companies. Even before starting his business, the entrepreneur gives up.

The second measure which comes after the SME bank is the one-stop shop. That has been announced by the previous Government, I don't even recall when, but it was never put in place. In this Budget Speech, not only have we announced it, but we have even announced where it is going to be, how it is going to function and what are the measures, that is, for example, the omnibus licence, the abolition of the requirement to file annual returns, no balance sheet except, of course, the filing of certain records. It is making matters much simpler for the entrepreneur to start his business.

The third step is about trade facilitation which goes in the same line. What do these measures show? They show that there is a clear vision where we want to go. It is not *une effet d'annonce*, but full *accompagnement* of the entrepreneur. What is the next step?

Once the entrepreneur stands up on his feet, starts his enterprise, becomes an employer; this will have *un effet boule de neige*. He will become, most probably, a first-time owner of

his home. In this same Budget Speech, as a first-time home owner, he will have an increase in tax benefits. He will most probably be living, working and enjoying in the coming smart cities. There is an alignment of thought, an alignment of ideas and this is what I want to highlight. It is not reasonable just to criticise for the sake of criticising. I have heard my learned friend at the Bar, hon. Uteem. I am not at all worried about the dam in Rivière des Anguilles. I know it is going to be constructed. I recall the answer provided by hon. Collendavelloo a few weeks back; that money was provided by *l'Agence Française de Développement*. It lapsed because of the lashes of the previous Government. Readily available money from *l'Agence Française de Développement* lapsed.

(Interruptions)

Even then it was not Government money. It was *l'Agence Française*. Now, when we show our record of three months and we will show our record of transparency and good governance, international organisations will finance it. Not only the dam in Rivière des Anguilles, but elsewhere! All the drains that have been covered up with concrete everywhere will have to be looked into. How can we explain to the inhabitants of Rivière du Poste who today see the bridge of Rivière du Poste crumbling because of a problem of drainage? Concrete everywhere! *Bétonner! En plus de cela bétonner* with contracts with 35% of variation. In this context, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can only say thank you once again and advise all those who are reading the Budget. *Ce n'est pas un budget à lire. C'est un budget à étudier.*

(Interruptions)

Il faut étudier ce budget. See the vision and the implementation how it is going to come. There are measures of implementation that have been set out at the back and I do not want to go through them. Those reasonable enough will understand how we are going to implement it.

Just before resuming my seat, I just wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Finance and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister to one matter which is quite worrying for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs to be; it is the question of the Mauritius Credit Information Bureau, the MCIB of the Central Bank. That MCIB holds, if I may say so, something called a blacklist of individuals and corporate bodies who have defaulted some time or the other in the repayment of some loans. Entrepreneurs very often face this difficulty because of their names appearing on that list, they have nowhere to go. We will have to review the functioning so that the MCIB does not adversely affect, now, the coming into effect and the operations of

the new SME bank. They have to be given a second chance and if the MCIB comes in their way, we will have to review the situation.

I will also highlight the need for interagency cooperation. We have reached a stage in the development of this country that all the agencies - most if not all- are already in existence. I take the example of the financial services. All agencies are in place, but we face the situation where sometimes in some sectors there is a lack of interagency cooperation. Sometimes it is because of personal ego or because of institutional ego: one was created before the other; one is perceived as more independent than the other and this sometimes blocks the cooperation. We will have to review this. For example, the creation of a Financial Crime Commission is perhaps a solution for interagency cooperation in the financial services sector, but this is not only a question of financial services, I am just highlighting this for the attention of the hon. Minister of Finance and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister so that we can implement fully all that we have announced.

I will end where I started: the question of poverty alleviation. We have heard a lot and it is now that we discover there are 38 pockets of poverty and these 38 have been listed. I say it again; this Budget Speech *doit être étudié*. The question of *parrainage* and the 38 pockets of poverty are at paragraphs 173 and 176 at page 30 of the Budget Speech. I would quote paragraph 173 –

“Madam Speaker, I would like to develop a new concept to allow for institutions that are contributing to CSR to take under their wings those unsustainable pockets of poverty in our country. I am speaking here of the concept of ‘*parrainage*’. An indicative list of 38 pockets of poverty is at Annex.”

The indicative list of 38 pockets of poverty is linked with the *parrainage*. We did not say there are only 38 pockets of poverty in the whole of Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

The 38 pockets of poverty will benefit from the *parrainage*.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Gobin: On the question of *parrainage*...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, please!

Mr Gobin: ... *démission du gouvernement* or a question of *privatisation de la pauvreté*. What not!

(Interruptions)

Incompréhensible, M. le president! Those companies pay 15% tax plus the CSR. Is it Government money that we are taking out of the taxpayers money? We just want them to invest priority in those 38 pockets of *grande pauvreté*. This is another one which is at paragraph 176 - '*poches de grande pauvreté*'. The 200 and so pockets of poverty still exist, of course, but the priority for the *parrainage* will be for the 38.

Of course, the *parrainage* will take place in collaboration with people on the ground, inhabitants and village councillors. Very soon, we are going to have, most probably, elections and we will have the right persons in those councils and we will really bring development to the doorstep of the needy ones.

(Interruptions)

I have been served with my notice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank you. I thank everybody and resume my seat.

At this stage, Madam Speaker took the Chair.

(7.04 p.m.)

Mr R. Rampertab (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the floor tonight in this August National Assembly to address this House after our first great Budget Speech which was delivered by our Minister of Finance, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo in the last sitting.

Before I start my not too long delivery - as my Chief Whip has just sanctioned me on that - on the Budget Speech I would like to congratulate the Leader of this House, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth for his 85th birthday which was greatly celebrated in Roches Noires last Sunday.

Madam Speaker, I must say that there was something very peculiar about the birthday celebration this time compared to last year. In fact, this time the cake was shared only by Sir Anerood Jugnauth and without even a shark to bite it despite being near the beaches of Roches Noires which is a very famous place and well-known by the whole population of Mauritius today.

Now Madam Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on the great Budget Speech made by hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Today, Madam Speaker, one of the challenges facing Mauritius is, as outlined in Chapter 5, page 11 of the Budget Speech, Training and Resource Development.

I must say that and we all know that there is a good educational system in Mauritius, but there is also a need to constantly review the system so as to facilitate access for all students to secondary and tertiary education. There has recently been a lack of public confidence in the tertiary education and this confidence needs to be restored.

Madam Speaker, the tertiary education sector has to be constantly reviewed so that it adapts to and answers the constantly changing market demands. It is an important sector that demands considerable funding by the Government, which has just been mentioned in our Budget, that is, over Rs80,000 to Rs100,000 per student per year. It also demands devotion, hard work and most importantly time at an important formative stage in the life of a student. Parents and students themselves need assurance that appropriate job opportunities are available on completion of the course of studies involving so much investment in terms of time and finance. There should be no speculation, Government must be aware, through proper planning of needs that will be available in the future.

Madam Speaker, perhaps we should look back at our history. Our country has cleverly retained positive elements of both French and British colonial cultures with emphasis on education in bilingual (French and English) cultures. Post independence Mauritius has pursued their vigorous British tradition of schooling and Mauritius has democratised and adapted education to suit ethnic needs to preserve and promote ancestral values emanating from both Western and Eastern civilisations.

The educational system has, by and large produced an educated workforce and an elite providing the necessary leadership. But it has also produced cultural elite that can bring positive contribution to the tourism sector. We should now broaden our horizon, Madam Speaker, and our multi-cultural, multi-lingual abilities needs to be properly tapped. Translation studies that can service the growing international television industry, film dubbing and generally translation at international conferences need to be tapped as well.

Successive Governments have encouraged inter-culturality and, in fact, done so in areas of public entertainment and social gathering. We should look at inter-culturality as a binding force not as a source of division.

Inter-culturality must become a Mauritian product, Madam Speaker. To start with, it promotes a sense of Mauritian identity conducive to patriotism and nation-building and

peaceful co-existence. It also encourages positive cross-communal factors like upward social and economic mobility. There is also the growth of a sense of equity that can contribute to social stability which in turn will encourage the nurture of democratic values by maintaining social harmony and capitalising on the strength of its ethnic diversity. Madam Speaker, Mauritius can foster a stable democratic political system and high quality institutions.

The activities of the proposed three campuses in our budget, namely, at Réduit, Montague Longue and Pamplemousses have to be constantly reviewed so that it answers the ever changing market demands of trained and skilled manpower.

Government is taking the right step in reviewing the role and functions of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development. It is time to put greater emphasis on training for trades that had increased demands associated with rise in standard of living. Electricians, plumbers, builders, bricklayers, decorators, carpenters, painters and stylish furniture makers, such industries associated with providing services to these areas must be encouraged.

Madam Speaker, again looking back at history, the boom in the domestic housing sector created a class of *masons*, *crépiseurs* and *décorateur en pierre volcanique*. We must look into this and encourage youngsters with the right aptitude to make careers in them. The domestic housing sector, Madam Speaker, has indeed a future in terms of investment, financial and skilled manpower.

Madam Speaker, I will raise another issue connected with education. But it is also linked with the Mauritian diaspora. In the years 1960's, 1970's and even early 80's Mauritius provided UK and many other countries with a lot of students mainly nursing. Our fellow Mauritians seem to have done reasonably well in the UK especially, where some have even excelled providing nursing services to the elderly and handicapped. We will soon have the growth of an ageing population in Mauritius. We can use the acquired skills and experiences of the Mauritian diaspora. As our Minister of Finance rightly said, encouragement should be given to them in Mauritius in terms of both finance and other help.

I will come to the Pamplemousses Campus, which the Government has a vision for, and which will offer courses in health care for nurses, technicians and trained personnel in the medical field, which is mostly welcome - I know that. The care industry for the elderly, if I may call it, is bound to grow, Madam Speaker. We must carefully plan and encourage it. We need to carefully plan for the care of our elderly. We will soon be elders; some very soon and

others soon after. Research in these areas must be encouraged, statistics must be compiled, and projection made with proper and appropriate arrangement. Otherwise, Madam Speaker, it will be a moral abdication. As a responsible, caring Government, we must act now.

The Montagne Blanche Campus, reserved for a Polytechnic offering courses, mainly in Tourism and Hotel Management is a warmly welcome venture, Madam Speaker. This is another sector that is bound to grow. Madam Speaker, we do not realise how lucky we are in Mauritius. We have the sun, the sea and the sand. We must by all means maintain them eco-wise. We must hand them in their proper appropriate state to our successors. Ecological studies must form part of the curriculum from pre-primary to the tertiary. Ecological care must become a part of our social habit.

Madam Speaker, I must also say that recent speedboats and sea accidents have given our tourism sector some concern. We must look into it and train our personnel properly, so that these kinds of things do not happen again. As we know, we rely a lot on foreign tourists who do bring in billions of rupees in foreign currencies and, as we all know, it is one of the most profitable industries today. It is our duty to make sure that those foreigners are safe in our country.

Madam Speaker, as a legal person myself, I feel called upon to draw the attention of all the authorities concerned to the deplorable conditions prevailing in connection with professional legal education in Mauritius. I must say, Madam Speaker, that vocational training of barristers, attorneys and notaries in Mauritius has many advantages, and many of our legal practitioners trained in Mauritius have excelled themselves in their respective fields. This vocational training in Mauritius also allows those who are financially not well off to pursue their ambition in a field in which they may have innate talents. However, Madam Speaker, the manner in which vocational training is being organised and conducted in Mauritius leaves much to be desired.

In a gist, the problem lies with the inadequate training which is dispensed to prospective barristers, attorneys and notaries. We all know in this House, for a number of years, the results of vocational examinations have been catastrophic and disheartening. In most years, only a couple of candidates out of some 70 or 80 or so have passed Barristers' exam, and the percentage of passes of Attorneys and Notaries has only been slightly higher.

The testimony of those who have not succeeded in those exams makes it clear that the reason behind so much failure is the dichotomy between training and examination. In other words, the students have been given academic lectures, generally speaking, and then been faced in the exam room with practical problems which they have never been taught to solve.

The situation was already bad when the courses were being dispensed by the Council of Legal Education itself. But since the University of Mauritius has taken over the training under the supervision of the Council of Legal Education, the situation has considerably worsened. *Comme on dit: sap dans carraille tombe dans difé*, as has been voiced out by many CLE students who have visited me lately.

I am given to understand that the lack of communication between the Council of Legal Education and the University of Mauritius has contributed to the deterioration mentioned above, and that this lack of communication is mostly due to the difficulty of communicating with the Chairman and members of the Council of Legal Education.

Imagine, Madam Speaker, a student being taught chemistry in a theoretical manner, and then at exam time being asked in the exam room to carry out practical exercises with Bunsen burners, test tubes, gases and what not. This is not an exaggerated analogy to what is happening to vocational students wishing to become legal practitioners.

Accordingly, Madam Speaker, I am making a vibrant appeal to all those concerned to look into the matter urgently. As a matter of fact, an amount of not less than Rs100,000 is being required by way of fees from every vocational student, and I am given to understand that the Council of Legal Education has been refusing lately to exercise its discretion to allow students who have not passed the exams previously to take those exams anew without following again the university course but paying the Rs100,000 fees.

Madam Speaker, some students and their parents have mortgaged their properties to take big loans amounting to millions of rupees to become graduates and try to get through the professional legal courses, but, unfortunately, nearly 90% of them are disappointed and still struggling to get through the professional exams conducted in Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, some have to go elsewhere, abroad and again spend a fortune to do their final law exams, and funnily enough they all come out with flying colours in their respective vocational exams. I feel sorry for those who cannot afford that extra bit of money to fulfil their dream of becoming a legal practitioner. Today, I can say that these exams which are being conducted in Mauritius, failure is guaranteed and the exception is to pass the exams, and there is no distinction between working hard or not. I urge, Madam Speaker, that those persons who are involved in deciding the future of these hard-working students do justice to them.

Madam Speaker, before ending, I would like to quote the great writer and philosopher Rousseau who said –

“Children are only empty barrels when they are born. It is our responsibility and duty to fill those barrels with the right ingredients and contents and prepare them for their adult life.”

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Tarolah!

(7.21 p.m)

Mr K. Tarolah (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, let me seize this opportunity to wish the Rt. hon. Prime Minister happy birthday, and we pray to the Almighty for the blessing that all the happiness and good health be bestowed upon him.

Madame la présidente, je voudrais commencer par féliciter chaleureusement l'honorable Lutchmeenaraidoo, ministre des Finances et du Développement économique ainsi que le Premier ministre pour ce budget qui est *another building block at the crossroad* pour une Ile Maurice pour tous.

Madam Speaker, let me start my intervention on this very daring Budget, I must say.

Je dois dire qu'il fallait beaucoup d'imagination pour laquelle je félicite l'honorable Ministre des Finances, encore une fois, ainsi que le Premier Ministre, et toute son équipe qui a travaillé avec lui, parce que, sûrement, il y a des penseurs au niveau du gouvernement qui ont fait beaucoup de travail.

This Budget, Madam Speaker, comes at an important time at the crossroad in the history of our country. In fact, we came to power a few months ago under the Prime Ministership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. We have seen so many problems cropping up for which the country itself was not responsible.

Je dois, encore une fois, dire que c'est un budget - un coup de maître - avec des mesures encore plus révolutionnaires. Bravo! C'est formidable! Cela va faire bouger les choses et les mesures vont devenir aujourd'hui une réalité. Des mesures révolutionnaires pour les gens, surtout pour ceux qui sont en difficulté.

Un budget nous donne les orientations, nous donne les moyens pour agir selon un programme établi pour chaque ministère, mais le budget est aussi là malheureusement pour corriger les erreurs du passé, commises par nos prédécesseurs comme le Ring Road, le Terre Rouge/Verdun sans faire ressortir le fameux Bagatelle Dam, pour considérer les problèmes récents, de l'heure, qui sont à l'horizon et pour préparer une riposte à ces problèmes. Ce qui fait que le budget est aussi un exercice pour préparer l'avenir.

Il fait tout son possible pour que la population soit la plus heureuse possible dans la conjoncture actuelle, mais il fait tellement bien que la population risque de croire que tout va à merveille, c'est facile. Mais ce n'est pas du tout cela, il faut tenir le poêlon pour savoir combien c'est chaud et comment il faut faire.

Madam Speaker, it is essential that we have a clear vision of the future we want for our nation. The belief for a policy of national sharing is as crucial for maintaining social justice. Considering the prevalence of so many pockets of poverty in our country, the idea of *parrainage* is very much welcomed. Having a look at the list of regions among the 38 pockets of poverty, we can notice that the largest number of households is in the region of Cité CHA, Bel Air with 321 households. This specific region had been visited in the past by the Leader of the MSM, hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth on the occasion of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the MSM party. He is fully aware of the conditions of living and the state of their housing units. The inhabitants of the Cité CHA, Bel Air will soon be knowing a change in the environment and are very thankful to the Leader of the MSM and the hon. Minister of Finance for the consideration given to them in this very first Budget of *l'Alliance Lepep*.

Madam Speaker, shelter is a basic need; a need that we all share, and one which is essential to a heavily populated life. Instead of providing either *boîtes allumettes* or '*kazot poule*' to poor people, Government has thus embarked on a number of projects with new housing programmes which will provide affordable houses to those needy families, without forgetting the concept of '*roti, kapra aur makaan*'.

Madam Speaker, let us come to the primary education, where we know that our biggest challenge is to tackle the rate of failure at CPE. The predecessors, Madam Speaker, have, over the year, been toying with the idea of reforms and remedial action. They addressed this problem but they met with very little success.

Madam Speaker, with the necessary support of this Government, the decision has been taken to introduce the necessary reforms that would give a new orientation to the whole primary sector for provision of quality education to every child, not only in terms of learner academic achievement, but also to give a new impetus to the holistic development and integral development of the child, as we say.

The Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centre est quelque chose de nouveau. C'est une école spécialisée pour les handicapés, autrement capables et cela pourrait être un enfant *who is attending a school somewhere, run by* les Forces Vives. Ces enfants ont besoin parfois de choses extrêmement adaptées à eux. Pour cela, ces enfants peuvent utiliser

les services de ce *Special Education Needs Resource and Development Centre*. Ils sont pris en charge à partir de l'école où ils sont et ils sont emmenés à ces écoles spécialisées.

Madam Speaker, the purpose is simple. These centres provide specialised support, specialised equipment and training that other schools cannot provide. *Alors, ce qu'ils ne peuvent pas faire eux, cela existe dans ces écoles. On voit que cet enfant a besoin de certaines choses spécifiques ; selon le cas, ils sont emmenés dans ces écoles spécialisées qui ont été mises sur pied.* One such school has already been set up at Ferney and the setting up of another Special Needs Resource Centre at Flacq is most welcome.

Madam Speaker, emphasis is being made and priority actions carried along the following fields: Curriculum development and adaptation for different types of impairments with the support and expertise from development partners. Norms and standards and quality assurance in SEN schools.

Recognition of prior learning or staff est très important parce que ces éducateurs qui travaillaient, et qui travaillent encore avec ces enfants handicapés dans ces ONGs n'ont pas nécessairement des diplômes ou des certificats. Mais ils ont une expérience ; ils ont vécu et travaillé avec ces enfants, et y ont passé de longues années et parfois toute leur vie avec ces enfants. Le ministère peut voir leur condition de travail - ça aussi c'est une innovation - et quel doit être leur salaire. Quand on parle de salaire, on commence à dire: 'quel est votre certificat'? C'est pour cela qu'on doit donner la possibilité d'adapter *what we call the recognition of prior learning*, c'est-à-dire, l'expérience que vous avez eue avec une petite formation théorique au niveau des écoles spécialisées.

Madam Speaker, ICT, which is, in itself an emerging sector, *un créneau porteur comme on dit*, at the crossroad Mega projects have been announced in this Budget with the coming up of the technopoles, and thus ICT has already been initiated in education with efforts of Government to expand the process of digitising classrooms, which was initiated with what is now well-known as the Sankoré Project.

Madam Speaker, this provision of ICT must be accompanied by the necessary managerial and systematic change to ensure that ICT becomes common practice and part and parcel of the system as a whole. *Il ne suffit pas d'avoir le système, il faut que les enfants puissent faire des classes avec.* ICT should be taught and examined as a subject as from the primary level itself.

Madam Speaker, with regard to innovative and visionary measures announced in the Budget to boost growth and development, the Budget provides a formidable bundle to facilitate business, more specifically, to SMEs with the setting up of a one-stop shop which

will provide under one roof all support, financing and information, as well as the delivery of permits to start and build up a business.

Madam Speaker, these facilities that I spoke before, the Budget creates economic space for a smooth transition to the world of work, and introduces a package of reform measures to accelerate business activities.

Madam Speaker, this Budget that largely reflects the vision of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister contains so many development issues that we would like to comment and explain to the nation, but time constraint make it necessary to draw a line somewhere.

Madam Speaker, I will now say something which I think has caused a lot of problems in this country, the issue of '*nation zougadère*'. Many people in the vision and desire to become rich, happen to lose the little they possess. It is a great and courageous measure taken in this Budget, people will benefit by it and improve their environment and their life.

Last but not least, to note that this Government had to bring smile on the face of not only our elders by bringing the monthly pension to Rs5,000 but rather to those parents whose children are undergoing SC and HSC examinations by removing this headache of the fees of these examinations mentioned above.

I will conclude, Madam Speaker, with a quote from Thomas Carlyle which says - and this is the characteristic of this Government with hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, I quote –

“Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak.”

Thank you for your attention.

(7.33 p.m.)

Mr D. Sesungkur (First Member for Montagne Blanche & Grand River South East): Madam Speaker, I know it has been a very long session, so, I will not be too long and will stick to the essential part of the Budget.

(Interruptions)

Thank you, hon. Minister!

So, I will start by congratulating the hon. Minister of Finance for his excellent work and the good Budget which he has presented and also the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for all his guidance to his team and the Government as a whole. I am glad to intervene on this

Appropriation (2015-2016) Bill and contribute with the little experience I have in the field of finance and business.

We all know in which state we inherited this country during the last election. The state of the economy was such in a bad shape that when we look at the economic fundamentals such as the growth rate, the rate of unemployment, the balance of trade deficit, the debt level of the country, all these indicators were in the red. We all know that for nearly a decade, the Labour Government has dipped our country with massive mismanagement, with lots of bad decisions, lots of frauds, corruption and bad governance which has cost us billions. Billions of rupees of public money have been wasted. We know that this country was not doing well and this is the reason why during the last election, the people of this country decided to make a sweeping change in Government. When we hear very negative comments from some Members of the Opposition, we can only realise that they have not changed as rightly said by the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. For years, they have continued with the same rhetoric, with the same kind of speech painting a very pessimistic picture, but the people of this country have learned the lesson and they know what they are at because a few months ago these people who are teaching us lessons today, were with the Labour Party campaigning together and would have probably been in power if they would have won the last election. So, we have no lesson to take from them and, as a responsible Government, we know clearly in which way we are heading and we have a very clear strategy.

Only yesterday, I saw a comment made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition saying that this Budget '*c'est un crime contre l'avenir*'. So, what has not been said on this Budget and just to pass a quick remark on this Budget which does not contain anything, which has been a deception for some, our friend from the Opposition, hon. Reza Uteem spent one hour fifteen minutes to comment a budget in which it has got nothing.

So, to say that Opposition is here to oppose, Opposition is here to criticise, but there were some Members who initially said that they were going to contribute positively, to engage in positive dialogue, to contribute to the construction of this country. So, I hope that they will contribute; they will bring constructive contribution for the future of this country.

I know that the hon. Minister of Finance has got a philosophy for this Budget, which has been probably misunderstood by some Members of the Opposition because they have been highlighting the fact that Government is not investing much and that there has been a fall in the Capital Budget. But my friend, the hon. Minister of Financial Services highlighted that the role of Government has changed and Government is now playing a role of facilitator, a role of partner.

What we want to do is - if I may make an analogy - instead of travelling by a bus, we want to travel by a train, by a TGV to achieve our target in the quickest way possible. So, this is what we want to do. We want to embark the whole nation, the whole country, we want to embark the private sector at work and get the contribution of one and all in this process of transforming the economy of our country. This is what the hon. Minister of Finance is aiming at. Even if we want to invest more, we have limited amount of resources and we cannot do much. So, this is why we have to rely on diverse sources and one of these sources is the private sector. We will also count on Foreign Direct Investment that we expect to get when we develop new sectors and, most importantly, the Minister of Finance has laid emphasis on the development of the entrepreneurship.

New entrepreneurs will come at work and they will create economic activities, they will be self-employed, they will also create additional employment. So, when we look at the Opposition claiming that we said that we are going to create 15,000 jobs, they give this false impression to the public that Government was going to employ 15,000 people every year. This is not true, Madam Speaker. What we said is: we will engage on the path of growth with the objective of creating maximum employment with expectation of 15,000 on an annual basis. Government is already doing its lot. We have embarked on a policy whereby over 6,000 people will be employed by the Government, but we want to do more. That's why there have been many new institutions which are being set up like the SME bank. The hon. Minister has also come up with new ideas like the Gold Reserve Fund to make maximum use of our limited resources so that we can attain the objective of growth in the quickest way possible.

Madam Speaker, I think the whole philosophy is to enlarge our economic base and we can only enlarge our economic base by empowering our people, those who want to become an entrepreneur, those who want to engage in business and this Government has made this process very simple by offering a complete package of facilities and incentives for those Mauritians who want to engage in business.

Madam Speaker, for many years we have had an economy which was underperforming. We have been underinvesting. This Budget is undoubtedly a new edifice in the economic transformation of our country just as in 1983, the first economic miracle. Despite headwinds besetting the global economy, the hon. Minister has convinced one and all that Mauritius outlook remains bright and optimistic. The hon. Minister has been greatly successful in the ways he has balanced various stakeholders' demands. The Government has set a high target and I agree that we all have to be a bit more ambitious. The positive intention

to stimulate investments and rekindle economic growth cannot be achieved by the Government only. In this fast moving world, the role of Government in the economy has changed into that of a facilitator and a partner with narrow intervention as I just said.

There have been some frivolous criticisms about the Budget mainly concerning the low level of capital expenditure proposed. The Opposition has not well understood the economic strategy of the Government. The population is now used to the negative and pessimistic comments and the sweeping generalisations of the Opposition. The Government is serious about its growth plans for the Mauritian economy, job creation and poverty alleviation. Fortunately, not all in the Opposition, I must say, have seen only the negative side, because Members of the political bureau: Steven Obeegadoo, even Arvin Boolell and Eric Guimbeau have all a contrary view from their colleagues. They have admitted that the Budget also contains good measures. The Budget has been widely acclaimed as a bold, innovative and has given much hope to the nation. According to latest surveys, public opinion is favourable and 80% of Mauritians approve Government action.

Indeed, after decades of lagging behind the curve, Mauritius is now set to work its way from stagnation to a more buoyant economic landscape. Even if socio-economic challenges persist at various levels, there is every reason to shed pessimism and embrace a positive mindset which contemplates economic and commercial prospects after the Budget. The economic miracle will certainly be achieved with the contribution of our fellow countrymen. The long-term economic plan is all about raising living standards for everyone in this country. Prosperity is strengthened when everyone has the capacity to participate effectively in the economy and the benefits of growth are widely shared. We know that if we are to bring prosperity this will require providing the right conditions for investment in skills, infrastructure and innovation.

As I said earlier, the role that the Government plays in the economy is changing. Thus, collaboration across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors is fast becoming key nodes to delivering services. Co-creation and co-production are becoming more important in policy development and delivery. Well-being is at the core of diverse policy agendas and having a job is rated the highest contributor to life satisfaction of most people. Our ability to deliver on job creation is highly dependent on investment. A major objective of the Budget is to ignite the economy and improve overall business environment in a bid to further motivate the private sector to invest more and create jobs. Thus, a massive investment of some Rs123 billion in megaprojects is expected in the next coming years. Major emphasis on self-

employment and developing an entrepreneur culture by a series of measures to facilitate business creation has also been announced.

For its part, Government plans to create more than 6000 jobs in the next coming year whereas young graduates will be fast tracked to an employment of their choice by upgrading their technical skills and abilities through special training. I, nevertheless, believe that there are some areas which could be further improved in this Budget by the Government. The decision to set up the Gold Reserve Fund to reactivate the Financial Services Promotion Authority and, at the same time, increase MTPA's Budget is salutary. In this same breath, it would pay dividend to redefine the role of the Board of Investment and review the Mauritius brand. Mauritius can get high marketing mileage by reviving these institutions and getting talented people to lead them.

I believe improving productivity of manpower, management, capital and technology are critical for efficiency and our global competitiveness. Being an open economy which is competing globally, I think Mauritius badly needs international expertise and a transfer of know-how. We should be prepared to invest in institutional capacity-building instead of pursuing short-term goals only.

The Civil Service is the principal instrument of Central Government for ensuring the delivery of its programme, improving public administration and public services would have been another area which deserves careful attention.

Coming to the African agenda, I would like to add a few words on our African strategy, having myself been involved on numerous assignments in the past in Africa. Indeed, Africa presents interesting opportunities and we should not wait further to pursue our regional diversification strategy. Government should drive this important initiative itself by way of a roadmap. A good initiative would be to get State-owned enterprises such as SIC, SBM, SICOM, MT, MHC to participate in this adventure into Africa. Implementation of budgetary measures has always been the biggest challenge and many good ideas and projects have failed to take shape for various reasons. There must not be any gap between the intention of policy and the actual achievement of that policy. There is policy failure when there is a gap between a policy decision and its implementation for any Government is judged on its administrative competence to implement the whole plan.

Growth and health of an economy are highly dependent on the functioning of its social and environmental condition. We are optimistic of the future of our country. We believe that the confluence of intertwined and self reinforcing factors will power the economic and development takeoff like in the 80s. Improved macroeconomic management, economic

diversification as well as enhanced business climate, increased FDI flows to a diversified range of sectors. Technological and innovation leapfrogging.

Madam Speaker, this Budget marks a policy change from that of the previous Labour Government, from that of an economic ultra-liberalism, from that which made the rich richer and the poor poorer, from economic stagnation, from jobless growth, from mismanagement of public funds, fraudulent and corrupt practices and opacity, from bad governance, favouritism, nepotism and *protection des petits copains*. This budget therefore sets our country on a new path for a meaningful change in the life of Mauritians and for many generations to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr Aliphon: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Rampertab rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 01 April 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

(7.54 p.m)

LYCÉE LA BOURDONNAIS - POLITICAL SCIENCE – BACHELOR DEGREE

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to raise a specific matter at adjournment time. A specific matter which reads as follows and addressed to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research –

“The plight of the students following a bachelor degree course in political science at the Lycée La Bourdonnais in collaboration with ‘Sciences Po d’Aix en Provence’”

This is a very sad and unfortunate matter. Madam Speaker, the Lycée La Bourdonnais, since January 2014, has been conducting a degree course leading to a bachelor degree in political science in collaboration with Sciences Po d’Aix en Provence. For the launching of that degree course in 2014, Mr Michel Dumas, *chargé des relations Internationales à Sciences Po d’Aix en Provence/Océan Indien-Caraïbes* came to Mauritius and made a speech during the launching of that course. I will quote what he said during the launching of that course -

« *Sciences Po Maurice est maintenant une véritable entité juridique. Elle a été enregistrée et j’en ai pris la direction* »

Thus, the three-year degree course is validated after obtention of 180 Euro Credit Transfer System and, therefore, the degree is awarded by the Department of Political Studies at the Institute of Political Studies of the University d’Aix en Provence. I would also, Madam Speaker, draw the attention of the House of the existing partnership between the University d’Aix en Provence and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

It was also stated at the time that a Masters course will be offered in due course. The educational requirements for such a course is the *baccalauréat*, the HSC and the GCE Advanced level. Admissions were considered after study and approval of a dossier submitted to the Commission. Mr Dumas also stated the following in his speech –

« Cette formation supérieure est une réelle opportunité pour les élèves mauriciens des lycées français et des écoles internationales pour offrir une formation aux cadres professionnels et cadres supérieures. »

On that day, *le Proviseur du Lycée La Bourdonnais* also took the floor and stated the following –

« Nous voulons qu’une information sérieuse soit passée alors que les étudiants mauriciens se présentent actuellement aux examens de fin d’études secondaires afin qu’ils puissent se positionner en vue des études tertiaires. »

Après soixante ans d’expérience en matière d’éducation primaire et secondaire nous élargissons notre offre de formation. Nous allons au-delà du baccalauréat et nous offrons une filière d’enseignement supérieur. Ce n’est pas un diplôme du Lycée La Bourdonnais mais un diplôme estampillé IEP d’Aix en Provence et une carte d’Aix en Provence assortie de tous les avantages de ceux ayant un statut d’étudiant d’Aix en Provence.

Ainsi que pour les bacheliers de l’océan Indien. Elle va leur permettre de poursuivre leurs études dans une grande école, reconnue internationalement tout en restant pour la majorité d’entre eux dans leur pays. En délocalisant un établissement d’enseignement supérieur à Maurice, au Lycée La Bourdonnais, établissement conventionné avec l’Agence pour l’enseignement français à l’étranger l’excellence du système éducatif français à l’étranger s’en trouve renforcée. »

Et il ajouta ce jour là-

« Nous ne sommes pas là pour faire du business uniquement.

Nous sommes là pour durer dans le temps. Nous voulons participer au développement de l’enseignement à Maurice avec des diplômes français. Nous disposons désormais d’un dispositif à travers la MCCI Business School »

Madame la présidente, déjà une année de cela il y avait des rumeurs qui circulaient sur la possibilité d’arrêter ce cours. Mais les élèves furent rassurés par le proviseur du Lycée La Bourdonnais. Les élèves terminèrent donc leur deuxième année et poursuivirent un stage de formation de trois mois. Le 17 mars 2015, les élèves furent convoqués par le proviseur du Lycée. Le 24 mars, les parents et les élèves de la deuxième année ont rencontré le proviseur.

Hier, ils ont eu une session de vidéoconférence avec le directeur de Sciences Po d’Aix en Provence, *M. Franck Biglione* qui a été nommé à ce poste après le départ de M. Dumas en décembre 2014. Voilà le contenu de cette discussion.

« Le Bachelor Science Politique, objet de la convention signée entre le Lycée La Bourdonnais et IEP d’Aix en Provenance n’a pas d’existence légale car il n’a jamais été validé par le conseil d’administration de Science Po d’Aix en Provence. Ce qui implique l’attestation de scolarité de première année du *Bachelor* d’étude politique stipulant la validation de 60 CTS délivrés aux étudiants sur entête officiel de Sciences Po et signés par le Directeur et présentant le tampon de l’IEP n’a aucune valeur. Les élèves de deuxième année ne se verront décerner aucun crédit alors qu’initialement ils en devaient obtenir 60 pendant la première année. Pour intégrer maintenant un autre cursus universitaire, nos jeunes étudiants doivent justifier de l’obtention de ces crédits. »

Maintenant ils demandent à ces élèves d’aller se faire inscrire ailleurs. Mais, malheureusement, les inscriptions post-bac France sont terminées. Cette piste est, donc, à exclure pour la réorientation de ces enfants. L’IEP d’Aix-en-Provence propose de remplacer le Bachelor en sciences politiques par une Licence d’administration publique.

Cette Licence propose des débouchés professionnels visant les concours administratifs. Cette Licence est un diplôme français. Malheureusement, des étudiants de nationalité mauricienne ne pourront en aucun cas utiliser cette Licence en dehors du territoire français. Il faudrait souligner que le coût de cette Licence réalisée en France est compris entre 350 et 500 euros par an, ce qui ne correspond pas avec les 4,000 à 5,000 euros par an versés au Lycée La Bourdonnais depuis deux ans. Si tel est le cas, le gouvernement mauricien devra aussi certainement valider cette formation, ce qui risque de prendre énormément de temps puisqu'il n'est pas encore au courant de cette information. Ce qui est plus difficile à accepter pour ces étudiants, c'est que maintenant l'IEP d'Aix-en-Provence leur demande de se faire enregistrer sous un autre statut. Ces étudiants ne veulent pas se faire enregistrer sous ce statut, parce qu'en France ce sont les seniors qui se font enregistrer sous ce statut-là. Conclusion, Madame la présidente, le Bachelor d'études politiques vendu à ces enfants mauriciens a été annoncé en grande pompe dans la presse locale, que ce soit par l'ambassadeur de France à Maurice, que ce soit par le proviseur du Lycée La Bourdonnais, que ce soit par le représentant de l'Université d'Aix-en-Provence.

Madame le présidente, des communications ont été envoyées par ces parents à Madame Lagarde, présidente du conseil d'administration de Sciences Po et présidente du FMI, et aussi à Madame Najat Vallaud-Belkacem, actuelle ministre de l'Education nationale française. Ce qu'il faudrait savoir c'est que ces parents estiment que c'est une escroquerie. Ils se sont fait avoir depuis deux ans, et leurs enfants malheureusement, maintenant, ne savent plus quoi faire, aussi bien que les parents.

I have raised this issue because we are talking of Mauritius as a knowledge-hub. I think, yesterday, the hon. Minister was with representatives from universities from France. I think we should look into this issue seriously and try to find a very rapid solution.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Madam Speaker, this matter has been reported to my Ministry, and I have requested the Tertiary Education Commission to conduct an exercise and to initiate appropriate action.

I am informed by the TEC that the situation is as follows - this has already been stated by the hon. Member of the Opposition, but I will still mention a few points. The *Bachelier d'études en sciences politiques* was a programme awarded by the *Institut d'études politiques*

of the *Université d'Aix-en-Provence, Grandes Ecoles*, in France. The programme is run and managed in Mauritius by the *Lycée La Bourdonnais*, which is registered with the Tertiary Education Commission as a post-secondary education provider.

The programme of Bachelor *d'études en sciences politiques* is awarded by the *IEP*. There are currently 15 students enrolled on the programme, of which seven are in the second year and eight in the first year. On 19 February 2015, the *proviseur* of *Lycée La Bourdonnais*, Mr Marc Haradji, was informed by *IEP* of Aix-en-Provence that the Bachelor *d'études en sciences politiques* would no longer be offered or awarded by *IEP* of the University of Aix-en-Provence. Instead of the Bachelor *d'études en sciences politiques*, the *IEP* has offered to allow students to complete a programme leading to a Licence d'administration publique. This was suggested from the *IEP* in a correspondence to Mr Haradji, the *proviseur* of *Lycée La Bourdonnais* in a letter dated 19 February 2015.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry views this situation with concern given that there has been a departure from the ethical commitment taken by an institution vis-à-vis its students population.

Furthermore, the institution did not deem it fit even to secure the approval of TEC for this change in proposition for the new programme entitled "*Licence d'administration publique*". It is also unfortunate that the *Lycée La Bourdonnais* has conveyed the information of the programmatic change to the parents and students only orally and that this decision for a change in course structure and contents has been taken without prior consultations with the parents, the students and even the Tertiary Education Commission.

Following representations made by parents, the *Lycée La Bourdonnais* organised a video conference yesterday, as stated by the hon. Member, with the course providers so as to elucidate matters and respond to the queries of parties concerned. Further to discussions I have had with the French Ambassador yesterday, I am given to understand that the matter has been taken up with l'Université d'Aix-en-Provence which has, however, indicated that it is not in a position to continue the Bachelor *d'études en sciences politiques* programme for technical reasons. It is maintaining its proposal to allow students after completion of the first two years to follow *Licence d'administration publique* to be delivered by Aix-Marseille. The proposal to reimburse the students concerned as well as compensate them for moral prejudice caused is also being considered. My Ministry is following this matter very closely and has directed the Tertiary Education Commission to engage with *the Lycée La Bourdonnais* in the

exploration of all other options with the view of coming up with satisfactory provisions for the aggrieved parents and students. We are also asking TEC to be more vigilant before issuing permits to foreign institutions willing to collaborate with Mauritian institutions in the provision of higher education.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

At 8.07 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 01 April 2015 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MELROSE PRISON – MOBILE PHONES, DRUGS & COMPLAINTS

(No. B/204) 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 Melrose Prison, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the –

- (a) Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of entry of mobile phones and of drugs threat, and
- (b) Human Rights Commission, information as to if complaints of the prevalence of inhumane conditions of detention thereat have been reported thereto.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons and the Commissioner of Police that since the coming into operation of the Eastern High Security Prison at Melrose in March 2014, 20 mobile phones have been secured as at to date. During the same period, there have been 6 reported cases whereby dry leaves suspected to be Cannabis and drug powder have been secured.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the National Human Rights Commission that the National Preventive Mechanism Division has carried out site visits at the Eastern High Security Prison and complaints from detainees have been received on the following –

- (a) Lack of warm or hot shower;
- (b) Presence of surveillance cameras in bathrooms of Segregation and Protection Unit;

- (c) Type of food in view of dietary problems;
- (d) The furniture is not appropriate;
- (e) No proper ventilation;
- (f) Letters sent to the Commission do not reach the intended destination, and
- (g) There is no methadone induction programme at Melrose.

To address the above problems, the National Preventive Mechanism Division has made a number of recommendations with a view to ensuring greater compliance with the United Nations guidelines governing such detention centres. I am also informed that most of the complaints made have already been attended to by the Prisons Department as at March 2015 and the National Preventive Mechanism Division will continue to monitor the situation in respect of the outstanding complaints.

POLICE OFFICERS – ALLEGED CRIMINAL CASES

(No. B/205) 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 Police Officers who are allegedly involved in criminal cases, either as victims or as accused parties, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the cases to be referred to the State Law Office for advice –

- (a) prior to the drafting of the provisional charge, and
- (b) as to the stand to be taken concerning applications for bail.

Reply: I presume that the hon. Member is making reference to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions from which advice is usually sought by the Police.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for Police Officers or any other civilian who are allegedly involved in criminal cases, it is not the practice of the Police to seek advice from the Office of the DPP prior to the Police drafting the provisional charges. It is only in certain serious criminal cases that such advice is sought as it will not be practical to do so in all cases.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Office of the DPP is not consulted if the Commissioner of Police does not object to bail. Otherwise, when the

Commissioner of Police intends to resist the bail application, he will, in some serious cases, seek advice from the Office of the DPP.

If the Office of the DPP advises that bail may be objected, then it will, in some serious cases, designate an officer to represent the Police before the Bail and Remand Court. However, in accordance with the provisions of the Bail Act, it is for the Court to decide as to whether bail should be granted or not.

I wish to inform the House that I am not at all satisfied with the present system of provisional charges. As announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019, my Government will come up with a modern legal framework modelled on the UK Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) to address the issue of abusiveness and arbitrariness of the present system of provisional charges.

The implementation of the PACE may involve the Police having its own in-house Legal Advisers who may advise the Police at enquiry stage. It will be for the DPP to advise whether prosecution is to be initiated for any offence.

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER – PROJECTS EARMARKED

(No. B/207) 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, in regard to Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit and table a list of the future projects earmarked for implementation thereat.

Reply: I am informed that a list of projects identified for future implementation by the National Development Unit for Constituency No. 14 is presently being compiled and estimates are being worked out.

The list was submitted to the NDU by the Parliamentary Private Secretary for that constituency.

Prior to the final list of proposed projects being drawn, the NDU needs to assess the outstanding balance on ongoing and completed projects. Thereafter financial commitments for any new projects can be taken.

This process will ensure that proper financial management and planning are effected and will also avoid situations which occurred in the recent past, where funds earmarked for

new projects, were already committed to ongoing projects, resulting in the NDU being heavily financially drained.

The NDU will as far as possible implement, amenities, roads and drain projects in all constituencies. The final list of projects for Constituency No. 14 will be tabled once it is drawn up.

TERRITORIAL WATERS – ACCIDENT – REPORTED CASES

(No. B/210) Mr R. Uteem (First 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 accident within our territorial waters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since January 2010 to date, indicating in each case, the number of death having occurred as a result thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2010 to date, three cases of accident within our territorial waters have been reported as follows –

- (i) on 31 October 2014 in the Port area, a heavy duty boat of the National Coast Guard collided with a tug of the Mauritius Ports Authority resulting in the death of two Police Officers;
- (ii) on 23 February 2015 in the lagoon at Belle Mare, two French tourists who were snorkeling in the sea were hit by a speed boat, causing their death, and
- (iii) on 14 March 2015 in the vicinity of Flat Island, a trimaran was capsized. Eleven tourists who were aboard fell into the sea, and one of them, a French lady, got drowned.

The recent fatal accidents concerning tourists during recreational activities at sea are tragic occurrences which should be avoided at all costs. The concerned Government bodies, including the National Coast Guard and the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications have already taken a series of measures geared towards ensuring safe and secure nautical activities for all sea-goers, including skippers, fishermen and tourists.

MEDICLINICS - OPERATION

(No. B/215) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the mediclinics, he will

state the number thereof in operation over the period October to December 2014, indicating in each case, on a daily basis, the –

- (a) average number of patients who attended thereat and
- (b) number of staff on duty, including doctors and nurses, who attended to the patients.

Reply: I will reply to both parliamentary questions B/215 and B/216 together as they deal with the same topic relating to mediclinics.

During the period October to December 2014, a total of five mediclinics were in operation, namely the Dr. Hyderkhan Mediclinic at Plaine Verte, the Triolet Mediclinic, the Goodlands Mediclinic, the Lady Sushil Ramgoolam Mediclinic at Belvédère and the Dr. H. Nkajima Mediclinic at L'escalier.

As regards part (a) an average number of 833 patients attended all the five mediclinics on a daily basis during October to December 2014. Average daily attendance at each mediclinic during this period was as follows -

• Plaine Verte (Dr. Hyderkhan)	108
• Triolet	194
• L'Escalier (Dr. H. Nkajima)	122
• Goodlands	271
• Bélvédère	138

Regarding part (b), a total of 136 staff members, including doctors and nurses, were posted at all five mediclinics from October to December 2014. Government is in the process of recruiting 100 Medical Health Officers/Senior Medical Health Officers for all hospital services including mediclinics and Area Health Centres.

In line with Government Programme to strengthen primary health care, a batch of 40 doctors will follow a 3-year training programme with the University of Bordeaux to graduate as Primary Care Physicians. They will subsequently be posted in primary health care institutions in Mauritius.

The Master Plan for primary health care which is being prepared will encompass an in-depth review of the organisational set-up at primary health care level.

It must be brought out that with the operation of mediclinics, it has been possible to curb the spread of infectious diseases such as conjunctivitis and gastro enteritis.

Similarly Government will recruit some 1,400 paramedical staff including nursing officers to be posted overall in the public health system, including mediclinics and Area Health Centres.

Furthermore, daily attendance at all the mediclinics is being followed closely. A total of 49,543 attendances were recorded at all the five mediclinics during the one month period starting 16 February to 15 March 2015, with a total of 15,932 attendances after normal working hours, i.e from 1800 hours to 0800 hours the next day. Given the high attendance up to 2000 hours, two medical officers, two pharmacy dispensers and two health records officers have been posted up to 2000 hours in all mediclinics. A hotline has been set up to connect mediclinics to the regional hospitals. In case of an emergency or if there is an upsurge in attendance, the regional hospitals have been given instructions to provide reinforcement of staff at the mediclinics.

A request has been made to the Commissioner of Police to reinforce security of staff by posting additional Police Constables at the mediclinics.

MEDICLINICS – DOCTORS & NURSES - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/216) Dr. Z. Joomaye (Second Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the mediclinics, he will state if Government is proposing to recruit doctors and/or nurses to work specifically thereat and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, indicate the organisational set-up that is being contemplated in relation to the extension of the hours of service on a 24 hour basis.

(Vide Reply PQ to No. B/215)

LIGNE BERTHAUD AVENUE – REHABILITATION

(No. B/219) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether he will state if he will consider the urgent rehabilitation of the Ligne Berthaud Avenue which links Trèfles to Quatre Bornes.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed that the NDU issued two Works Orders, firstly in respect of drains and secondly, in respect of roads to the contractor Super Builders Co. Ltd on 26 May 2014 for works to be executed along Berthaud Avenue.

The contract values for the drain works and road works were respectively Rs24,237,203.93; and Rs23,959,732.50 VAT inclusive.

The drain Works Order comprised the construction of 1,400 metres of covered drain, the enlargement of bridge and the relocation of services.

The road Works Order comprised the construction of about 1,400 metres of road and the relocation or diversion of services.

I am informed by the NDU that both Works Orders have, however, not yet been executed in view of the fact that the procedures for land acquisition required for the enlargement of the road from 3.5 mts to 10.00 mts as well as the construction of foot paths on both sides, have not been finalised by the Road Development Authority.

Moreover, I am informed that the original Works Orders issued for the drain component of the project, although it makes mention, *inter-alia*, of the enlargement of bridge, did not provide the required design for same. Furthermore, it does not provide for the demolition of the existing boundary walls and reconstruction after enlargement works.

The urgent rehabilitation of Ligne Berthaud Avenue which links Trèfles to Quatre Bornes can only be effected once land acquisition is completed and the detailed design of the bridge finalised.

BASSIN/PALMA - SEWAGE PROJECTS – ROADS REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/227) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government whether, in regard to the sewage projects in the Bassin/Palma regions in Constituency No. 14, Savanne and Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand as to the reinstatement of the public roads damaged as a result thereof.

Reply (The Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities): Part of the regions of Bassin/Palma are concerned with the implementation of wastewater project under the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project – Lot 1A. Once the infrastructure works are completed, the public roads are temporarily reinstated using Asphaltic concrete over the working area.

Upon completion of all house connection works, water pipe replacement, testing and commissioning, the roads are reinstated to its full width.

I am tabling a list of all the roads in the region of Palma, Bassin that are concerned under the project.

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT - DIRECTOR

(No. B/230) **Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Financial Intelligence Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

(a) name of the director thereof, indicating his –

(i) qualifications, and

(ii) terms and conditions of employment, and

(b) reasons for the termination of the employment of the former director thereof.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/113, wherein I, *inter alia*, informed the House that Mr Guillaume Nicolas Ferdinand Ollivry is the current Director of the FIU.

Mr Ollivry holds a degree in law from the University of Kent, Canterbury, UK. Section 9(2) of the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA), provides for the Director of the FIU to be “*a person of high repute with substantial experience in the financial services industry or law enforcement and experience in management and accounting.*” The House may wish to note that from February 2012 to December 2014 Mr Ollivry has worked as a Forensic Researcher in Anti- Money Laundering, Financial Services and Human Rights. The first two areas of practice during these 2 years are of particular relevance for the purposes of section 9(2) of the FIAMLA.

It is to be highlighted that Mr Ollivry’s work included working on assessment of the Prevention of Corruption Act, reviewing offences in the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act (FIAMLA), researching on the interaction between FIAMLA and the ‘FSC Code’ in the context of flaws in relation to the term ‘reasonable measures’ to combat money laundering.

Mr Ollivry has also worked on the Financial Services Act, the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters Act, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Proceeds of Crime Act and the Asset Recovery Act and in the context of his work money laundering, fraud, prosecution of offences and investigation were relevant to his work.

The House may further wish to note that at the 29th ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials Meeting held last week in Arusha, Tanzania, Mr Ollivry has been included in the Roaster of experts in view of his operational expertise in the AML/CFT. It is to be noted that the AML/CFT project in the Greater Horn of Africa is a European Commission funded

project and is being implemented by Civipol Conseil which is an agency of the French Ministry of Interior.

Mr Ollivry has been appointed as Director of the FIU, on a contractual basis, for a period of 3 years with a monthly salary of Rs150,000 compared to Rs238,000 drawn by the previous Director. The new Director has not been granted the privilege of a chauffeur driven car, as was the case for the former Director.

The employment of the former Director of the FIU was terminated by virtue of section 113(4) (5) of the Constitution.

MAURITIUS CREDIT INFORMATION BUREAU – LOANS - REPAYMENT

(No. B/231) 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 Mauritius Credit Information Bureau, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the number of borrowers registered therewith and who have defaulted on the repayment of their loans, indicating the aggregate amount of money defaulted in respect of the -

- (a) individuals, and
- (b) corporate borrowers.

Reply: The Mauritius Credit Information Bureau (MCIB), set up under section 52 of the Bank of Mauritius Act, came into operation in December 2005. In fact the MCIB has been set up to be a repository of credit information on all recipients of credit facilities. The main objective is to ensure the development of a sound credit environment and aims at directly assisting in fighting over-indebtedness, mainly that of households.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that the MCIB has currently 43 participants comprising banks, non-bank financial institutions including Insurance companies, leasing companies, the DBM Ltd, MHC Ltd, NHDC Ltd and utility service providers.

The MCIB does not classify information according to borrowers who have defaulted on the repayment of their loans. The MCIB is just a repository of credit information and only the lenders have information concerning defaults by their clients.

As such, the information requested is not available.

DR. A. G. JEETOO HOSPITAL - INCINERATOR

(No. B/232) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the

incinerator of the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state where matters stand as to the remedial measures proposed to be taken by his Ministry in relation to the thick smokes emanating therefrom.

Reply: Presently medical waste produced at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital is disposed of in the incinerator located within the premises of the hospital. This incinerator is in working condition and is being maintained on a regular basis.

It is necessary to point out that as per Government Notice No. 157 of 2001, 1st Schedule, Regulation 2 of the Environment Protection Act 1991 -

“Human or animal healthcare and research related to such healthcare; waste from diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease and natal care are categorised as hazardous waste”.

Incineration of medical waste generated by public health institutions is undertaken in incinerators located within hospitals' premises. Most of our hospitals, however, are situated within highly residential agglomerations.

At times, due to an excess of medical waste, there is over-accumulation of waste giving rise to inconvenience and odour nuisance. Moreover, during incineration the likelihood of the environmental nuisance exists with regard to emission of black smoke due to extensive use of the incinerator. It is worth mentioning that most incinerators have been purchased some ten (10) years ago and are nearly reaching their lifespan.

My Ministry has taken the following measures -

Short Term Measures

- (a) The height of the chimney of the incinerator at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital has been extended by 3 metres to a maximum permissible height of 12.6 metres to provide for the dispersion and dilution of the emissions over longer distances;
- (b) Medical waste is incinerated only during weekdays from 08.00 hrs up to 14.00 hrs. No incineration is carried out during weekends and Public Holidays.
- (c) Medical waste (waste from surgeries/treatments - bandages, cotton, sharps, catheters, pharmaceutical and pathological waste) is being segregated in coloured yellow plastic bags and sent for incineration. However, medical waste generated from renal dialysis unit which is likely to contribute to black smoke emission is being segregated for disposal at J. Nehru Hospital.

Non-Medical waste (office waste, food waste packing materials) is separately collected in coloured black plastic bags on a regular basis by Municipal and District Councils and safely disposed of at the Mare Chicose Landfill.

- (d) Regular maintenance of Incinerators is undertaken by a maintenance contractor under the supervision of Energy Services Division (ESD).
- (e) Training of the operators and personnel has been provided whereby emphasis has been laid on the importance of ensuring that the incinerator reaches the required combustion temperature of 850° C as well as post combustion temperature of 1100°C for optimal destruction and avoidance of smoke emission.
- (f) In case of over accumulation of waste likely to give rise to odour nuisance, the excess waste is redirected to incinerators of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, Jawaharlall Nehru Hospital and Brown Sequard Hospital.

Medium Term Measures

A technical team of the Ministry has undertaken a visit to Reunion Island to examine its method of disposal/treatment of medical waste which is a sterilization system rather than incineration. Also the sterilization system is apparently more eco-friendly with regards to emissions in the atmosphere.

Following the visit, recommendation has been made on the appropriateness of adopting such technology at the Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital to replace the existing incinerator on a pilot basis.

Long Term Measures

My Ministry is looking into various possibilities to prevent pollution during medical waste treatment by incineration. One alternative will be to have recourse to new generation of incinerators with inbuilt pollution abatement technology for treatment to reduce and prevent pollution.

Another alternative would be to invest in new equipment which would involve autoclaving and shredding of medical waste for its disposal.

**NATIONAL SOLIDARITY FUND - FOOTBALL BETTING – UNCLAIMED
WINNINGS**

(No. B/239) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to football betting, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the -

- (a) amount of money remitted as unclaimed funds to the National Solidarity Fund during the period 2003 to 2011, indicating the names of the companies suspended during the said period for non-compliance, and
- (b) if Peerless Ltd. and Empowering People Ltd. were suspended in 2010.

Reply (The Prime Minister): The Gambling Regulatory Authority was set up in December 2007. I understand that prior to December 2007, football betting was unregulated.

As regards part (a) of the question, in 2008, the Gambling Regulatory Authority issued licences, for conducting fixed odds betting on football matches played outside Mauritius, to 10 bookmakers. I am informed, however, that not all the bookmakers started operation in 2008: some started in 2009 whilst others in 2010.

An amount of Rs74,356,316 was remitted as unclaimed winnings to the National Solidarity Fund for period 2008 to 2011.

The licenses of five companies, namely, Peerless Ltd, Empowering Ltd, Booksystem Ltd, Bosco Co. Ltd and Value Plus Ltd were suspended during the said period for non-remittance of the unclaimed prize to the National Solidarity Fund within the prescribed time.

However, the licences of Bosco Co. Ltd and Value Plus Ltd were subsequently reinstated in 2011.

With respect to Part (b) of the question, I am advised that the licences of Peerless Ltd and Empowering People Ltd were suspended on 21 February 2011 for failing to remit unclaimed winnings to the National Solidarity Fund.

I am further advised that –

- (i) the licence of Peerless Ltd was not renewed on expiry on 16 July 2011, and
- (ii) Empowering People Ltd was revoked on 29 July 2011.

I am informed that both these Licensees have applied for Judicial Review before the Supreme Court against the decision to suspend their licences.

In the case of Peerless Ltd, I am further informed that the Supreme Court has refused to grant leave to apply for Judicial Review. Peerless Ltd has appealed against the decision of the Supreme Court to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The matter was heard on 25 March 2015 and judgment has been reserved.

HORSERACING - 2015 TURF SEASON

(No. B/240) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the organisation of horseracing in Mauritius for the 2015 Turf Season by the Mauritius Turf Club, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if the approval thereof was made in full compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and of the Guidelines under the Financial Reporting Act.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed that the organisation of horseracing in Mauritius for the 2015 Turf season by the Mauritius Turf Club was approved by the new Gambling Regulatory Board, at its meeting held on 19 March 2015. This was done in strict compliance with the Provisions of the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) Act 2007, especially as it relates to section 7(1) (g) and the licensing conditions under section 31 (3).

However, the hon. Member should be aware of the catastrophic situation in the horse racing sector as a result of the '*silence coupable*' of some people at the helm of the Gambling Regulatory Authority under the previous régime. Furthermore, following widespread concerns emanating from different stakeholders on horse racing in Mauritius, a Commission of Inquiry was set up, *inter-alia*, to inquire into the matter and to come up with appropriate recommendations to address these issues.

I have the pleasure to inform the House that the Commissioners have submitted their Report and in line with the commitment undertaken by my Government to tackle the problematic issue of "*nation zougadère*", I shall later on, today, make a Statement thereon.

CANCER HOSPITAL PROJECT

(No. B/246) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the proposed Cancer Hospital Project at the former Medpoint Clinic, he will state -

- (a) the responsibility under which it would be placed;
- (b) the estimated cost thereof in respect of the -
 - (i) renovation of the building;
 - (ii) purchase of equipment, and
 - (iii) furniture, fixtures and other costs;
- (c) if quotations have been launched for the purchase of equipment and, if so, give a list thereof;
- (d) if the personnel for the running thereof has been identified and, if so, give details thereof, and
- (e) the expected date of coming into operation thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the former Medpoint Clinic which will be rehabilitated into a modern Cancer Centre, will be under the responsibility of my Ministry.

It is to be noted that the project for a Cancer Centre would be carried out in two phases, as follows -

- a. **Phase I** would comprise rehabilitation of the existing building infrastructure and the premises including creation of parking area and landscaping works to render the Centre operational.
- b. **Phase II** would consist of (a) the construction of a Bunker or other appropriate structure to accommodate a Linear Accelerator and (b) the procurement, installation, testing and commissioning of the Linear Accelerator and Accessories.

The estimated cost of the rehabilitation works will be prepared by the Consultants who will be appointed to work out the design and tender documents for the project. Presently the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is working on the terms of reference for consultancy services for the rehabilitation of the ex-Medpoint Clinic.

With respect to part (b) relating to the estimated cost of the purchase of (ii) equipment and (iii) furniture, fixtures and other cost, I would wish to point out that it has been decided to resort to consultancy services. Based on the design and the scope of works, estimated cost of construction, equipment, accessories and other requisites will be worked out for preparation of bid documents.

With regard to part (c) of the question, the House may wish to note that expressions of interest have been invited for the procurement of a Linear Accelerator and the construction of a bunker to house the apparatus. The expressions of interest will be assessed and examined for shortlisting of suitable bidder.

As for part (d), the medical, nursing and other staff presently working at the Cancer Unit of Victoria Hospital will eventually be transferred to the new Cancer Centre and we are working with the IAEA for the training of our personnel.

With the completion of the rehabilitation works and the transfer of the Cancer Unit from Victoria Hospital, it is expected that the Cancer Centre will become operational by December 2015.

BELLE MARE WATER PARK AND LEISURE VILLAGE - CLOSURE

(No. B/248) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Belle Mare Water Park and Leisure Village, he will state since when it is closed to the public, indicating -

- (a) if the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry set up by Government in relation thereto have been implemented and, if not, why not, and
- (b) when the re-opening thereof to the public is being contemplated.

Reply: I am advised that the Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate into the death of two children at Belle Mare Water Park and Leisure Village has submitted its report. The recommendations are actually being examined by the Board of the Sugar Investment Trust.

One the main recommendations is that the Water Park should be revamped to attain world class standard. However, this would necessitate an investment estimated at more than Rs200 m.

In view thereof, the Board of the Sugar Investment Trust has decided to seek a strategic partner for the modernisation of the infrastructures that would render the Water Park safer, more attractive and profitable.

The Water Park is closed to the public since October 2013. The date of its re-opening cannot be known at this stage as much would depend on the outcome of the Board's initiative to secure a strategic partner for the renovation project.

PAY RESEARCH BUREAU REPORT - PUBLICATION

(No. B/249) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative reforms whether, in regard to the next Pay Research Bureau Report, he will state the expected date of -

- (a) publication, and

(b) implementation thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the publication of the Pay Research Bureau Report would, in principle, be in October 2015 and the effective date of its implementation would be 01 January 2016.

MSPA – LAND TRANSFER

(No. B/250) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the 2000 acres of land obtained from the sugar industry, he will state the extent thereof –

(a) received region-wise, and

(b) released, giving details as to the

(i) name of the beneficiaries thereof;

(ii) date of release thereof, and

(iii) project to be implemented and the terms and conditions thereof, indicating the number thereof implemented to date, giving details thereof in each case.

Reply: The agreement signed between the Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association (MSPA) on 22 April 2008 provides for the transfer of 2000 *arpents* of land to the State over a period of 10 years, ending in December 2017.

Out of the 2000 *arpents*, an extent of 1200 *arpents* were to be released for agriculture and 800 *arpents* for housing and other social infrastructure projects.

The Government has so far acquired 757 *arpents*, out of which 460 *arpents* have been vested in my Ministry for agricultural projects.

With regard to part (a) of the question, land has been acquired in the following regions

–

- 50 *arpents* at the Rouge Terre in the North;
- 63.11 *arpents* at Mare D’Albert, 34.76 *arpents* at St Hubert; 24.31 *arpents* at Joli Bois, Mare Tabac; 43.86 *arpents* at Grand Bois and 19.55 *arpents* at Rivière du Poste in the South;
- 50 *arpents* at L’Esperance, (Quartier Militaire); 40 *arpents* at Melrose; 7 *arpents* at La Laura; 25 *arpents* at Bel Etang and 72 *arpents* at Olivia for the eastern region, and
- 30 *arpents* at La Chaumière in the West.

With regard to part (b) of the question, out of the 460 *arpents* vested in my Ministry, 420 *arpents* have been released to 69 Cooperative Societies/Agro-Based Companies for food crop and livestock production.

Note also that one plot has been released at L'Esperance (Quartier Militaire) and St Hubert respectively for implementation of small-scale farming projects under the Vulnerable Woman Empowerment Programme being implemented by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.

Details regarding date of release, projects implemented and conditions of lease are being tabled.

CITÉ MARTIAL - SEWERAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

(No. B/251) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed sewerage network project for the sewerage connection of house numbers 20 to 26, at the Alfred Gellé Street, Cité Martial, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the expected start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the Alfred Gellé Street houses number 20 to 26 are included in the Cité Paul et Virginie Housing Estate, Port Louis which has been identified as one of the six priority sites for the rehabilitation of the sewerage infrastructure.

Topographical surveys, detailed design and the bidding documents for the works contract have been completed.

The detailed design report has revealed that -

- (a) many houses have been constructed over the existing sewer line and sewer manholes contributing to the degradation of the sewer system, and
- (b) rehabilitation works will have to be carried out in some cases, inside the houses and the collaboration of the inhabitants will be needed for the sewer works to be carried out.

I have requested the WMA to discuss with the inhabitants concerned and the neighbours. The collaboration of the hon. Member is most welcome to help the WMA resolve this issue.