



**SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**THURSDAY 16 APRIL 2015**

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Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs, Minister for Rodrigues and National Development Unit
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and External Communications
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, 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

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Deputy Speaker	Duval, Hon. Adrien Charles
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Hurreeram, Hon. Mahendranuth Sharma
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**MAURITIUS**

**Sixth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 22 of 2015**

**Sitting of 16 April 2015**

**The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 10.30 a.m.**

**The National Anthem was played**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**PUBLIC BILLS****THE APPROPRIATION (2015) BILL (NO. III OF 2015)**

**&**

**THE APPROPRIATION (2015-2016) BILL (NO. IV OF 2015)****COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

*Vote 7-1 Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 61, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*. Can the hon. Minister inform us from the amount earmarked for the coming six months, how much has been spent up to now on overseas travel and separately, capacity building? I will take three in one, just for the hon. Minister not to come back again. On item 26313.025 - *Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA)*.

**The Chairperson:** Can I just interrupt the hon. Member! Does the hon. Minister want to have one by one or get two or three questions at a time?

**Mr Jugnauth:** It's okay, we can have!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On the IBA, can the hon. Minister inform us whether, in the amount Rs8.5 m. earmarked, there is compensation paid to the former people working at the IBA,

Director and so on and whether the new Board has been constituted? On the same page, under item 26313.054 - *National Computer Board*, is there a new Board and has compensation been paid out of the amount we are being asked to vote for the previous Chairperson, Director or Board Members and is the Board operational? The hon. Minister can later on circulate the composition of the Board even for IBA and NCB.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Madam Chairperson, for IBA the Board is in the process of being constituted. In fact, if I am not mistaken, according to law there is need to have consultation with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I believe that consultation has been done, so then the Board will be constituted.

*(Interruptions)*

Probably, I will receive the information.

*(Interruptions)*

For the National Computer Board, again the Board is in the process of being constituted. Now, whether there has been any compensation paid, I'll get the information. No compensation paid to Mr S. who, in fact, passed away. For IBA, no amount has been paid also. For overseas travel, the increase is due to the Data Protection Office joining my Ministry.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 61, item 26313.136 - *International Institute of Technology Research Academy*. Last year, for the whole year, there was an amount of Rs3.5 m. and for the coming year, for the six months is budgeted an amount of Rs11 m. May I know why there is such an increase in this amount?

**Mr Jugnauth:** It is for recruitment of faculty staff and operation expenses. I understand that a number of people have been recruited or are in the process of being recruited to constitute the IIT. I can give you the number for faculty staff - 8 are being recruited in March 2015; the number of administrative staff, not yet recruited but who will be recruited for the year, will be 22; and I can circulate a list of other posts and their corresponding budget also.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!



**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the same page 61, item 28323 - *Transfers to Non Financial Public Corporation*. There was an amount of Rs15 m. paid to MBC and now nothing is budgeted. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any transfer to MBC on other items or the Government is not going to fund MBC anymore?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, previously the MBC fell under the Prime Minister's office. Now, with this Government there has been a change. I have the responsibility now of the MBC. As you know, there is a restructuration of the MBC that is going on, that is why we have not provided any amount now. But, in the course of the year, we will see about the financial situation and Government will have to decide accordingly.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 63, under *Mauritius National Identity Card*, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, Rs11 m. Can I take it upon this item to ask the hon. Minister where matters stand concerning the issue of the New Identity Card project? How much, in fact, has been spent, up to now, locally and the amount paid to foreign operators?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, where matters stand: the project will be reviewed pending the judgement that is being awaited before the Supreme Court. We have already undertaken to destroy the databank with regard to the fingerprints and the biometric photograph. So, that undertaking by Government will be fully respected, but again because there are a number of issues that have been raised before the Court including very fundamental constitutional matters, we are still waiting. Probably the House will note also that this case has already been pleaded since last year and, as we all know, the Supreme Court had given priority to this case. In fact, all the other cases had been postponed. It was heard on consecutive days. I understand also that priority was given for the Court to be given adequate time to deliver a judgement, but the House will appreciate that, up to now, we have not had any judgement also. As per the contract of Rs1.1 billion, there is Rs8.99 m. that is still outstanding. I understand that there was a note with regard to money that has to be withheld. I suppose that, in due course, if everything is according to the contract, that amount will have to be paid.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** On page 63, *Capital Expenditure*, under *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. With regard to the fibre optic cable between Rodrigues and Mauritius, is the fibre optic cable investment included in that Rs1.9 billion provisions?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Sorry! Can the hon. Member repeat the question?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Can the hon. Member repeat the question for the hon. Minister?

**Mr Jhuboo:** I have got the answer. It's alright!

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, I would come back to page 61, the MBC/TV – Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. Can the hon. Minister inform us whether the inquiry which was on-going on the malpractices under the previous administration has been completed? There was a financial inquiry which was underway regarding the administration of the previous Director-General. Can we know whether his Ministry or the relevant people have been able to find ways and means to retrieve the amount paid to Mr Callikan - there was a question on that – and whether, up to now, the hon. Minister can report progress on that?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Madam Chairperson, I have, of course, some information with regard to the inquiry that is underway, but I have not had as yet the final report. I know it is nearing completion, but from memory I can say that an amount which has been paid to the former Director-General, from that amount he was requested to refund an amount. I cannot recall how much money, but which he did, in fact, refund. So, we are looking also into the issue of how he was being paid that amount whereby he used one clause of the contract to avail himself of that compensation. Of course, that will have also to be looked into by the State Law Office so that we are properly advised on the legal issue.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I refer to page 62, *Capital Expenditure*, item 31132.401 *e-Government Projects*. Year in year out, we are asked to vote a substantial amount of money for e-Government Projects, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the departments of the Government which now have fully functional e-Government Projects?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I do not have the list of the departments, but if I can get the information now I will, of course, answer. I can circulate the list.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** I have a last question. Concerning the identity cards, item 31132, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the delay for anyone to get the new identity card would be extended, *de facto*, until the case is being cleared by the Court?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, I must say it is a very embarrassing situation, because we have just extended the period to, I think, end of June of this year. Well, I hope that is enough time for the Supreme Court to deliver judgment. We will see.

*Vote 7-1 Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Rs434,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 7-1 Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 149, the *Mauritius National Identity Card*, under item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*, there is a new budgetary amount of Rs22 m. May I know from the hon. Minister whether provision is made in this Rs22 m. to the staff that is going to also interact with the public when they come to apply for the identity card or whether this is going to be subcontracted, as it has been under the previous Government?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Madam Chairperson, this is not really a new item, because it was formerly under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office. This amount caters for the payment of salaries to officers who are posted at the Registration Centres and the cost for all the officers working in the Investigation Unit, MNIS IT Unit and CPD. There are approximately, I understand, 50 officers and, of course, that also includes the service that is being given to the public with regard to anybody who wishes to have any query, can, of course, attend the office for such queries.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** My question is a follow-up of what hon. Ameer Meea has just mentioned about extension. The reason for delay in obtaining identity cards sometimes is also due to mismatch in names. People's names are incorrect and this is a delay, I believe not your Ministry, but at the Civil Status Office. Can matters be expedited, because by the end of June, I believe there will still be a lot of outstanding cases?

**Mr Jugnauth:** First of all, Madam Chairperson, a question must relate to an item. Never mind! But still I am aware of few cases which the hon. Member has mentioned, but it will depend on each case where the problem lies. With regard to the mismatch in the names, I understand that there are some legal implications, because sometimes the name of the card holder did not even match with the birth certificate of that person. I cannot give a general answer, because it will depend on the case of that person. Although I do not have the number

of cases concerned, I believe there are few cases. So far, it does not cause any problem to a card holder, because the former card is still valid until such time that Government decides otherwise.

**The Chairperson:** I take this opportunity to appeal to hon. Members not to ask questions of a general nature, but to relate it to a specific vote item, please. Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 145, item 28, there are two items 28212.026 *ICT Training Scheme* Rs50 m. and 28215.007 *National Innovation Programme* Rs125 m., which seems to be new items to this Budget. May I ask the hon. Minister some details on these two budgetary items?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Concerning the ICT Training Scheme, it is provision that is made for appropriate ICT Training to unemployed graduates in the ICT and related fields to create a pool of work ready for workforce. I must add here that the ICT Academy that was set up, in fact, did not deliver. So, we have to review the whole system and the objective is since we have a number of qualified people on the market and at the same time the enterprises are requiring a number of workforce, but there is a mismatch, because they are not fit in for that particular job. We are looking into it. If we can give some kind of additional training to those people so that – even at the end of the day they would not probably be readily employable – they will have to then undergo some other training depending on which enterprise is recruiting them. There was another question...

**The Chairperson:** The National Innovation Programme.

**Mr Jugnauth:** For the National Innovation Programme, this is new. It has been announced in the Budget and the objective is to transform Mauritius into a high income country through innovation. There are specific schemes that will be designed for supporting innovators with creative ideas in ICT and also non-ICT sectors. The programme will be run by the MRC in collaboration with the private sector.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, thank you. It is in relation to the very same item that has just been raised by hon. Ameer Meea regarding the *ICT Training Scheme* and the *National Innovation Programme*. With respect to the *ICT Training Scheme*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the amount of Rs50 m. would be given to outsiders to provide

the training or there will be people from his Ministry recruited to deliver this training? Under the *National Innovation Programme* whether at this stage he can let us know whether the amount disbursed will be in terms of grants, loans or what are the type of facilities he has in mind?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Yes, if I can give additional information, the target is to train some 1000 to 1500 unemployed through a *remise à niveau* and the programme will include –

- a core module for language, French and English;
- specific core modules for knowledge process outsourcing, accounting, legal and otherwise;
- specific certification modules, Oracle, Microsoft, Cisco and so on, and
- generic modules for non-IT science graduates.

As for the training, as I said, they may join the ICT Skills Development Programme for placement in different companies. I understand under the ISDP 50 percent of the salary is taken care by the company and 50 percent by the Programme for a given period of time. Of course, we will use the existing training institutions and we will also review the ICT Academy. So, decision is not really yet taken. We are working towards that training programme, but we intend to tap both the resources from the private sector and the public sector.

I am also told with regard to the innovation programme, there are going to be grants and not loans.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Regarding the identity card, Madam Chairperson, on page 149 on the *Mauritius National Identity Card*, I will take it on *Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister inform the House that pending whatever will be happening as to the outcome of the Court issue, whether his Ministry or Government will be carrying out an inquiry into all the subcontracts which had been awarded? There have been a lot of *magouilles*, even the guy who was responsible - I won't mention names – one Mr R. whether he is still around or whether he has resigned and how much compensation he has been given? Here, in Parliament, we have, on several occasions, asked questions on the different agencies which had been hired for the issue of the National Identity Card project. Will the Minister, at least,

give the House the guarantee that an inquiry will be conducted in parallel and not waiting for whatever will happen with the Court's judgment?

**The Chairperson:** Again, this is of a general nature.

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** Yes, I will answer, Madam Chairperson. I believe that not only with regard to that person who was in charge of this project, I believe the whole project itself, how it started when we all know that there was a tender procedure. It was nearing selection of one successful tenderer and then, the former Government decided to cancel the whole process and go for a G2G with Singapore. I don't need to go into all that, but I believe that we will have to, at least, gather all the information and from there on, we will see what other steps we can take.

The hon. Member has mentioned one Mr R. - again, if there is any specific case that we believe can be established, we will refer the matter to the Ministry of Good Governance and probably ask them to inquire into it.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to page 145 item 26313.042 - *Mauritius Research Council* and it is more specifically about the scheme launched by the Council last year, I believe, the Collaborative Research and Innovative Grant Scheme. How many applications were successfully processed during the year and whether the provision for the forthcoming years will still comprise of that scheme?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** I understand that there have been 38 applications and 5 have been successfully processed.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 147, item number 22120 - *Fees .033, Licence Fees for Microsoft Office*, as far as I can recall, there was a serious issue with Microsoft in the recent past. There was a big amount of Rs250 m. that was involved and this was criticised by the Director of Audit and it was being handled by the previous Financial Secretary. Therefore, under this issue, can I ask the hon. Minister if matters have been sorted out and also, whether now Government is in line with the rules and regulations of Microsoft Office?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** This is provision, in fact, for the purchase of about 620 licences for laptops because again it is as a consequence of the non-renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement which particularly was subject of great controversy. But, I have a lot of information about this - I do not think that the hon. Member wants me to read all about it, but it is in line with the stand that we have taken in the past. It is not yet sorted out, but we have not renewed the agreement, that is for one.

Secondly, we have to be in line with the legal obligation when we use a number of the software and that is why there are 620 licences. But, nothing comparable to what happened before.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 147, there is item 22030.007 – *Rental of Lines for Network System (a) GINS Rental (SKyGovNet, GFN, GOC Internet) and (b) SchoolNet II*. Then, we have the same item under Capital Expenditure, item 31132 – *Intangible Fixed Assets*. May I know from the hon. Minister, with respect to (a) *GINS Rental*, what this relates to? Second, with respect to (b) *SchoolNet II*, which I understand is putting Wi-Fi in secondary schools, what was the criteria used to identify and prioritise which schools get the Wi-Fi?

**Mr P. Jugnauth:** With regard to the *GINS* and the *GOC Internet* line rental, the increase is due to the line capacity at Government online centre and broadband connectivity from SHDSL to fibre optics for Ministries and Departments. With regard to *SchoolNet II*, this is rental of telecommunication lines in secondary schools. But I understand there is an issue. The *SchoolNet* project - provision that was made - has not yet started because there has been a challenge at the IRP. As regards which schools, I understand it must be for all schools. It is for all Government Secondary Schools plus all Government Aided Secondary Schools. We are talking about 163 schools in all. But it will have to cover all schools.

*Vote 7-1 Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Rs1,294,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 8-1 Ministry of Youth and Sports was called.*

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, on page 66, item 22900.939 - *Indian Ocean Island Games (IOIG)*, there is a sum of Rs30 m. budgeted. I would like to know if this sum has

already been disbursed and allocated to the sports federations and, if yes, can the hon. Minister give the sum allocated to each sports discipline?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, there is a provision of Rs30 m. which has been made until June 2015. I can circulate the details of the amount for the hon. Member. Otherwise, we will have to go through it.

**Mr Quirin:** Can I know whether this sum has already been disbursed in full?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** No, actually, the sum has not been disbursed in full, but it is being paid for –

- air tickets;
- nutrition;
- insurance;
- water filters;
- massage fees, and
- the coach fees, etc.

**Mr Quirin:** What about the training of athletes?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** The coach fees are included.

**Mr Quirin:** The hon. Minister is going to circulate the list.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Yes, I am going to circulate it.

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, I have one more question. On the same page 66, item 26313.045 – *Mauritius Sports Council*. I would like to know if the new Board has already been appointed. If yes, can the hon. Minister state the composition of the Board, please?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Madam Chairperson, the new Board has been constituted and the new Chairman is Mrs Sarah Rawat-Currimjee. The members are –

- Mr Michel Eddy Chang Kye;
- Mr Mouhammad Adjmal Peerbocus;
- Mr Anand Kumar Sukhraj;
- Mrs Bela Saddul, who is a representative of the Ministry of Education;



- Mr Lindsay Kunthasami;
- Mr Rajen Moothoocurpen;
- Mr Mohammad Shah Mehmeel Salamat;
- Mr Seewanand Tannoo;
- Mrs V. Boodhun, who is a representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports;
- Mr Daniel Gerard Beeharry, the Chairperson of the CNFS, and
- Mr Y. Oree, the new Managing Secretary.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, on page 66, item 28211.056 -*Professionalisation of Football*, there is a budgeted amount of Rs10 m. So, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the role of the Government in the professionalisation of football? We are paying Rs10 m. What is Government's involvement in that project?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, the Mauritius Professional Football League has spent more than Rs40 m. and the Government is only assisting with Rs10 m. This is only to give them the boost to go further until they can cruise on their own.

**Mr Quirin:** On the same page 66, item 26313.094 -*Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*. Maybe, it's the same question as the previous one on MSC. Has the new Chairman been appointed for the *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, we are in consultation, and the new Chairman as well as the Board members will be appointed soon.

**Mr Uteem:** Let me come back again to this question of *Professionalisation of Football*, item 28211.056. The hon. Minister has just mentioned that the Government is contributing Rs10 m. So, may I know whether the Government will have any representative on the Board or will there be any monitoring? How are we going to know what this sum of Rs10 m. is used for?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Definitely, my Ministry will look into it, so that money is used *à bon escient*. Inclusive we have the part payment of the *DTN, the Football Féminin* and the Top Up Premier League. So, everything will be monitored by my Ministry.

**Mr Quirin:** I have one more question, Madam Chairperson. On the same page 66, item 28211.056 - *Support to Football Clubs*, can the hon. Minister state if the sum earmarked

here - Rs8.5 m. - has already been allocated to the clubs? Can we know the names of the clubs and the sum allocated to each?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, we have ten teams in the Premier League, eight teams in the First Division, eight teams in the Second Division, and 12 teams in the Regional Clubs. But the money has not yet been voted.

**Mr Quirin:** On the same page 66, Madam Chairperson, *Professionalisation of Football*, a sum of Rs10 m. is budgeted for the first six months of this year. Can the hon. Minister tell us how this sum is going to be spent? Is it going to be disbursed to the *Ligue Professionnel* ?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** I think I have already answered to that. The money will be given to the MFA, and the MFA is going to redistribute the funds.

**Mr Quirin:** On page 67, Capital Expenditure, item 31113.006 – *Multi Sports Complex at La Source, Quatre Bornes*. I would like to know the name of the contractor, please.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** The name of the contractor – with no surprise – is Super Builders Co. Ltd.

*Vote 8-1 Ministry of Youth and Sports (Rs253,300,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 8-1 Ministry of Youth and Sports was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 155, Madam Chairperson, item 28212.015 *Transfers to Households, Allowances to High Level Athletes*. We are being asked to vote an amount of Rs5 m. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether these allowances to our high-level athletes have been increased, and will be increased as and when they perform and give results to the nation, and whether the Ministry will be considering also any possibility for these high-level athletes to have the best insurance cover? Whether, insurance cover also will be included during their training?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, the amount budgeted is still the same as last year, but anyway we are going to revise, in due course, depending on the performance of athletes or increase number of athletes.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** Thank you. Still on page 155, Capital Expenditure, item 31113.406 - *Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure* with regard to (c) *Lighting of Training Ground*, there is a provision of Rs15 m. over the next three years. Can the hon. Minister circulate the list of the projects that have been identified?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** I will circulate the list of the projects once it is being compiled.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to page 157, item 31112 - *Youth Centres*, more specifically youth complexes. I am not too sure whether there is a difference between the two, but hearsay is that access to youth complexes will henceforth be payable. I just want to find out from the hon. Minister whether this is a fact or not.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** At the moment, there are no fees being charged. It is going to remain the same, but we are going to review the hours to make it more flexible so that young people can use it.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 157, Capital Expenditure, item 31112.407 -*Upgrading of Youth Centres*. Mention is made about Anse La Raie, Bel Ombre, Flic-en-Flac, etc. Can I just make a request to the hon. Minister to have a site visit at the Trèfles Youth Centre, the Barkly Youth Centre and the Mont Roches Youth Centre which are of an urgent need for renovation works as they have been left over the past years - I won't say for political reasons? These centres are very popular and in need of urgent renovation works. So I would like to know whether funds, apart from those mentioned for those youth centres, have been earmarked in a general vote for the renovation of other youth centres.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, we have earmarked these three youth centres because they are in a really pitiful state or nearly closed down; I am visiting all the youth centres.

These renovation works are normal procedures. We are going to definitely renovate and review the whole procedure of the youth centres.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 155, item 31113.406 - *Upgrading of Sports Infrastructure*. May I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of the very bad state of the turf of Mamade Elahee Stadium and if this is budgeted to completely redo the turf as there are so many small rocks and pellets on the soil of the turf, and whether this is budgeted for next year?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** As far as I know, the Mamade Elahee Stadium is a synthetic ground.

*(Interruptions)*

Actually, I have been informed that it is being vested to the District Council. So, the other one, we are going to have a look at it.

*(Interruptions)*

Municipal Council, then!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 157, item 31112.007 - *Non-Residential Buildings, Construction of Youth Centres, (a) Harris Street Youth Centre*. I see there is no amount budgeted for this year because, I understand, that construction has been completed. May I know from the hon. Minister whether like Mamade Elahee Stadium, this Harris Youth Centre also will be vested in the Municipal Council, and whether any provisions have been made for the maintenance, lighting and payment of the gatekeeper?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, the project has been completed but, so far, we have not determined really how we are going to operate it. But, definitely, if we have to vest it in the Municipal Council, we will; it will be less burden for us.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, at page 155, under *Capital Expenditure*, item 31113.406 (c) *Lighting of training grounds* as well as (d) *Fencing and waterproofing*. A sum

of Rs10 m. has been earmarked for both. Can we know if the training grounds have already been identified concerning this project?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** The waterproofing works have been identified and we have the Rivière du Rempart Youth Centre, the Malherbe Youth Centre, Badminton Centre at Rose Hill, the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, Goodlands Youth Centre, Brisée Verdière Youth Centre, Anjalay Stadium, New George V Stadium, Phoenix Gymnasium and Germain Comarmond Stadium.

And for the fencing works, we have Pointe Jérôme Youth Centre, Mahebourg Youth Centre, Grand Baie Sailing Centre, Auguste Volaire Stadium and Centre Technique National François-Blaquart and the Rose Hill MSC ground as well.

The project consists of provision of lighting facilities on football ground, basketball ground and volleyball ground of this Ministry, for example, the Centre Technique National François-Blaquart and the Rose Hill Stadium, amongst others.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 155, item 28212.015 *Transfers to Households, Allowances to High Level Athletes*, may I know from the hon. Minister the amount budgeted to boxers, in particular, boxers who have won medals in the Commonwealth Games?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** The boxers inside are Ludovic Bactora, John Colin, Colin Ricardo, Jean-Luc Rosalba, Hursad Yannish, Cédric Olivier, Kennedy St. Pierre, Mervin Clair, Donovan Gerie, Amène Marcus, Vadamootoo Jordy, Nampoongah Michael, Laverdure Olivier, Danilo Gaspard. For example, Kennedy St. Pierre is perceiving Rs26,000 per month as well as Colin Ricardo.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 155, Madam Chairperson, item 26313.045 *-Mauritius Sports Council*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Mauritius Sports Council is now allowing the holding of *concerts* in Rose Hill Sports Complex? Recently, there has been a *concert*, I would like to know whether the Ministry has been made aware of damages caused to that very important sports ground in Rose Hill, *une ancienne Magistrature*, which is used for training purposes and in which massive investments were made. I would like to know

whether artists can, henceforth, make use of this ground and whether there is a new policy regarding fees which are being collected from artists.

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Actually, the Mauritius Sports Council has got a new Board now. I will have to see with them and I will circulate the answer to the hon. Member.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** On page 155, item 26313.045 *Mauritius Sports Council*, can the hon. Minister inform us if there is any salary or allocation paid to the Chairman and members of the Board of the MSC?

**Mr Sawmynaden:** Yes, there is an amount being paid. According to PRB, the Chairman, I think, is perceiving Rs26,000 per month.

*(Interruptions)*

Board members, if I can recall, is Rs850.

*Vote 8-1 Ministry of Youth and Sports (Rs550,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport*

*Vote 9-1 Public Infrastructure was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 71, under item 22120.008 *Fees to Consultants (Geotechnical Expert for Port Louis Ring Road Lot 1)*, there is an amount of Rs1.8 m. budgeted. In respect to this Ring Road, may I know from the hon. Minister where do matters stand as far as the claim that the Government may have against the contractor or consultant or whoever is responsible for the mess of the Ring Road?

**Mr Bodha:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As regards the *Fees*, they are fees for geotechnical experts, pavement engineer and consultancy fees. In fact, what has happened is that we were still within the one-year liability period. So, the consortium, which built the Ring Road Phase I, has accepted to do the consultancy for the repair works and to carry out the repair works and they have, in fact, chosen a consultant to do so. We, from the Government side - just to check whether the design and remedial works were appropriate -

requested a consultancy firm to come to Mauritius and to carry out the consultancy just to check whether the design and the remedial works were adequate.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 72, under item 31113.003, (g) *Upgrading of Hugnin Road (Study)*, we are being asked to vote Rs4.5 m. Can the hon. Minister give us some indication where we have reached with this project? *Upgrading of Hugnin Road (Study)*!

Secondly, I would like to talk on item 31113.403 *Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation*. For the six months, we are being asked to vote Rs210 m. I won't go into the past. The hon. Minister knows it; certain constituencies were left apart. The main road from St Jean to Coromandel is completely rushed. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether St Jean Road to Port Louis and also the main road from Mont Roches to St Martin cemetery are included for maintenance?

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Chairperson, as regards the upgrading of Hugnin Road, it's a study. A study aims to recommend the best possible solution to reduce traffic congestion on existing roads, reduce traffic accidents and enhance road safety to an extent of 5.2 km from Hugnin Road, from its junction with A1 to the junction with Boundary Road. Provision will be required for payment of consultancy fees.

**The Chairperson:** From St Jean to Coromandel! Road maintenance and rehabilitation!

**Mr Bodha:** Well, the project consists of the maintenance and rehabilitation of roads network falling under the responsibility of the RDA, that is, namely what we call the M, A and B roads. I think there was a specific question as regards Mont Roches to St Martin.

*(Interruptions)*

Maintenance! So, I don't have the list here. I think I can be provided with same.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** On page 71, concerning item 22120.008 *Fees to Consultants (Geotechnical Expert for Port Louis Ring Road Lot 1)*, the hon. Minister has mentioned that Government will look into the real issue as to whether the consultant employed by the contractor is doing the job. May I inform the hon. Minister that Arab Consulting took all the responsibility before and now we see ourselves with Rs1.8 m. just to check what they are

doing? So, it was a waste of money before and are we not wasting money again if we employ contractors and consultants and then we have another consultant to check on what contract we have already signed with them?

**Mr Bodha:** It is to make assurance doubly sure. In fact, Arab Consulting was the consultancy firm which advised for the design and was supposed to supervise the works and the road collapsed. When Arab Consulting came with another solution, I think that it was important for us to see to it that the remedial works were the proper works. Now, later we have to see how we can have a case against the Arab Consulting and those who designed the road and who did the works.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to page 71, item *31410.407 Rehabilitation Works for Landslide Management*, for which a sum of Rs8 m. has been provided for the period January to June 2015. My question is as follows: since the actual rehabilitation will be done by the Ministry, whether Rs8 m. are sufficient because after the recent downpour in the region of Port Louis, my own estimate of this far exceeds Rs8 m. and they all warrant in urgent intervention?

**The Chairperson:** Page 71 item *31410.407 Rehabilitation Works for Landslide Management!*

**Mr Bodha:** Landslide management, in fact, I don't have any specific answer here. That is what I was saying. This has been done in collaboration with JICA which is the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the budget they have requested, in fact, is Rs8 m. and the provision required by Civil Engineering Division is about the Remote Monitoring System in Chitrakoot, Vallée Pitot, Quatre Soeurs and La Butte, and for some other remedial works. Rs8 m!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 75, item *26313.129 Mauritius Land Transport Authority*.

**The Chairperson:** Which page is the hon. Member referring to?

**Mr Bodha:** We are still with Public Infrastructure.

**The Chairperson:** Can we pass on to hon. Dr. Sorefan in the meantime?



**Dr. Sorefan:** On page 72, item 31 *Acquisition of Non Financial Assets, 31113.003 (f) Rehabilitation of Hillcrest Avenue, Quatre Bornes*, regarding Capital Expenditure, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the amount includes landscaping, if not, who is doing the landscaping and whether tenders were launched for landscaping or is it in the contract of Gamma Civic?

**Mr Bodha:** Regarding Hillcrest Avenue, the project consists of the upgrading of 1.15 kilometres of road starting from roundabout motorway. The road will be equipped with street lighting and necessary road infrastructure. The objective of this project is to provide a link of high standards for traffic within the Sodnac and Quatre Bornes region with good horizontal and vertical geometry. The project intends to significantly reduce traffic. As regards the landscaping, I do not have much. So, I would have to have some specific answer from my officers. Yes, landscaping will be included.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 72, item 26 *Grants, item 26313.079 Road Development Authority*. So, there is a budgetary amount of Rs59 m. May I know from the hon. Minister where matters stand as far as the enquiry conducted by the RDA is concerned with regard to the Terre Rouge-Verdun Project.

**Mr Bodha:** It is a specific question or a general one! Well, as regards the enquiry by the Disciplinary Committee concerning two engineers, it is scheduled for 21 April.

*Vote 9-1 Public Infrastructure (Rs655,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 9-2 Land Transport was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 75, item 26313.129 *Mauritius Land Transport Authority*. We are being asked to vote Rs3.5 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether all the relevant sections of the Land Transport Authority Act, which was passed here, have been proclaimed and whether all the posts have been filled as per this Act?

**Mr Bodha:** The grant is to meet recurrent costs. As regards the law, the answer is no, it has not been proclaimed.

*(Interruptions)*

No, not proclaimed! What I have been told is that all sections have been proclaimed except the merging of the RDA, the NTA and the TMRSU.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 75, item 31122.999 *Other Machinery and Equipment (Traffic Heads, Traffic Signs & Reflectorised Traffic Signs, and Speed Cameras)*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether tenders have already been launched for these traffic signs, because in the past, there were issues with the allocation of contracts which went all the way to IRP?

**Mr Bodha:** Traffic Signs!

*(Interruptions)*

There are the speed cameras and the traffic signs. As regards speed cameras, the contract has been allotted, some of the cameras have been installed and there are six which have not yet been delivered. The last consignment was supposed to be done in December and as they have not been delivered, there is a breach of contract. The six which have been the last consignment and which have not been delivered, will now be cancelled.

As regards the other cameras, we are going to relocate some of them, we are going to see to it that they adapt to the new configuration with the new road system.

As regards the signal equipment, so far it applies for the contract for supplies, installation of speed cameras. We have had no contract, as far as I know, for traffic signal equipment. So, this Budget of Rs35 m. was for the speed cameras.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** On page 74, item 22030 *Rent*, I see that there has been an increase of four times the rent. May we know whether it is a new building and the surface area and why has it gone from Rs911,000 to Rs3.7 m.?

**Mr Bodha:** It is provision to meet the cost of rent of the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, Air Mauritius building, parking slots attached to the Ministry and rental of facilities for events up to June 2015. Well, from what I understand, the Ministry was in Government House and we have moved now to the Air Mauritius building.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 76, item 25 *Subsidies –Free Travel Scheme* both to the public and private enterprises. I see it is exactly the same amount as the previous year, divided by

half. So, is there any change in the method of allocation for these subsidies or are we doing the same thing as we did last year?

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Chairperson, I explained to the House here that, in fact, there is no accountability. It is just based on a figure, on a presumed percentage of students travelling and the elderly travelling. Now, we have put up a system where we will have an accountability as to the number of people who are travelling as regards the students, the number of buses and the number of students on a daily basis. We are starting the system next week. The other issue is: we still do not know how many people travel every day. So, we have to come in the second stage and I think we will have to do that in the months to come. It is to have a system where we have a swipe card where we know exactly the number of students who travel by the dedicated buses and the number of students who travel with the national system. As regards the elderly, to know the number of elderly people travelling on a daily basis, in fact, so far, the authority has just been a paying agent; that's a mathematical conclusion. There is no contract between the NTA and any of the service providers. We just have an MoU which dates back to 2006. So, now, we are going to have a contract with each service provider and an accountability system so that we know who travels, and who travels on which bus.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** On page 76, on the same item, the hon. Minister has just mentioned no contracts. We were surprised when he talked on the Budget Speech that there were no contracts since the implementation of this project. Now that the Government is in power as from December, is a contract still going on for these people to gather juicy money without doing the job?

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Chairperson, what we are going to do as from next week is: we will have a specific contract between the NTA and each service provider and that contract will specify what are the obligations and responsibilities of each service provider and, at the same time, we will see to it that the NTA has a record, on a daily basis, of the names of the drivers, the names of the conductors and the number of students travelling from which school to which destination.

*Vote 9-2 Land Transport (Rs840,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 9-1 Public Infrastructure was called.*

**Mr Lesjongard:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I refer the hon. Minister to page 168, item 31113.003 *Construction of Grade Separated Junction on M1 at De Caen Street, Port Louis*. The project value for this particular project is Rs200 m. The hon. Minister will recall that we have already built a flyover with variations being paid and an extra cost to the tune of Rs160 m. in the past and I remember having put a question to the then Minister to know whether what we are building is supported by a feasibility study, that is, whether the whole Road Decongestion Programme is supported by a feasibility study. We have already spent Rs160 m. in the past to build a flyover at the Caudan Roundabout. Now, Government is telling us that we have again to spend Rs200 m. for the construction of a grade separated junction on the M1 at the De Caen Street, Port Louis which is not far from the Caudan Roundabout. May we know from the hon. Minister whether this project will eventually solve the traffic congestion problem at Caudan or is it another project that will give rise to a third combination of flyover and grade separated junction at that particular area?

**Mr Bodha:** Madam Chairperson, the issue has always been the congestion at Place d'Armes. There are only three possibilities; one is the tunnel, the other one is the dream bridge and the third one would be the flyover across the Place d'Armes. I think, for a number of reasons people would not like to have a flyover just in front of Place d'Armes. So, the idea, in fact, is to see to it that we enter into Port Louis not at Place d'Armes but further up. This is the grade separated junction at De Caen and we will see to it that the traffic over a flyover will enter Port Louis at De Caen and join the John Kennedy Road and we are going to work on the whole region of Port Louis with the main arteries. We are thinking of Desforges Street and Royal Street being three lanes without parking. This will join the Ring Road Phase II, the tunnel and the Ring Road Phase III to connect at the grade separation of Mer Rouge connecting with all the traffic from the port area. So, that is the idea, to see to it that there is a fluid traffic at Place d'Armes. All the cars going from the north to the south will not have to stop any more, they will go straight to the south and the cars entering Port Louis will enter Port Louis further up at the De Caen Street and no longer at Place d'Armes.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 164, under item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*, sub item *General Worker*, there is an increase from 176 employees as general workers to 652. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of general workers who were in service in 2014 which after the elections have been laid off and whether in

recruiting these new general workers priority would be given to those general workers who have been laid off by this new Government?

**Mr Bodha:** Well, the laying off was a policy decision with regard to people who had been recruited just before the elections. In the case of the RDA for example, they assumed duty on 10 November when the National Assembly had been dissolved on 06 October and the Nomination Day was 24 November.

The grade of general worker, in fact, is a departmental grade on the establishment of each Ministry. In fact, they are not general workers who are going to be allocated to the Ministry of Public infrastructure. The Ministry does the recruitment exercise with the PSC and then allots the general workers to the different Ministries. I understand that there is a problem, that some of the workers have been laid off and what we are going to...

*(Interruptions)*

I think when the decision was taken it was about 300. As regards the exercise to come, whether they will be given priority, I think that they can apply like the other workers provided that they qualify - I think one of the first conditions is that they have been on the list of unemployed people at the Ministry of Employment and they have the unemployment card. I think that what we can do is to ask them to apply like the other candidates.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 167, Madam, I will take it upon the RDA. We are being asked to vote Rs119 m. I have raised this issue of traffic congestion at the *Vandermeersch Street* near the Central Electricity Board and even coming from Ebène which is a nightmare to all the citizens of the country travelling to this area, especially sick people. Can I insist upon the hon. Minister - because I don't rely on the officers of the RDA - to have a proper study carried out? We had been given a reply here with which we do not agree. It is too costly to have a bypass behind the Ebène SSS. So the new project which would start near Coromandel to go on the motorway will take 5 to 10 years. We are having problems every day at this roundabout and even coming from Port Louis in the afternoon and in the morning. Will the hon. Minister see to it that, at least, a proper study be carried out? I have been there and there are possibilities.

Secondly, whether the hon. Minister can give instructions to the RDA to remove all these plastics that they have put at the *Promenade Roland Armand* which is the main jogging park of this region *qui est très fréquenté*. Since four weeks the RDA has put their plastic bindings at this promenade which is an eyesore and which is creating lots of confusion?

**Mr Bodha:** First of all, Madam Chairperson, as regards decongestion programme, we are going to have the new scope of works in the weeks to come and Government will have to take a decision as regards the main A1/M1 bridge over Sorèze connecting with the motorway.

As regards the Vandermeersch issue, the junction, the hon. Member has mentioned this to me many times and I can assure him that nothing will be done to make him feel that we have not listened to his advice.

I have, in fact, requested the RDA and the TMRSU to give a special attention to that. It is true that we have the Queen Elizabeth College, we have the bus station, so, we are going to move very cautiously. We will take the advice of the hon. Member as well as the other Members of the Constituency to see that we find the best solution. It is a major problem. I have been told that the by-pass behind the Queen Elizabeth College will cost a lot. In fact, it is building a bridge which will join the *le bout du monde* ...

*(Interruptions)*

Anyway, we will look into the matter. We will be posted as regards the A1/M1 link road from Beau Bassin to Sorèze in the coming weeks.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, I will request the RDA to do that.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 167, item 31113 *Capital Expenditure – Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, there was an amount of Rs1 billion spent in 2014. Next year, it will be Rs800 m. and Rs800 m. the following years. May I know from the hon. Minister in regard to these main infrastructure projects, whether it will be totally funded by Government? Is Government going to do a private/public partnership or has this idea of having a company with the private sector to construct road been shelved?

**Mr Bodha:** As regards the general decongestion programme, this will have an impact on all these projects, Madam Chairperson. We are going to have as I have said –

- the new scope of works;
- the budget;
- the mode of financing, and

then we will see whether we are going for the PPP. We know that, in the past, there was a model which was proposed by Government. I think nobody agreed on this that the Government will take a loan of Rs20 billion and give it to the private partner. So, we are looking at the new scope of works, the new budget and we will see how Government's involvement could be taken into account. We are also taking into consideration some private partnership and some private investment.

**Mr Jhuboo:** On page 167, Capital Expenditure – item (n) *Upgrading of access to Flic en Flac (Study)*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the study concerns only the access or is it a comprehensive study that will define whether we need a bypass to decongest Flic en Flac?

**Mr Bodha:** I have it here. Madam Chairperson, the assignment consists of a feasibility study and detailed engineering design for the access to Flic en Flac. The alignment under study shall start at the existing Pierrefonds roundabout, follow the existing Palma road bypass, the village of Beaux Songes and deviate into a south-west direction with a junction at Geoffroy and thereafter aiming west to connect to the existing road at Manisa Hotel. The objectives of the study are –

- to provide a second access option;
- increase the access capacity;
- create a pedestrian friendly traffic cum zone from the Flic en Flac/Wolmar area, and
- provision for a proposed alternative design or traffic flow options for the staggered double T junction at Cascavelle.

So, in fact, it is a very holistic approach of the area.

*Vote 9-1 Public Infrastructure (Rs1,647,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 9-2 Land Transport was called.*

**Mr Lesjongard:** I'll get back again to the creation of that *Mauritius Land Transport Authority*. It is on page 175, under item 26 – *Grants*, sub-item 26313.129. We see that provision is there for an estimate of Rs7.3 m. for 2015/2016 and we still have provision for the Traffic Management Road Safety Unit, the National Transport Authority and the RDA. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether we have a time frame for the implementation of this Act, that is, the Mauritius Land Transport Authority Act and whether he can confirm where matters stand? Have we proclaimed the First and Second Schedule of the Act which deals with the declaration of assets of officers involved in those organisations, that is, the RDA, the National Transport Authority and the TMRSU?

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Members, I just wish to draw your attention to the fact that during the Committee of Supply, no questions are allowed on legislation.

**Mr Bodha:** Well, the question is whether the Mauritius Land Transport Authority will be constituted in the manner it had been devised then. The answer is no. So, we are not coming with the huge authority which will be like an umbrella under which the TMRSU, the RDA and the NTA will work. That is why sections have not been proclaimed because we are not going for the merger. In fact, we have a small team which is now at the Mauritius Land Transport Authority which was working on the LRT. Now that the LRT project has been shelved, this Authority will not see the day as the big umbrella under which all these organisations are going to operate. In fact, what is going to happen is that the Mauritius Land Transport Authority will remain as it is today. We are going to see to it that the Authority can be some sort of a think tank for the whole issue of land transport.

**Mr Lesjongard:** We had in mind when we voted that legislation that officers in such Authority dealing with big contracts do declare their assets. I want to know whether this will hold good or we are not going into that direction?

**Mr Bodha:** We will not go into that direction. They will not deal with contracts at all.

*Vote 9-2 Land Transport (Rs1,690,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 10-1 Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research was called.*



**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, can I take page 83? Is it on that vote?

**The Chairperson:** Yes.

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 83 – *Grants* to the MITD. I do not need to recall the hon. Minister in what mess the MITD was ...

**The Chairperson:** Which item?

**Mr Bhagwan:** Item 26313.027 – *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*. Can the hon. Minister, at least, inform the House - before asking us to vote for nearly Rs237 m. - whether the whole mess at the MITD has been cleared, whether a new set-up has been put in place, and whether there would be a full enquiry on all the issues which have been raised in Parliament where there has been a lot of injustice, corruption and *pourriture*?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The matter is being taken care of and, in fact, full restructuring of the sector is envisaged. We are trying to get support from certain experts, which will be provided to us from the embassies in Mauritius who are ready to help. With the help of consultants and experts, we are going to restructure the whole sector and, obviously, care is being taken to look after the cases that have been brought to our notice.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, page 80, item 28212.004 - *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*. Can the hon. Minister tell us if this project is actually being implemented? Is it really the project concerning '*repas chauds*' to schoolchildren?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The project '*repas chauds*' is not being envisaged right now. In fact, the school feeding programme refers to the school feeding programme at the ZEP schools and the offer of loaves of bread in all primary schools.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 80, item 31, *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets, 31112.402 - Upgrading of Schools, (a) O. Beugeard GS*, I take note that there is absolutely no amount budgeted. May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that no money is being budgeted for the reconstruction of Beugeard GS?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** As for Beugeard Government School, the renovation and construction works have been carried out. Works had started in July 2013 and the contract has terminated. Yet, there is an injunction case before the Supreme Court. Since the stay order in November 2013 from the Supreme Court, an amount of Rs15,000, on a daily basis, comprising of watchmanship, tools and equipment, performance security insurance, etc., is being spent. The State Law Office has, in November last, informed the Ministry that the contract may be terminated, and that's why no provision is being made.

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, can we know why the '*repas chauds*' project is not being considered actually?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** No provision has been made in this budget and it will be done in the coming years. It requires proper thinking before we launch on this project.

**Mr Quirin:** May I know what is being offered to schoolchildren actually as food?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Apart from the provision of loaves to primary schools, which is funded by PTA, we have the provision of meals to pupils at the ZEP schools - bread, butter, cheese, fruit and water. It is the responsibility, again, of the PTA to appoint the caterers. The sum spent is Rs76 m. for 2014, and the estimates for January to June 2015 is Rs42 m.

**Mr Uteem:** At page 85, item 26313.088 - *Tertiary Education Commission/Tertiary Education Institutions*. The grant for TEC is around Rs38 m. for this coming six months. May I know from the hon. Minister whether all enquiries relating to TEC have been completed or not, and what is the outcome therefor?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** There are some enquiries on officers working at TEC which is still on, which have not been completed yet.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 80, item 31, sub-item 31112.402 - *Upgrading of Schools, (f) Primary Schools Renewal Project*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether Emmanuel Anquetil School, which is found in Roche Bois, is included in this list of 'upgrading of schools', as some of the classes are in a very bad state, especially the toilets for the kids there?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I will give you the information.

**The Chairperson:** In the meantime maybe hon. Uteem can have his question.

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 84, under Recurrent Expenditure, item 28212.011 - *State of Mauritius/Additional Scholarships*, there is a pro rata reduction from Rs108 m. to Rs26 m. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a reduction in the number of additional scholarships that are being given under this scheme?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** No. It's only the timing when the payment is made. The number of scholarships is the same.

I have got the information regarding Emmanuel Anquetil Government School. We have a project for construction of new toilet blocks, demolition of the old toilet blocks and construction of eight WC cubicles for boys and eight for girls, two for the staff and one for disabled. The project started in April 2013 and was completed in October 2013. For the classes, no provision has been made in this budget.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ramful!

**Mr Ramful:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 84, under the sub-head 10-107: *Human Resource Development*, I see that no provision has been made for the Human Resource Development Council. So, do I take it that the recurrent budget for the HRDC will be taken from the levy grant system contributed by the private sector?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** One of the functions of the HRDC is to manage the National Training Fund. Given that no Government grant has been allocated to HRDC, the Council has been financing its overall budget from the National Training Fund since 2009.

*Vote 10-1 Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Rs7,317,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 10-1 Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research was called.*

**The Chairperson:** I will allow only one question because I had already put the question. The question had already been replied. So, I will give you one question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** On page 186, item 22120.025 *Fees of which Fees to Oriental Language Teachers*, every year, we are asked to vote an item of about Rs25 m. to Rs28 m. May I know from the hon. Minister how many Oriental Teachers are concerned and why are they not on establishment? Why do we have to keep paying fees every year to them?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The Oriental Teachers that we are talking about are not those who are on establishment. They are those working in the *baitkas* and small evening schools. For Hindi, we have 391 teachers; Urdu - 194; Tamil - 67; Telegu - 34; Modern Chinese - 4; Marathi - 22; a total of 712 teachers and these are teachers working in evening schools, not in the primary schools.

*Vote 10-1 Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Rs14,725,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Health and Quality of Life*

*Vote 11-1 Ministry of Health and Quality of Life was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 87, item 21110 *Personal Emoluments* and, on page 88, item 26313.095 - *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care* respectively. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the sum that we are going to approve include payment to specialist Doctors doing surgery, for example, neurosurgery, cardiac surgery and gynaecological?

**Mr Gayan:** I assume that the amount is for all the charges paid to all the Doctors and specialists.

**Dr. Sorefan:** No, what I mean, certain neurosurgeons or cardiac surgeons when they do one case, are they paid another fee for every case they do - that goes even for caesarean - and whether this amount is included in this Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, from what I understand, there is a specified number of operations which are carried out by the cardiac surgeons and, over and above that number, they are paid extra for the operations.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 88, item 22140.002 - *C.T Scan and MRI Fees and Materials*. I understand expenditures are paid to the private. Since several of our hospitals are equipped with C.T. Scan and MRI, I fail to understand why such an amount is being paid to the private. So, can the hon. Minister enlighten us?

**Mr Gayan:** I understand that in case of breakdown and patients needing planned C.T, Scan, then they have to be redirected to the clinics. I understand that in the last 8 to 10 years, patients needing emergency C.T Scan were sent mainly to City clinic and some were sent to *Clinique du Nord*, but it would appear that since the outcry most of the C.T. Scans are being performed at hospitals. If it is not available in one hospital they are sent to another hospital.

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 88, item 31112.003 (f) *New ENT Hospital* and (j) *New Psychiatric Hospital* respectively. I see that no amount has been budgeted for these two new hospitals that have been announced for construction. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether this project will not be done soon?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, we are still awaiting clearance from the Prime Minister's Office regarding the authorisation to construct in the same place as the present ENT. A reply is expected soon, and once this is obtained, then, of course, there will be all the preparation for the scope of work and the cost estimate.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** *Merci, Madame la présidente.* On page 90, item 31 - *Capital Expenditure*, out of an amount of almost half a billion rupees, can the hon. Minister confirm the amount that is being allocated for upgrading Dr. Yves Cantin Regional Hospital in Black River?

**The Chairperson:** It is not under the list of items. There is no Dr. Yves Cantin Regional Hospital in there.

**Mr Gayan:** Well, if the hon. Member is asking about whether there is any project for Dr. Yves Cantin Regional Hospital in this Budget, no, there is not!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Regarding the question of hon. Dr. Joomaye for the ENT Hospital, this has been earmarked for 2015-2016; there is a huge sum voted that we are going to come with.

**Mr Gayan:** Well, my understanding is that the location of the ENT Hospital was being discussed and there were other plots that were being studied. But finally, it was found that it is better to have it in the same place with a new building. So, this is why we are still awaiting clearance from the Prime Minister's Office, but the money will be there.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** A la page 88, sous l'item 31112. En ce qui concerne le *Upgrading of Hospitals* dans l'enceinte de l'hôpital Victoria, des infrastructures religieuses y étaient prévues initialement et qui ont été complètement négligées depuis. Est-ce qu'il y a des dotations budgétaires qui sont prévues pour la rénovation ou bien éventuellement pour être utilisées à titre de store, etc.?

**Mr Gayan :** En ce qui concerne les structures religieuses, je ne crois pas qu'il y a eu des fonds qui ont été alloués pour ça.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 88, item 26313.095 *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*. We are being asked to vote Rs112 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the house whether provision has been made for the upgrading of the yard of that specialised centre? I am sure you have been there; it is a mess outside. For the reputation of the centre itself, there is an urgent need for the upgrading of the yard and the surroundings and, the more so, there are constructions around and this is causing an environment nuisance to the people attending this centre.

Secondly, on the vote of Rs112 m., I would like to know whether funds have been spent recently for the refurbishment of offices of the new administration.

**Mr Gayan:** Regarding the first question, Madam Chairperson, I understand that this amount includes the upgrading of the yard and the surrounding areas. I think it is an ongoing thing that all offices need to be upgraded. So, I believe that there must have been some upgrading.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On the very same item 26313.095 *Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether in the coming 6 months any amount has been budgeted to increase the number of cardiac surgeons operating at that centre.

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, I understand that ideally, we need to have more cardiac surgeons, but there seems to be some structural difficulties and we are looking into that. I think we need to look for them locally and if we do not get them, then, of course, we'll have to go overseas. But we are in the process of finding a third cardiac surgeon. We have two, right now.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On the same item, Madam Chairperson, I just want to put on record my appreciation, because this centre is a centre of excellence and has saved the lives of many Mauritians, including Members of Parliament here, irrespective of political differences. Can I make a request to the hon. Minister that, at least, this centre of excellence, which has been built by the DWC years back - I am not talking about the yard only, but the waiting room for the patients, who go for treatment also should be a more convenient place? I do not think that for such a specialised centre, money should be a problem.

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, in fact, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. Member. There is a building which the former Minister Jeetah was putting up for a university or I do not know what, at Pamplemousses. In fact, we are in the process of finding out whether we can take over that particular building for the Trust Fund and also for other activities like the nursing school. This has been mentioned in the Budget, but we are trying to see if we can reorganise that particular building for that purpose.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 90, under item 22900.915 *Multi sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS Programme*, I would like to know from the hon. Minister why this Budget has been decreased and whether he is satisfied with this fact.

**Mr Gayan:** I'll just check. I think, Madam Chairperson, this is for the 6 months, this is why this amount is there.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Joomaye:** For the 6 months coming, it is Rs12 m. and for the previous year, it was Rs29 m.

**Mr Gayan:** I think the allocation was not there; the basis of the amount actually spent.

*Vote 11-1 Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (Rs4,450,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 11-1 Ministry of Health and Quality of Life was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** On page 218 *Capital Expenditure*, item 31112.006 *Construction of Mediclinics, (e) Coromandel Mediclinic*, there is a sum of Rs7 m. earmarked for this year. Can we know when will this project start and in how many years will it be completed, as I see here Rs25 m. for the coming years has been earmarked also?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, the hon. Member will appreciate that I have also an interest in this, but I understand that the land has been identified and the process is on for the vesting of the land in the Ministry. So, I hope it goes very fast and I will see to it that it goes very fast.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 202, under item 22130.001 *Studies and Preliminary Project Preparation*, an amount of Rs20,888 m. has been allocated. This amount has been allocated for studies and surveys only. Can I know from the hon. Minister what will be the time frame for implementing these projects (a) to (f) - *Institute of Women's Health, Paediatric Hospital, New Warehouse, etc.?*

**Mr Gayan:** For some of these studies, I understand that there is still some work that has to be done. For example, there are feasibility studies for the projects and there is an amount of Rs20 m. which has been earmarked for study on NCDs and other agencies. For the Institute of Women's Health, the contract has been awarded. For paediatric hospital, contract also has been awarded to a consultant. For the new warehouse, the contract has been awarded to another consultant and for the others, the studies are expected to start sometime this year.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!



**Dr. Sorefan:** Madam Chairperson, on page 219, item 22900.925 *Rehabilitation Programme for Alcoholics and Drug Addicts by NATReSA*, may we know from the hon. Minister whether the amount earmarked includes security guards at the dispensing department in the hospital where recently we had drug addicts who broke in and had self-treatment of methadone, by themselves; self-service?

**Mr Gayan:** Well, I know that recently there was an incident at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, but an inquiry is still on as to how this could have happened, because if the proper procedure had been followed, this would have been impossible. So, there must have been something that went wrong. With regard to the hospitals, there is security, there are the Police, but this is an exceptional circumstance.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, on page 212, item 22140 *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, we are asked to vote a budget of around Rs595 m., may I know from the hon. Minister what measures are being taken to ensure that there is no shortage of medicines, because we have just seen, for example, with the 'disco eyes', *conjunctivite*, there was a shortage of medicines in the public hospitals?

**Mr Gayan:** Let me say one thing, Madam Chairperson. In the hospitals, there was no shortage of any medication for conjunctivitis. There may have been in the private sector, but in the public sector there was none. We are regularly monitoring the stock of medication at the Central Supplies Division. In fact, I have impressed upon that particular department that we should monitor on a regular basis so that we never run out of stock. It may happen exceptionally that some medication is not available but, as far as possible, I have impressed upon them not only not to be out of stock but also to ensure that we do not purchase lots of drugs *qui deviennent périmés*. Right now we have billions of rupees of medication lying which have to be destroyed so that is also a waste which we are trying to control.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Mohamed!

**Mr Mohamed:** At page 204 item 21 as far as *Recurrent Expenditure* is concerned, what I would like to know from the hon. Minister is something very simple - I have not seen it therein and forgive my ignorance - but does anyone of the people or individuals in charge of hospitals have what I will call certifications or qualifications or training in the field of management of hospitals? Do any of them have that particular training, that particular qualification and, if not, what does the hon. Minister propose to do in order to give them that

particular managerial skill in terms of certification because managing a hospital or a health institution is different to being a doctor and is different to being someone qualified in health services?

**Mr Gayan:** I understand that we have hospital administrators who are supposed to be trained in administration. Madam Chairperson, I understand that there are training programmes that they follow to get the expertise to run the hospitals. I must say that, when looking into the management of hospitals, someone came up with the idea to me saying that the best way to run a hospital is to get somebody who runs a hotel as the same services are provided. It is customer oriented. In fact, I have mentioned it to my officers and we are going to look into that.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Ameer Meea, are you ready with your question?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 212, item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*, my question will be on the distribution of methadone. I am taking it on item 22140.001 - *Medicine, Drugs and Vaccines*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can report progress to the House on the distribution of methadone? Since its inception up to now what has been the rate of success? How many drug addicts are taking it and what is his vision concerning the distribution of methadone?

**Mr Gayan:** Well, Madam Chairperson, I must say that I am not very happy with the rate of progress of people getting out of methadone. When I became Minister I looked into the issue and there was no control whatsoever on how methadone was being distributed to the clients as they are called. And then we decided to have a system where no client of methadone would get any methadone unless he came with his identity card plus another card which was distributed by the Ministry so that it is only on presentation of those two cards that a client can get his methadone. I must say that the numbers are in the thousands and, as at December 2014, the number was about 7000. Since we have decentralised the methadone distribution, I have also got on board a Doctor who is especially trained to wean drug addicts off. The programme has just started and I hope it is a success, but I must also say that the NGOs have to play their part as well in this process. I think it is ongoing, but, as I said, I cannot say any more than that right now.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** Thank you, Madam. On page 213, item 31112.003 regarding the *New Cancer Centre - Construction, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Bunker and*

*Equipment*, I understand it is the radiotherapy equipment. I can see that for 2015/2016 only Rs15 m. have been budgeted and planned for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 are Rs50 m. and Rs70 m. Does that mean that the new Cancer Centre will be fully operational and will give radio therapy services only in 3 to 4 years?

**Mr Gayan:** That is not the intention of Government. The intention of Government is to have a new Cancer Treatment Centre operational at the earliest. But, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned yesterday and I have taken his concern on board. With the linear accelerator apparatus that we need to make it fully modern, we need to be very careful because it is a huge amount of money. There are only apparently three suppliers in the world for this equipment and we are having a wide range of consultations. I have also had consultations with the IAEA in Vienna so that they also help us in the identification of the proper equipment for Mauritius. I am sure that the hon. Minister of Finance will provide the funds necessary so that it becomes operational at the earliest.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ramful!

**Mr Ramful:** On the same item, Madam Chairperson, we know that Government is spending a lot of money sending cancer patients abroad. Do I take it that this sum would cover the purchase of the latest equipment so that patients can get maximum cancer treatment over here in Mauritius? Can we have a list of the equipment that we intend to purchase?

**Mr Gayan:** Well, I think, Madam Chairperson, there is a confusion. There are two things, one is the equipment for the cancer treatment and there is another item for overseas treatment of patients so we should not mix the two. Probably there will always be some cases that we will not be able to treat locally and they will have to be treated overseas. This is something over which we can have no control. The intention is that, as far as possible, all Mauritians suffering from cancer would be treated locally and, with this new equipment, I understand it is very modern, it is a state-of-the-art, so I believe that we will have the equipment but, the greatest problem also will be to train the people who will be able to use the equipment. This also is already ongoing.

*(Interruptions)*

It will be part of the package. Maybe I should assure everybody that for the equipment that we propose to purchase there will be a maintenance contract and we will ensure that, within 48 hours, the supplier will have to come and repair by whatever means he can. We are trying to get the best possible means to ensure that this equipment is for the benefit of all Mauritians.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 213 item 31112.003 - *Non-Residential Buildings Construction/Extension of which (a) New Jeetoo Hospital*, there is a budgeted amount of Rs35 m. May I know from this amount whether any amount is budgeted for the building of a new incineration in Dr. Jeetoo hospital? There was a parliamentary question on that and, if not, what is happening with the project of having a central incineration for the waste which, we believe is toxic?

**Mr Gayan:** Well, Madam Chairperson, this incinerator at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital is causing a lot of nuisance. I have looked into the matter. I understand that the best way forward would be to have a separate incinerator for the whole medical waste generated in hospitals, but not on the premises of any hospital. A study will have to be carried out regarding this particular matter. I understand that last year a delegation went to Reunion Island to see how they manage their medical waste and I understand that they have a good system. Maybe we should have another look at it. But, another possibility would be that all medical waste is disposed of in as safe a manner as possible without damaging the environment. Right now, the problem at Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital is because of the wastes which are from the dialysis, all the plastics, all the consumables are just put there and there is a lot of black smoke. I understand that there is a system where this is shredded and made easier to be burnt. But we are looking into that.

*(Interruptions)*

No, it is a problem not only for Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, but for all the hospitals. We cannot just send them to Mare Chicose. They have to be disposed of in a different way, but a decision must be taken as soon as possible.

**Dr. Sorefan:** I refer to page 220, *Recurrent Expenditure*, item 21 *Personal Emoluments*. I see that the Ministry is embarking on recruiting more specialised nurses for the diabetes. May I know from the hon. Minister whether that will be from promotion, that is nurses from hospitals or will they be recruited from the market and whether we have set specialised nurses on the market?

**Mr Gayan:** I don't think there are nurses on the market as the hon. Member is saying. My understanding is that they will have to be trained. We are training nurses every year and some will be directed into diabetic treatment. For the training of nurses, we have to train them in other fields as well like the new cancer treatment and other specialised areas. It is an ongoing process.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, I will come very briefly on the new cancer centre. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the planning that he has given the House, in terms of personnel, is in line with the purchase of equipment? Who are the personnel who should be trained and whether the Ministry has actually, in its staffing list, a proper Oncologist and how many Oncologists the Ministry has because from what I have heard there is only one for the country? Will the Government be sending our young Doctors for training abroad and whether there is a planning in connection with the opening of that hospital?

Secondly, pending the opening of this centre, we all know that MPs have problems with their mandates. There are lots of problems at Candos Hospital for those going for treatment - male and female separate. We have been told, during the past years, that those attending Victoria Hospital were having problems in terms of facilities prior to their treatment, having to wait for ambulance and so on. Will the hon. Minister, at least, during the coming years, put sufficient funds so as the whole system could be reviewed and the whole section upgraded?

**Mr Gayan:** I have said in this House, Madam Chairperson, that I am very concerned about the state of that particular unit at Victoria Hospital. This is why we are moving very fast to have the New Cancer Treatment Centre. Once we have that open, it is going to solve...

*(Interruptions)*

Well, we will take whatever measures we can to address the concerns of the hon. Member. With regard to Oncologists, of course, I have also said that we need to have capacity building. I understand that even the suppliers of the new equipment will give some training for our Doctors who will be called upon to work in that sector.

**Mr Mohamed:** Madam Chairperson, on page 213, *Capital Expenditure - 26*, I see the figures for 2015/2016 is Rs587,100,000, then it goes to Rs519,500,000 and Rs528,500,000 for the two other years making an average of about Rs550 m. on each and every year. Could the hon. Minister - because I can't see it there - not have spared just Rs1 m. or R2 m. for Agalega because no mention at all is made of Agalega? There are women there who are pregnant - I am not only talking while he is Minister, but even before - and who have to come to Mauritius for an echography. There are people who get injured and for a proper x-ray to be carried out they have to be carried to Mauritius which is additional expense in terms of flight between Agalega and Mauritius. So, what could be done, because nothing is

provided here, and whether he could really consider - maybe his attention was not drawn to that - that we have to give better services? Maybe he could do it for Agalega - upgrading the service - because there has been a longstanding request and there were promises by your predecessor that this was in the process of being done. That would be to receive a lot of thanks on my behalf?

**Mr Gayan:** I will certainly look into that.

**Mr Mahomed:** Madam Chairperson, if I may come back to the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital waste incinerator. The solution evoked by the hon. Minister just now appears to be long-term. Can consideration be given in the meanwhile for the smokestack to be raised because the low-lying black smoke creates a very bad perception in the neighbourhood which is a highly residential area?

**Mr Gayan:** Madam Chairperson, I understand that this particular measure had already been taken when the issue arose. I think the issue was raised. I don't know whether it is technically possible, but we will certainly have a look at it.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 221, sub head *Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases and Promotion of Quality of Life*, item 22900(903), the hon. Minister knows the importance of medication and prevention of NCDs, is he satisfied that the Budget has not been increased satisfactory for awareness and sensitisation campaign? In the same spirit the support to NGOs for Anti-Smoking and Anti-alcohol Campaign is only Rs500,000. Can he explain why nothing has been done to increase the budget for NGOs?

**Mr Gayan:** I understand that there are other Bodies that are looking at these issues like NATReSA and all substance abuse is being looked at. All of these issues are being looked at by the NGOs, but I also understand that people are smoking less in the country.

*Vote 11-1 Ministry of Health and Quality of Life (Rs9,720,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** I suspend the sitting for one and half hours for lunch.

*At 12.55 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

*Vote 12-1 Local Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** Je suis à la page 94 sous l’item 26312 *Grant to Local Authorities*. Je voulais savoir du ministre quels sont les critères qui sont considérés actuellement en ce qui concerne l’allocation des *grants* aux différentes collectivités locales ? Est-ce que ce sont les mêmes critères ou bien il y a eu des changements vu que le gouvernement s’est fixé comme objectif de donner plus d’autonomie aux différentes collectivités locales?

**Dr. Husnoo:** As you know, this *grant-in-aid* has been prepared since the 1980s. Actually, the grant is being increased every year, but there has not been any change in the formula itself; there has not been any change at all since the 1980s; but we are thinking about working on it again.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Regarding the same issue, the formula, like the hon. Minister said, had been there for 25 years back and is going on, but per capita grant is much to my surprise, I see that for the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, the grant has gone down and even for the year 2015 and 2016, it has gone down by Rs21 m. when the residents are increasing with the annexed area. Can the hon. Minister tell us why this is so?

**Dr. Husnoo:** The grant has come down for this year. Actually, what is happening is that the grant for this year was calculated and actually there has been a decrease – the hon. Member is right - by Rs21 m. This is explained by the refund of loan of Rs30 m. granted to the Municipality in 2014. This was given to cover for the deficit of the year 2013. So, if we compare with 2014 and 2015, we find that there is a loss. But, actually, in 2014 there was a loan which was given to cover for the budget deficit of 2013. But, in actual fact, if we compare 2013, 2014 and 2015, there has been an increase. It is just to cover the loan, that’s why it looks like it has come down. The loan was given in 2014 to cover for the deficit in 2013.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Under item 26323.204 *Local Development Fund*, at page 94, I don’t see in the vote any mention made about the project for housing hawkers. Can the hon.

Minister give us some explanation as to whether during the coming six months this project will start and what is the status itself of the project?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, yes, we are going to. In fact, I am writing to the Minister of Public infrastructure and Land Transport to work on the layout. We are going to do the same like we did for the Hawkers Palace where we took a grant and gradually the Municipality is going to pay for it over the years.

**Mr Bhagwan:** But the funds? What about the funding of the project?

**Dr. Husnoo:** As I told the hon. Member, we are going to take a loan. The Municipality is going to take a loan just as we did for Hawkers Palace, and then gradually we will pay it.

**Mr Ramano:** Toujours sous l'item *Grants* aux différentes collectivités locales, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre s'il a en sa possession, actuellement, une liste des postes qui doivent être remplis au niveau des différentes collectivités locales, par exemple, pour la Municipalité de Quatre Bornes ? Il y a pas mal de postes qui n'ont pas été remplis jusqu'à présent, et il y a toujours des *grants* qui sont prévus à cet effet. Quelle est la situation actuellement au niveau de la Municipalité de Quatre Bornes, par exemple ?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, as the hon. Member said, there are quite a number of posts that have not been filled. But we are going to work on it because now the LGSC is operational - about a month or so. So, we are going to work on it to fill these posts.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Is the hon. Minister aware that with regard to construction of roads - it goes under *Capital Grants* – such as M1 road and other roads, as well as Phase I of the Ring Road, they have lightings? All these lightings...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Sorefan, to which item are you referring?

**Dr. Sorefan:** I am referring to *Capital Grants*. The lightings become very costly to the Municipalities. I did raise questions, in the course of the ex-mandate, to the Minister of Local Government to liaise with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to see whether RDA can take this in charge; to pay the lighting instead of telling the Council to pay so. Can the



hon. Minister liaise with the RDA or other institutions to get that funded - the Municipalities or RDA to pay the lightings?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, on the subject of lighting, we are going to have a look at it again. It is not just for the maintenance, but also what type of lamp we are going to use. We will have to change to led lamp. So the whole thing is being studied, and we are going to look at that in the future.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Coming back to the question of *Grants* under *Capital Expenditure*, and building on the question of hon. Bhagwan with respect to hawkers' centres, the previous Government - now outgoing Government - did identify three sites. I know there were some issues regarding the contracting, but the plans were already designed by the Ministry of Infrastructure. From the Minister's reply just now, I gather that he is going for a new design. Is that right?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, the hon. Member is right. If we take the North, for example; *la Gare du Nord*, we are going to have an integrated plan. If you remember the plan for *la Gare du Nord*, it was only one part, just behind the police station. But now we are going to do the whole thing. On the ground floor, there will be the bus station. Hopefully, on the first floor we will have the hawkers. We are going to *réaménager* the whole place. That is why we are working on a different plan.

**Mr Uteem:** On this same issue, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the timeline; when construction will begin and when these new buildings will be completed?

**Dr. Husnoo:** As I just mentioned, I am writing anytime to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to work on the design. But working on the design and getting the finance could take a little bit of time. It is difficult for me to say now how long it will take. It will depend on the procedures.

**Mr Ramano:** Toujours en ce qui concerne item *Grants*. Est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre si la construction du marché de Quatre Bornes fait partie de la liste prioritaire en ce qui concerne les *capital projects* à être approuvés par les différentes municipalités ?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Unfortunately, it has not been included in this year's budget.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jhuboo!

**Mr Jhuboo:** Merci, Madame la présidente. A la page 94, il y a un montant de R 96,100,000 à l’item *Grants 26323.204 (a) Acquisition of compactor lorries*. Peut-on savoir du ministre le nom de la firme avec laquelle nous avons acheté ces *compactor lorries*?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, I can’t tell which firm it is, but I can later on have the information. I don’t have the name of the firm, I am afraid.

**Dr. Sorefan:** I come to the question of hon. Kavi Ramano regarding the market. If I read ‘Notes on Ministry - Mission Statement’, it is stated, “To empower local authorities to be more responsive to the needs of the local community.” How can we go about in a local authority where the needs of the population of Quatre Bornes is a market – that has been all far since I was young - and the Ministry is not even reconciling to finance or partly to have a new market in Quatre Bornes? How can we go by the ‘Mission Statement’ to say ‘to be more responsive’?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Obviously the local Government is going to be responsive, but we have a budgetary constraint. We have to see the project we are going to put this year and then next year. The hon. Member knows what I mean!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to *Grants* again, on the same page, 94, *Compactor Lorries*. One of the reasons why all along we could not get rid of plastic bags in Mauritius was because people use it to dump their wastes. Will the compactor lorries in any way enhance waste segregation in the country?

**Dr. Husnoo:** We should not just concentrate at the level of the depot where the waste is being thrown. I think we have to concentrate at the level of the households, because once we start it here, I think we can segregate the wastes. I think it can be done. It is just a matter of education and trying to set up the system. So, it will not just depend on the compactor lorries. Compactor lorry will not itself stop this.

*Vote 12-1 Ministry of Local Government (Rs1,517,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 12-2 Fire Services was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem.

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 96, item 31122.803 - *Acquisition of Fire Fighting and Rescue Equipment*. May I know from the hon. Minister how many fire fighting lorries are scheduled to be purchased under this item for the coming year?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, for this provision of Fire Fighting and Rescue Equipment, provision is made for the purchase of ten portable generators, three semi urban fire fighting vehicles, which is going to cost Rs35,400,000, and delivery will be effected by 30 April this year; high angle rescue equipment to the tune of Rs1.4 m.; hopefully they will be delivered by the end of May this year.

**Mr Ramano:** Toujours à la page 95, sous l'item 31112.024 - *Construction of Fire Stations*. Ma plaidoirie serait que, par rapport avec la *Fire Station* de la ville de Quatre Bornes, cela se trouve carrément dans l'enceinte de la Municipalité de Quatre Bornes. Mon appel au ministre c'est de trouver un site alternatif, parce que d'un point de vue de sécurité, d'un point de vue de trafic, cela pose pas mal de problèmes pratiques et aussi de sécurité pour la ville de Quatre Bornes. Est-ce que le ministre peut considérer la relocalisation du *Fire Station* de la ville de Quatre Bornes dans un endroit beaucoup plus approprié?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Over the next one or two years, we are going to start on different Fire Stations in different areas. Quatre Bornes is not included, as far as I know, for this year. But, maybe next year, we can include it.

**Mr Uteem:** Let me go back again to page 96, *Acquisition of Fire fighting and Rescue Equipment*. The hon. Minister mentioned the mid-level lorries. But for the higher buildings, how tall will be the ladder? What will be the reach of the vehicles that are going to be purchased, to look after if there is a fire outbreak in one of the high-rise buildings?

**Dr. Husnoo:** There are different types. There is one to reach three storeys, and one to reach ten storeys. This one is not going to reach the 10-storey ones. But we have a vehicle. This is going to be sorted out soon; the 10 storeys. There are some problems. It is under repair. Hopefully, we should get it sorted out soon.

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, on page 232, with regard to *Mission Statement and Strategic Direction...*

**The Chairperson:** We are still on the first Budget.

*Vote 12-2 Fire Services (Rs212,500,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 12-1 Local Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 224, the first item 21110.001 *Personal Emoluments, Basic salary*. Can I ask the hon. Minister if there is any vacancy in the Municipal Councils and have all the posts been advertised right now?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Yes, the hon. Member is right. There are vacancies not just in Municipal Councils but in District Councils as well and they are going to be advertised soon.

*(Interruptions)*

No! It is in process; some of them are being advertised at the District Councils, but in turn others would be advertised.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, on page 232, with regard to *Mission Statement and Strategic Direction*, it is mentioned that Ministries are going to empower local authorities, promote local democracy and consolidate democracy at Local Government level. Can the hon. Minister tell us what are the measures/actions his Ministry is going to take in order to promote local democracy and to consolidate democracy at Local Government level?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Firstly, the fact that we are going to do the elections. That is going in the direction of local democracy, that's No. 1.

Secondly, to get the people in the different councils to have a better representation, we are going to increase the number of Councillors.

Thirdly, as we know, in the villages, a lot of people were being expelled unnecessarily. We have taken steps to prevent them from being expelled, from losing their seats. These are the different steps we are taking to consolidate democracy at these levels.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** A la page 228, sous l'item 26210 *Contribution to International Organisations...*

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

**Mr Ramano:** Je voudrais savoir du ministre quelles sont les différentes organisations qui sont concernées, parce que, là, je vois que mention est faite seulement du *Commonwealth Local Government Forum*. Si ma mémoire est bonne, normalement il y avait d'autres organisations...

**Dr. Husnoo:** Which number and which item, please?

**Mr Ramano:** Sous l'item 26210, à la page 228, *Contribution to International Organisations*.

**Dr. Husnoo:** It is only for the Local Government Forum, that's the only one this contribution is for.

**Mr Ramano:** Ma question est : est-ce que cela implique qu'on ne considère plus les autres organisations, telles que les associations francophones des Maires ou aussi les différentes associations de l'Océan Indien où l'île Maurice était partie prenante dans le passé ?

**Dr. Husnoo:** These contributions are from the local authorities, it is not from the Central Government.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** At page 227, the very last item 22900.940 *Operating expenses icw Centralised Unit for Building and Land Use Permits*. Can I know from the hon. Minister if there is going to be a centralised body which is going to issue local permits or will the issue of permits still reside with the local authorities? Why is the Rs3.5 m. budgeted for that field?

**Dr. Husnoo:** Actually, this is a new project which is being considered and we are trying to work on it. It has not been centralised, because the applications will be coming from the Local Government. Nowadays, a lot of applications are being considered at the Central Government. So, they are trying to look into it again. As you know, in 2014, there was an ICAC Report which was done, I think, in collaboration with the UNDP and there was a perception that, at the local authority, I am sorry to say so, there was a high perception of high index of corruption, especially on the issue of giving permits. That was the study that was done in 2014 by ICAC and UNDP. If we have a problem, what do we do? Do we continue to do the same thing or try to think about other ways of solving the problem? That is why we have earmarked Rs3.5 m., trying to work on it and see what can be done.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 224, under item *21110 Personal Emoluments*. May I ask the hon. Minister of the number of vacancies in all Municipal Councils, but if he does not have the answer, he can circulate it later.

**Dr. Husnoo:** I will circulate it later. Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 228, with regard to *Capital Grant to Extra Budgetary, item 26323.204 Local Development Fund, (b) Contribution towards Plaza Renovation – Phase 2*, there is no money earmarked. Is there a decision not to go ahead with any renovation with respect to Plaza anymore?

**Dr. Husnoo:** The contract for consultancy has already been awarded to Francis Wong Associates for Rs6.6 m. The total contribution from Central Government would be Rs40 m. and the rest would have to be sorted out by the Beau Bassin-Rose Hill Municipal Council.

*Vote 12-1 Local Government (Rs3,181,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 12-2 Fire Services (Rs461,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 13-1 Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** At page 97, under item *Grants, Extra-Budgetary Units, item 26313.135 - National Empowerment Foundation*. May I know from the hon. Minister who is now heading the National Empowerment Foundation, whether the Board has been properly constituted?

**Mr Roopun:** The Board will be reconstituted soon and the Chief Administrator is still in office actually.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, with your permission, on page 97. On the *National Empowerment Foundation*, once the Board is reconstituted and all these field officers are appointed, can we make a request to the Minister, at least, to circulate to hon. Members, the different persons who have been appointed? As MPs - you have been in the Opposition, you know - very often we need to contact these people and we do not know how.

Secondly, on same page 97, item 26313.135 (ii) *Training and Placement for Unemployed Poor*. Can we have an idea how many persons have been employed, where, in which sector where we have been asked to vote Rs15 m.?

Also, same page 97, under (iii) *Community Development for the Poor*, where Rs10 m. is earmarked, can the hon. Minister give us a list of projects identified region-wise and what are the criteria used for giving assistance?

**Mr Roopun:** Insofar as the first question is concerned, the suggestion is duly noted and I may add also that we are also launching a hotline at my Ministry so that we can further help members of the public, including MPs who want to have information about the NEF.

Insofar as projects undertaken in 2014 are concerned, there was one at Grand Basfond, Lallmatie for Rs500,000 done in 2014 before I became Minister. There was the construction of a drain at Cité CIM at Rivière du Rempart, a night shelter at Roche Bois and a green space at Ripailles, among others.

Insofar as the Training and Placement Programme is concerned, I understand from the NEF that the number of candidates who have been placed in 2014 was 445 and in 2013 it was 349. The percentage of successful placements was reported to be 29 percent.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 97, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, I see that there is a new item *Marshall Plan on Poverty*, there is an amount of only Rs300,000 budgeted. I would like to know what is this survey on the Marshall Plan of Poverty and who will be carrying it out for Rs300,000.

**Mr Roopun:** Insofar as the Marshall Plan is concerned, we are still preparing the terms of reference which are being finalised actually and consultations will thereafter be held with appropriate stakeholders. In the first instance, an assessment of the needs of vulnerable families in pockets of poverty will be carried out. This assessment will serve as a basis for intervention in the context of the '*parrainage*' concept which has just been launched.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 97 item number 26313.135 (a) *Operating Costs* Rs49 m. may we have a breakdown of this figure?

**Mr Roopun:** Yes, operating costs Rs49 m. we have got –

- salaries for the staff in Mauritius which amounts to Rs44 m. and
- for Rodrigues it is Rs4.8 m.

Out of the Rs44 m for Mauritius, we have got –

- Rs36 m. for salaries;
- Rs1.7 m. for utilities;
- Rs1.2 m. for the upkeep of vehicles;
- Rs1.6 m. for the fees to board members (there are in all 13 board members);
- we have also for publication which amounts to Rs600,000;
- the maintenance cost is Rs500,000;
- we have rent for one building which is Rs650,000, and
- other incidental expenses which amount to Rs1.75 m. among others.

For Rodrigues, out of the Rs4.8 m. we have –

- salaries represent Rs2.85 m.;
- utility costs Rs400,000;
- fuel Rs300,000;
- rental of building Rs900,000, and
- equipment, etc. Rs350,000, making a total of Rs4.8 m.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Coming back on the same *Marshall Plan on Poverty*, item 22130, has the hon. Minister already identified what are the criteria that this survey would use to identify these *poches* of poverty? How will one become a *poché* of poverty?



**Mr Roopun:** No, the criteria have not yet been fully worked out. There is a consultant from the UNDP who is working on the project actually. Together with a dedicated team at the level of my Ministry we are working out on the terms of reference.

*Vote 13-1 Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Rs140,500,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 13-1 Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Rs415,000,000) was called.*

**Mr Quirin:** Madam Chairperson, on page 234, *Capital Expenditure* item 26323.135 (i) *Integrated Social Housing Projects*, there is a sum of Rs22 m. earmarked for 2015/2016. Can we know from the hon. Minister the number of houses to be constructed in 2015/2016 and the regions identified pertaining to these projects?

**Mr Roopun:** The amount for *Extra-Budgetary Units, National Empowerment Foundation* (i) *Integrated Social Housing Projects* is Rs159 m., out of which we have -

- Rs22 m. for preliminary expenses for integrated social houses;
- we also have Rs63 m. for concrete cum CIS houses

All these projects have not yet been earmarked and, in fact, the construction of the works will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Lands once the sites have been identified. Whenever there are beneficiaries who do not fall within the ambit of the NHDC, my Ministry is going to take over the construction of those houses for beneficiaries who earn less than Rs6200.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On the same score, Madam, can the Minister inform the House whether definite criteria have been established by his Ministry for the construction of these houses especially with regard to the size? We have seen in the past with the whole scandal of having construction of *boites zallumettes* type of houses, whether a new design will be produced by the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Lands in connection with the World Habitat UN guidelines, can the Minister inform the House?

Secondly, I would like to know whether the Minister has put order in this question of allocation of *du bois* and *tole*, the same scandal we have had in the past where there have

been crooks taking money of the poor and beneficiating from the allowances given to the poor.

**Mr Roopun:** Insofar as the second question is concerned, the policy of this Government is to phase out all construction in CIS houses. We are doing only construction of CIS houses in cases of utmost urgency otherwise we are more inclined to construct concrete houses with corrugated iron sheets roof. In fact, so far as the design is concerned, my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister did mention during his Budget Speech that we are working on a new design. In fact, the size of the house also will be increased. It will be in harmonisation with the area of houses which will be constructed by the NHDC. We are also trying to see how we can fit in some other aspects like the environmental aspect. We are also considering recreational amenities. We are viewing it in a more integrated manner.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 234, again on this *Extra-Budgetary Units*, construction of *Integrated Social Housing Projects* item 26323, we just heard the hon. Minister mention that there will be houses constructed in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing. Yesterday, we voted an item here for social housing. Now, we are asked to vote another item which again relates to social housing. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the difference in criteria. Do we need to have a PEL account for these housing units? We need to have some clarification.

**Mr Roopun:** In fact, when we talk about social housing, we have different thresholds of households. We have the first threshold which is those earning less than Rs6,200 and thereafter we've got another threshold at Rs10,000. I understand that the Ministry of Housing and Lands is coming yet with another threshold. I think it is Rs15,000. Actually for those who earn Rs10,000, it is the NHDC who does the construction and they pay a certain amount. So far as those earning less than Rs6,200 are concerned, at times they do not have the means to construct themselves and it is where the NEF comes in and do the construction for them. Some constructions are done by the CSR companies, otherwise, it is the NEF who does the construction. For those earning Rs10,000 it is the NHDC who does the construction and then allocates the units to those applicants.

**Mr Uteem:** On a follow-up on this very same item, the hon. Minister just mentioned that the NEF is going to construct the houses, but what about the land. Is the land also provided by NEF or is the poor person supposed to bring the land?

**Mr Roopun:** We have different schemes. If the beneficiary is owner of a land, we can construct on the land of the beneficiary, in which case he has got certain criteria to respect. He should be the owner. He should apply for a building permit. He should not have benefited from other housing schemes before and then we can construct on his property. There are other schemes where it is the Ministry of Housing and Lands which comes with an integrated project and there we provide in-site services on the plot of land. If the beneficiary does not have the means, the NEF will then construct the housing units and allocate them to the beneficiaries.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, I have got one last question concerning the houses for vulnerable groups. The other day, I asked a parliamentary question concerning the Petite Rivère project. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has had an opportunity to have a look and, at least, to give us a time frame when the remaining houses will be distributed to the poor families? At the same time, are there sufficient funds in this vote to cater for all remaining works including repairs to be effected to the damaged houses?

**Mr Roopun:** Insofar as the housing project at Petite Rivère, which is commonly called Gros Cailloux, is concerned as, unfortunately, I am taken up here in Parliament, I requested officers of the NEF to make a site visit in the light of the remarks of the hon. Member. I asked them to go there with a ladder so that they can climb on the roof and see the structural defects which have been reported by the hon. Member. I also mentioned about the state of surroundings and we will see what remedial measures should be taken.

**Mr Bhagwan:** It has not been reported to me. I go there nearly every day, so I know.

**Mr Roopun:** Yes. Insofar as allocation is concerned, we are working along with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and also with the Ministry of Housing and lands so as not to repeat the same mistake which we did at La Valette. We want to make sure that the beneficiaries are well integrated in the region. We take the right balance of beneficiaries who are going to be there and also we ensure that they have got the capacity to pay.

*Vote 13-1 Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Development (Rs415,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 14-1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.*

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, I have one question on page 99, *Recurrent Expenditure* - item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*. Can we have an idea from the hon. Minister - three months have elapsed for the new Government - when will the post of High Commissioners, Ambassadors and so on will be filled? Is there a time lag? Have the procedures already been completed?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Chairperson, I thank the hon. Member for his question. I can safely inform the House and the hon. Member that those posts are being filled very quickly and we will all be informed accordingly.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 99, item 22030 - *Rent*, there is a massive amount of Rs76.7 m. for the six months budgeted. May we have some details on this amount?

**Mr Sinatambou:** May I first thank you again, Madam Chairperson and the hon. Member. Well, may I just start by saying that, compared to the preceding year, it is not that drastically gigantic because it is just 50% of the rent which was being paid out for the same buildings. Now, my understanding is that part of it is about payment of rent and parking slots to Belem Ltd. Part of it is in relation to chanceries, overseas missions and, I understand, residences of home-based staff overseas.

**Dr. Joomaye:** I can see from the *Sub-Head 14-102: Foreign Relations*, no specific...

**Mr Sinatambou:** Which page is that, please?

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 99. No specific fund has been allocated to create awareness regarding our claim of sovereignty over the Chagos and Tromelin. So, I would like to ask the...

**The Chairperson:** Which item the hon. Member is referring to, please?

**Dr. Joomaye:** Sub-Head: Foreign Relations. On page 99.

**The Chairperson:** Page 99. Which item number?

**Dr. Joomaye:** Item 26210 – *Contribution to International Organisations*.

**The Chairperson:** Yes.

**Dr. Joomaye:** No specific fund has been allocated regarding the creation of awareness for our claim of sovereignty over the Chagos and Tromelin. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he has requested from the Minister of Finance for such funds?

**Mr Sinatambou:** I thank the hon. Member for his question. Madam Chairperson, as you will note on item 26110, the contribution to the International Organisations is such that, after the contribution, every time Mauritius has the opportunity of attending any meeting of those organisations, we make it a point to try and get a Resolution to the effect that our sovereignty rights over Chagos and Tromelin have to be preserved. I hope this answers the question fully.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 99, item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*, to follow up on what hon. Bhagwan asked. May I know specifically the number of embassies and other missions outside of Mauritius where there is any vacancy?

**Mr Sinatambou:** From the time that the employment of the political nominees was terminated, it means that there were, I think, 16 of them. Therefore, those posts are now being filled. The procedure is nearly over. The only thing is that, as a matter of policy and of common sense, we cannot give any name unless and until the *agrément* is obtained from the foreign country. The hon. Member can rest assured that all this has already been processed. We are only now expecting matters to be completed within a short lapse of time.

**Mr Jhuboo:** On page 99, item 26 *Grants*. There is a provision made of Rs6 m. to the Union of the Comoros. Can I know from the hon. Minister the reasons prompting to such a grant?

**Mr Sinatambou:** In an attempt to ensure that we have good fraternal links with all the countries of the region and for Mauritius to show that it is, indeed, a country which promotes the rule of law and good governance, this amount of Rs6,750,000 concerns a donation to the Union of Comoros for election purposes.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Regarding page 100 under the item Capital Expenditure; in the Government Programme it was stipulated that there will be the opening of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia. So, I can see no fund allocated to such effect. Can the hon. Minister tell us how he will manage in case this should happen in the coming year?

**Mr Sinatambou:** In fact, it does not appear in the budget for the coming six months ending June, but I can assure the hon. Member that if he looks at the provisions for the next financial year which is the Year 2015/2016, I think he will see that provision for the establishment of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia has been made.

*Vote 14-1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs597,100,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 14-1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 238, Recurrent Expenditure for Foreign Relations, in the Budget Speech mention was made for eight Managers to be posted in Embassies and I see no provision for the coming years. Will the hon. Minister enlighten the House when will these be implemented?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Madam Chairperson, I do thank the hon. Member for his question which is very pertinent. In view of the policy that we have enunciated in the House, it so happens, however, that our eight Trade and Investment Advisers are actually going to fall within the purview of the Board of Investment and, therefore, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 239, item 31 Capital Expenditure, *31112 Non-Residential Buildings*; the hon. Minister has just, in answer to a question of my friend, hon. Dr. Joomaye, stated that provision is not made for the opening of an Embassy for the six months, but is made in the coming year. So, may I ask him under what item in *31 Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets* is there any amount budgeted for the opening of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia?

**Mr Sinatambou:** Thank you. Madam Chairperson, let me, perhaps, recall the history behind this. On 20 January of this year, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister addressed to the highly regretted His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, a message that Government had decided to establish its first Embassy in the Gulf region. Now, on 13 March 2015, Government approved the proposal for the setting up of its Embassy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Now, if I can refer the hon. Member to the very same page 239, if he looks at item 31, sub-item 31112.408, he will see that at paragraph (c) *Other Chanceries & Home Based Staff Residence*, there is a sum of Rs23 m. which has been earmarked. You will also note that from the moment that we made the request and the moment we will receive all the approvals, it will take quite some time and this is why the full funding is not, here, actually put.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Referring to page 242, Notes on the Ministry, Key Actions for 2015/2016 -

- Securing of at least two new visa waiver agreements.

May we know which two countries we are talking about and whether Dubai forms part of these two?

**The Chairperson:** This is a policy question.

**Mr Sinatambou:** As a matter of fact, Madam Chairperson, the Ministry has been negotiating a number of visa waiver agreements with several countries, especially those which do not require a visa to travel to Mauritius and where Mauritians still require a visa prior to travelling to these countries. The idea is to make sure that an element of reciprocity is respected by those foreign countries. I can inform the House and the hon. Member that a request has been made to the United Arab Emirates so as to obtain such a visa waiver, but I can also inform the hon. Member, Madam Chairperson, that we have already received a positive reply, in principle, from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 236, item 21110.001 *Personal Emoluments, Ambassador (Roving)*, there is a provision made for Rs811,000. May I know from the hon. Minister

whether the Roving Ambassador has been identified and appointed, in what area he will be based and what countries will he cover?

**Mr Sinatambou:** At the moment, we are concentrating on the appointment of those who are going to be fixed in the 16 countries, first. We will come to the Roving Ambassador in due course.

*Vote 14-1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Rs1,086,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 15-1 Office of the Solicitor-General was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** In relation to the item *15-1 Office of the Solicitor-General* under *21110 Personal Emoluments*, may I know from the hon. Minister if there are any vacancies, or the number of vacancies that there are at the Solicitor-General's Office at the moment?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** Well, there are actually 122 officers in posts and there are 31 funded vacancies for the coming year.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Under the same item, *Personal Emoluments*, item *21110*; is provision made for the payment of fees when those officers of the State Law Office sit on Board or provide advice to parastatal bodies?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** No! No such provision is made in that vote item. Whenever officers do tender legal advice, it is the respective bodies or parastatals which pay them. It is not in the budget.

*Vote 15-1 Office of the Solicitor-General (Rs68,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 15-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Under the full vote, vote *15-2*; I understand that there is a case pending before the Court. May I know from the hon. Attorney General what is the status of this case



and whether there will be any funding provided pending the outcome of that case, challenging the constitutionality of putting the DPP's Office under the Attorney General's Office?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** As far as the case is concerned, the case is returnable on 17 May. And yes, funding is provided. Business as usual.

*Vote 15-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Rs57,900,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 15-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (Rs7,600,000) (January-June 2015) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 15-1 Office of the Solicitor-General (Rs205,500,000) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 15-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Under the personal emoluments, item 21110; may I know from the hon. Attorney General what amount is budgeted with respect to the Assets Recovery Unit?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** Well, for this financial year, no amount is being budgeted because as the hon. Member will be aware there is a policy decision of Government that the Asset Recovery Office will no longer be vested under the office of the DPP, henceforth, pending proper legislation being passed through the House, be probably vested into the Financial Intelligence Unit.

**Mr Uteem:** As a follow-up question, the Attorney General rightly pointed out: "pending the coming into legislation" because we need to have legislation to change this. In the meantime, is there any amount budgeted for the Asset Recovery?

**Mr Yerrigadoo:** That amount is budgeted until end of June 2015 by which date we expect the changes will be brought through Parliament.

*Vote 15-2 Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Rs124,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 15-3 Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (Rs21,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 16-1 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Yes, Madam Chairperson. On page 107 – I will take two items and the Minister can have it once – item 28213.021 *Mauritius Cane Industry Authority*, the top of the page. The Minister of Arts and Culture is mistaken. It is the Minister of Agriculture, not Arts and Culture!

*(Interruptions)*

He is more excited than the Minister of Agriculture. Wait your turn! We have a vote of Rs26 m. and we all know the mess at the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority where it has absorbed the MSIRI. Can the Minister inform the House whether within that vote of Rs26 m., he is having a project to review the whole situation at the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and to make sure that the MSIRI, which was once *la gloire de l'île Maurice*, our reputation now is completely outburst by the previous administration of the Mauritius Cane industry authority? And whether the hon. Minister can tell us if the Rs26 m. fund is allocated for the restructuring of that Authority? Secondly, on the same page, *Accompanying Measures for Sugar Sector Derocking of Small Sugarcane Planters' Lands (incl FORIP and Fair Trade projects)*; we are being asked to vote Rs255 m. for the coming six months. We raised that issue the other day about the FORIP, can the hon. Minister give us some details about how much the small farmers will be benefiting from that and also with regard to the Fair Trade projects, how much is being earmarked for the small planters?

**Mr Seeruttun:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the first question, the amount being earmarked for the MCIA, Mauritius Cane Industry Authority is Rs26 m. for 2015. As the hon. Member is probably aware, the funding comes from the cess money and the merger of all the institutions financed under the cess money are now under one umbrella, the authority which is the MCIA and there has been a reduction in the amount of cess that may be allocated to that authority. Any shortfall now is being catered by Government. That amount, the Rs26 m., is to cater for that particular shortfall. That is with regard to the MCIA. As for the FORIP project, for the year 2015, an amount of Rs255 m. has been earmarked and so far some 9,000 hectares of land have already been covered under that project in terms of preparation of the land and the objective is to cover 12,000 hectares of land over that period of time. So, for the year 2015 up to June, that amount has been earmarked to carry on with

that project. With regard to the Fair Trade which is under that same item of the amount of Rs255 m., Rs3 m. is allocated for the Fair Trade project for the small planters.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Thank you Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to page 106, item 22130.001 *Studies and Survey, Studies (incl. Bagasse transfer pricing and Cane Harvest Logistics)*. The hon. Minister has said in his speech, himself, that planters are being paid very little, a pittance almost for their bagasse that they owe. My question is what has the outcome of 2014 studies given, Rs10.65 m. for which was spent and what does the forthcoming studies over the next six months for which Rs7 m. is earmarked?

**Mr Seeruttun:** Madam Chairperson, with regard to the item regarding Studies and Surveys, in fact, last year, the amount earmarked was for the studies carried out on the Bagasse Transfer Pricing Project and the Cane Harvest Logistics. So far, we have done the surveys, but no decision has yet been taken as to the price to be paid to the planters. There have been recommendations, but so far, not yet any decision has been taken regarding the amount that has to be paid to small planters.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 108, item 25 *Subsidies, 25210.009 Food Growers (Bat net)*, there is an amount of Rs5 m. earmarked. As the hon. Minister knows, bats have become a great source of nuisance for all, everyone who has a fruit tree in his yard. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether, in that Rs5 m., any amount is budgeted for ordinary people who have fruit trees in their yard? Because here it is only mentioned fruit growers. So, what is qualified as fruit growers?

**Mr Seeruttun:** In fact, Madam Chairperson, that project is to provide bat net to fruit growers, be it backyard garden growers or professional ones. It has been given on a request basis. I believe that the objective of that scheme was to protect fruit trees in orchards and also in backyard gardens. So, it is not limited to only orchards.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Page 110, item 31112.045 *Construction of New Slaughter House*. May we know where this slaughterhouse will be built, what will happen to the old slaughterhouse which is found in Roche Bois, and when this new slaughterhouse will come into operation?

**Mr Seeruttun:** As you are aware, Madam Chairperson, this project is mentioned in the Budget Speech. Now that we have the money allocated for that particular project, we are

setting up a committee to consider how we go about with that project, and we will talk to all the stakeholders to see what is the appropriate place to be identified for that slaughterhouse. Of course, we will see to it that the place that is identified is the proper one, and then we will carry out the implementation of the project.

**Mr Uteem:** On the same page, *Capital Expenditure*, item 28225.007 - *Capital Transfer (Livestock), (a) Cattle Breeders Scheme (Mauritius)*, I know that there has been an increase in the budgetary allocation. May I know from the hon. Minister what this scheme is about and what will be the criteria to benefit from the scheme?

**Mr Seeruttun:** In fact, Madam Chairperson, as you all know, we are trying to promote more people to go into that kind of activities. What we are doing this time is increasing the subsidy with regard to the feed that is provided to those cattle breeders. It used to be Rs2.00 per kilo, and now it has gone to Rs4.00 per kilo. That is the reason why the amount earmarked here has increased.

*Vote 16-1 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Rs1,179,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 16-1 Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Rs2,458,000,000) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 17-1 Ministry of Arts and Culture was called.*

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 114, under item 26313.036 - *Mauritius Film Development Corporation*, we are being asked to vote Rs4.9 m. additional for the coming six months. Can the hon. Minister inform us in which new film production his Ministry is being engaged, which type of films, which language, who is the producer of that film, and where the filming is being effected?

**The Chairperson:** Too many questions in one question!

*(Interruptions)*

Does the hon. Minister want one by one or does he want a series of questions?

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have so many questions, Madam Chairperson. Will the Minister reply one by one?

**Mr Baboo:** Regarding the Mauritius Film Development Corporation, we are developing and promoting the local film and audio-visual industry, both domestically and

internationally, support and stimulate public participation in film and audio-visual, build capacity in the film and audio-visual sector, develop and promote Mauritius as a prime film-making destination.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 114, item 26313.102 *Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund*, may I know from the hon. Minister who are the members of the *Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund*?

**Mr Baboo:** The ICC Board 2015 has 13 members, namely –

Mr Samioullah Lauthan, Professor Subratty Hussein, Mr Jaunbocus Fareed, Mr Cheeroo Mahmood, Mr Assad Bhuglah, Mr Sohawon Said, Mr Yearoo Afzal, Mr Rashid Neerooa and we have the co-opted members as well, namely Mr Salehmohamed Yousuf, Mr Taher Swadeck, Mr Bundhoo Imteaz, Mr Imran Pondor, and the last one is Dr. Sorefan Mustapha.

**Dr. Joomaye:** On page 114, item 28211.026 - *Socio-Cultural Organisations*, a sum of Rs1 m. has been allocated. Can I know from the Minister what will be the mechanism to allocate these sums to the socio-cultural organisations?

**Mr Baboo:** According to the Socio Cultural Organisations, assistance to socio-cultural organisations for full cultural activities, the quantum which usually ranges between Rs1,500 to Rs20,000 depends on the level of the events, the number of artists involved and the requirement of sound and light systems.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On the last line on page 114, item 28212.014 - *Financial Assistance to Artists*, Rs4.6 m. Can the Minister inform the House whether there is a definite criteria for assistance to be given to artists, is there a grading, *un pointage* for which artists can benefit from this assistance scheme?

**Mr Baboo:** According to me, we are working on that and it will be for all the artists whereby we will examine by means of a committee.

**Mr Bhagwan:** If the Minister could later circulate who are the members of the committee. On the same page, item .116 - *Speaking Unions* where there is a total vote of Rs7.8 m. Can the Minister inform the House - we have so many Speaking Unions - how this sum is being apportioned to the Speaking Unions?

**Mr Baboo:** There are 11 Speaking Unions: Hindi Speaking Union, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, English, Bhojpuri, Creole, Chinese, Sanskrit, and the Arabic is not yet set up. But, my Ministry is looking into the possibility of harmonising the legislation governing all the Speaking Unions first.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 114, I will come back to the same item 26313.102 - *Islamic Cultural Centre Trust Fund*. The hon. Minister just gave us the list of Board members, the Board of appointed members according to law, so I would like to know from the hon. Minister who appointed Mr Taher Swadeck, and whether he can confirm that it is the same Taher Swadeck from BAI on whom there is an objection to departure that has been lodged?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Allow the Minister to reply!

**Mr Baboo:** Sorry, I don't have the information right now.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Quirin!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Quirin:** On page 115, *Capital Expenditure*.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Order please! Order!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Uteem, please!

**Mr Quirin:** On page 115, *Capital Expenditure*, item 31112.420 - *Upgrading of Theatres: Serge Constantin Theatre*, a sum of Rs8 m. is budgeted for the first six months of this year. I would like to know if the upgrading works have already started.

*(Interruptions)*

Ah! Is it completed?

**Mr Baboo:** Serge Constantin Theatre has been inaugurated on 27 March. It was inaugurated on the Theatre Day. All the works have already been completed and we can say it is the modern one in the surrounding. It is eco-friendly; we have done motorisation, air conditioning which is eco. So, a lot of work has been done and it is fully completed and it is functioning hundred per cent.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** At page 115, item 22900.922. Concernant la célébration du bicentenaire des Archives nationales, est-ce-que le ministre est en mesure de nous donner un peu de détails concernant la date et aussi la célébration concernant le bicentenaire ?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baboo:** Regarding the *Bicentenary of National Archives* we can say we are celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its official establishment and, in this context, the National Archives will organise a series of activities on the national, regional and international levels. The project is valued up to Rs1 m. We are holding an exhibition at the UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, on the 11 and 15. There will also be some slams, quiz competitions and essays.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 115, under item 31112.038 - *Setting up of Galerie d'Art Nationale*, where we are being asked to vote Rs5 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the House where we have reached with that project of the *Galerie d'Art Nationale* - for the coming six months it is Rs5 m.? How our Rs5 m. will be spent? Where the project has reached?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Baboo:** I am not excited as hon. Bhagwan said! The project constitutes of the renovation of the ex-military hospital and its conversion into a *Galerie d'Art Nationale*. Its objective is to rehabilitate and display artworks, painting and sculptures by Mauritian artists which date as far back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The project has been delayed due to unavailability of expertise in the sector. Assistance of the Government of India has been obtained in terms of services of a consultant who has expertise in the setting up of this gallery.

Part of the consultancy fees will be met by the Indian Authorities. Funds available will be used to meet the remaining consultancy fees, the cost of publication of books and the felling of trees which are damaging the ex-military hospital.

*Vote 17-1 Ministry of Arts and Culture (Rs207,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 17-1 Ministry of Arts and Culture was called.*

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 277, item 28212.014 - *Financial Assistance to Artists*, there is a scheme. We are being asked to vote Rs4 m. for the coming year and there is another scheme for performing arts, another one for International Development Grant Scheme. Can the Minister inform the House whether a committee has been set up, how this scheme would be run, whether there are criteria which will be set up and all the artists will be informed and whether it will not be on a policy of pick and choose? Everybody must know what would be the criteria of assistance to be obtained from the Ministry.

**Mr Baboo:** The criteria for providing assistance - we should look about the credibility for organisers, the level of the event, the impact of the event, the contribution of the event in the development of our cultural industry and the number of local artists involved.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ramano!

**Mr Ramano:** Toujours à la page 278 concernant *Preservation and Promotion of Heritage*; en ce qui concerne le *National Archives*. Nous sommes en train de célébrer le bicentenaire, mais nous sommes tous d'accord sur l'état déplorable des archives nationales. Ma question est: est-ce qu'il y a des provisions budgétaires qui sont prévues pour l'amélioration de lieu, pour la préservation de notre mémoire et pour la préservation de l'histoire lui-même parce que là nous sommes en train de parler 2015/2016, 2016/2017 et 2017/2018?

**Mr Baboo:** There are provisions. I do agree with the hon. Member on these issues. The purpose of the culture house will be to accommodate, *inter alia*, the National Archives Department and the National Library in an appropriate building. We are working on that. We understand the problem they are facing, but, in the meantime, we are also looking for a building for rent because we know the state of these documents. My Ministry is working with



the Ministry of Finance so as to finalise the construction which will be at Réduit for a culture house where we'll have these archives and the National Department also.

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 276, item 22130.001 (a) '*Stade Musical*' Project, there are Rs2 m. earmarked. This is the project which the artists have been awaiting since many, many years. Can the hon. Minister give us an idea whether a site has been located, and where are we with the preliminary studies and the same for the National Centre for Performing Arts and Project?

**Mr Baboo:** That is a very nice question. We should be happy that this Government is bringing the '*Stade Musical*' Project. Regarding the population of artists also, we did have a workshop last Saturday. We are bringing that to promote the artists and costing for consultancy and preliminary work for *Stade Musical* will be equipped with a podium, latest sound and light system and changing room for artists. Consultations are being held with the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the identification of an appropriate plot of land. Possibly, it might be in Trianon or Mapou. Thank you.

**Mr Quirin:** On page 278, item 31112.417 *Upgrading of Cultural Complex/Buildings (c) Espace Artistique at La Citadelle*, there is a sum of Rs5 m. earmarked for 2015/2016 and the same amount for 2016/2017. Can the hon. Minister give some details concerning this project?

**The Chairperson:** *Espace Artistique at La Citadelle!*

**Mr Baboo:** The amount is Rs5 m. La Citadelle will be converted into an *espace artistique* to provide a platform for our artists and local cultural entrepreneurs to showcase their talents in all art forms. This project will be mounted jointly by my Ministry and the Ministry of Tourism and External Communications to promote the creativity industry.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Madam Chairperson, on the same page *Troupe Culturelle Nationale*, we have heard about this project for some time. Can the hon. Minister inform the House - the Rs1 m. that we are being asked to vote - what is the status of the project of *Troupe Culturelle Nationale*?

**Mr Baboo:** Which item?

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 276, item 22130.001 *Studies and preliminary project preparation: (d) Troupe Culturelle Nationale*.

**Mr Baboo:** Rs1 m. has been provided for preliminary works and consultations with various stakeholders. We will begin shortly to discuss on the best way to set up *une troupe nationale culturelle digne de ce nom*.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 277, item 26313.100. *Islamic Cultural Centre for Hadjj Organisation*, we are paying Rs1.3 m. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is still going to be the Islamic Cultural Centre which will be responsible for the Hadjj organisations?

**Mr Baboo:** Regarding the Hadjj, it has been moved to the Ministry of Housing and Lands. Special funds will be used...

*(Interruptions)*

Under his guidance!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Order, please! Please, proceed hon. Minister!

**Mr Baboo:** Funds will be used for –

- registration of Hadjjees;
- registration of operators;
- Hadjj awareness programme, and
- pre-Hadjj mission.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On the same issue. We just learnt ...

*(Interruptions)*

On the same issue, *Islamic Cultural Centre for Hadjj Organisation*, we just learned that the Hadjj organisation has been moved to the Ministry of Housing and Lands. Is it what the hon. Minister just said? If he does not have the answer, he can circulate it later on. What about the number of visas that have been negotiated and as at now will be obtained? Does the hon. Minister have an idea about it?

**Mr Baboo:** Well, I don't have it. I will communicate it later.

*Vote17-1 Ministry of Arts and Culture (Rs417,900,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 18-1 Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs138,200,000) (January-June 2015) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 18-1 Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, on page 285, item 26313.134 *Enterprise Mauritius*, the budget has been substantially increased by Rs120 m. for Export Market Development Support. May we have some more details about what this Export Market Development Support is?

**Mr Gungah:** Madam Chairperson, the Export Development Plan is that what the hon. Member needed more information for?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes.

**Mr Gungah:** In fact, in 2014 funds to the tune of Rs180 m. were provided for the Export Development Plan of *Enterprise Mauritius* under the vote of the Ministry of Finance. This is to improve the visibility of Mauritius as a reliable sourcing destination for –

- manufactured products;
- identified and promote our products to new buyers;
- enhance penetration in both traditional and non-traditional markets;
- develop export capability, and
- expand the pool of exporters.

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, under the same item *Enterprise Mauritius*, may we know under item (d) what the *Credit Guarantee Insurance Subsidy Scheme for Africa* relates to?

**Mr Gungah:** The insurance guarantee to exporters. These are to cover risks associated with non-payment for exports effected and Credit Guarantee Insurance Subsidy Scheme is a refunded scheme for credit insurance to cover the enterprises exporting to Africa. The refund is 50% of the premium paid.

*Vote 18-1 Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs442,100,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 19-1 Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900.912 on page 122, *Other Goods and Services of which Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*. I would like to know how many shelters for children there are and what measure has been taken by her Ministry to ensure that the children who go there are safe?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Minister! Page 122, item 22900.912 *Other Goods and Services of which Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*.

**Mrs Perraud:** The number of shelters that are Government owned is five. Do you want me to name them?

**The Chairperson:** The number only, please.

**Mrs Perraud:** It is five.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 123, *Social Benefits*, item 27210.011 *Social Assistance - Benefits in Cash, Foster Care*. There is an amount of Rs590,000 budgeted. May I know from the hon. Minister whether these items relate to foster parents who agree to take on board children?

**The Chairperson:** On page 123, item 27210.011 *Social Assistance - Benefits in Cash, Foster Care*.

**Mrs Perraud:** At present, there are 50 children who are placed in 44 foster families. The number of children adopted by their respective foster families - 44; the number of children returned to institutions - 16; the number of children who have reached 18 years old - 7, and the monthly allowance per child paid to the foster parents is Rs1,500.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 122, item 21 *Compensation of Employees, 21110 Personal Emoluments*. May I know from the hon. Minister how many Child Psychiatrists are being

employed by her Ministry under this heading and whether provisions have been made for the increase in the number of Child Psychiatrists?

**Mrs Perraud:** So, there are six.

**Mr Uteem:** Have provisions been made to increase the number?

**Mrs Perraud:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** Yes! The hon. Member has another question!

**Mr Uteem:** Yes. On page 123, item 28211.004 *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Charitable Institutions*, an amount of Rs16,5 m. is earmarked for transfers to charitable institutions. Can the hon. Minister circulate a list of the charitable institutions that benefit from the help of the Government?

**Mrs Perraud:** Yes, I will do.

*Vote 19-1 Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Rs184,100,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 19-1 Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Rs428,400,000) was called and agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem, you had a question, but it's too late. It is too late, hon. Uteem!

*(Interruptions)*

You have taken too much time. Next time...

**Mr Uteem:** Thirty minutes are earmarked for a project. Just give us one minute to be able to...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** I have given you time. Sorry. Now that the vote has already been passed, we can't go back.

*(Interruptions)*

I don't think you can complain. I am giving you a fair number of questions. Okay.

*Vote 20-1 Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 124, item 22030 *Rent*; may I know from the hon. Minister where is the building being rented situated and what procurement method has been used to choose that building?

**Mr Bhadain:** Which page?

**Mr Uteem:** On page 124, item 22030 *Rent*. So, I want to know what are...

**Mr Bhadain:** For the first six months?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** Item 22030 *Rent*, at the bottom of the page.

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes, Madam Chairperson, it is the rental of building at Hennessy Court in Port Louis which comes to Rs1,353,000. The building was already occupied by the public bodies, so no tender was required as per the law.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 303...

**The Chairperson:** No. We are still on the six months budget. Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 125, item 26313.015 *Extra Budgetary Units, Financial Intelligence Unit*. The amount earmarked for Financial Intelligence Unit is Rs21 m. which is increased on a pro rata basis from last year. May I know what this increase relates to?

**Mr Bhadain:** There are 33 officers currently at the Financial Intelligence Unit. So, to meet the operating costs of the FIU, i.e, compensation of the employees, the staff costs, goods and services.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 125, item 26313.015 *Financial Intelligence Unit* and item 26313.016 *Financial Reporting Council*, is hon. Minister considering to revoke the Board and appoint new members?

**Mr Bhadain:** Is the hon. Member talking about the FIU or the FRC?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Both.

**Mr Bhadain:** With regard to the FRC, as I have intimated before, there are actions which are going to be taken by Government because the FRC is the responsible Body for ensuring that proper accounts of files and the figures which are reported are accurate and that the public do not suffer as a result of falsified accounts.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 125, under item 26313.008 *Competition Commission*, may I know from the hon. Minister who is now in charge of the Competition Commission?

**Mr Bhadain:** Well, the Competition Commission, of course, has a Board and an Executive. The Board is still being chaired by the previous Chief Justice Ariranga Pillay and the Chief Executive is Mr Deshmuk Kowlessur.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** The hon. Minister did not give me the answer for the FIU which is found on page 125, item no. 26313.015 *Financial Intelligence Unit*. We are asked to vote for an amount of Rs21 m. and with the recent event, is he considering to revoke the Board and appoint new people?

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes, actually the contract of the Board members has already come to an end and a new Board is going to be appointed soon.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On the same item *Financial Intelligence Unit*, may we know from the hon. Minister - if he does not have the answer with him, he can circulate it - the number of suspicious transactions reports that have been filed with the FIU last year and the amount of investigations carried out by the FIU?

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes, of course. I can provide this information. With regard to the second part, in fact, the FIU does not conduct investigations; they disseminate intelligence reports to investigatory bodies. So, if the question is in relation to the number of reports which have been disseminated to ICAC and the Police, I can also provide this information.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am referring to page 125, the question is more or less the same as the last one. The FRC which is a regulator for licence auditor, can we know in how many cases they have investigated and sanctions have been taken?

**Mr Bhadain:** Madam Chairperson, I do not have this information at this present moment, but I am aware that what we have just seen with the BAI case, there are certain investigations which should have been carried out by the FRC which have not been carried out. This is why we are going to sack the Board. Well, not everybody on the Board, but those who are responsible.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 125, under item 28 *Other Expenses, 28216.012 Contribution for Operation of Mauritius International Arbitration Centre Limited*, Rs34 m. had been earmarked last year and this year for the six months, Rs12.5 m. May I know from the hon. Minister, the number of cases that have been handled and determined by the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre so far?

**Mr Bhadain:** Well, the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre has been operating for a period of time. I do not have the exact information at this moment in time. I will provide it, of course. Just to let the hon. Member know that the portfolio of International Arbitration has been recently - only a couple of weeks - attributed to my Ministry and we are actually setting up a hearing centre which is going to be based in Ebène for the Permanent Court of Arbitration which is based in the Hague. This is the very first hearing centre which is outside the Hague, which is now going to be based in Mauritius.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Dr. Joomaye!



**Dr. Joomaye:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 126, under item 22120 *Fees*, a sum of Rs4,087,000 has been allocated. Can the hon. Minister give details of the fees paid and who will benefit from these fees?

**Mr Bhadain:** Madam Chairperson, these are fees to members of the Tender Committee and fees to consultants. I understand that this is the current practice for people in the Ministry who are sitting on certain committees especially when we are tendering for items like laptops, computers and so on. That particular amount has already been determined by the Ministry of Civil Service.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The hon. Minister did not answer my question about the FRC. I asked how many cases where the FRC has investigated in the recent past and sanctions have been taken?

**Mr Bhadain:** Well, I basically stated that the information is not available, but I will certainly provide it in due course.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I am coming back to the last question I asked about the Mauritius International arbitration Centre, item 28216.012. I understand the hon. Minister has just been allocated this portfolio. He is confusing Mauritius International Arbitration Centre with the Permanent Court of Arbitration, another item 26210.105 which relates to the Hague.

*(Interruptions)*

No, they are not the same thing! One is the host country agreement with PTA which is the Hague, the other one is a Government-owned enterprise. This is where my question comes because we are spending a lot of money on that Mauritius International Arbitration Centre Limited and we need to reassess whether it is worth spending so much money every year on that?

**Mr Bhadain:** No, it is not for every year. In fact, the hon. Member probably is aware that the LCIA-MIAC Arbitration Centre and the PCA is all becoming one. So, the figure of Rs12,500,000 is for the setting up and operational costs for the hearing facilities. It will be known as the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre Limited which is going to be based

at Ebène on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor in the building where my Ministry is. This is for the setting up of the high tech state-of-the-art hearing centre which is a matter of honour for Mauritius because it is going to be the first hearing centre which is outside the Hague and it will be based in Mauritius.

*Vote 20-1 Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Rs153,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 20-1 Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 302, item 22900.941 *Promotion of Financial Services*, there is an amount of Rs75 m. budgeted. Will that amount be spent by the Ministry or will there be a separate organisation like it used to be the case, the Financial Services Promotion Agency?

**Mr Bhadain:** No. Of course, it is a new agency which is being created, the Financial Services Promotion Agency. The amount which has been allocated to my Ministry, that is, Rs75 m. for promotion of financial services will also take care of the budget of the FSPA and allocation will be made from this item, of course, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 302, item 22120.007 *Fees for Training*, there is an amount of Rs25 m. which is budgeted. May we have some details of this amount, to whom it will be paid and who will give this training? I can add another question, on page 303, on *Recurrent Expenditure*, item 22120.008 *Fees for Consultant* Rs 17 m., may we have some details on a breakdown of this figure and to whom the fees will be paid? Who are those consultants?

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes. With regard to the first one, Madam Chairperson, the figure of Rs25 m., in the Budget there is a specific initiative for the creation of a Financial Services Institute which will be the responsible organisation for training and capacity building of many graduates we have in Mauritius, who have studied law, finance, accountancy, management and who are now going to be specifically trained in the financial services side,

relating to stock exchange, insurance, asset management, wealth management. The Budget is for that particular item, the creation of a Financial Services Institute.

The other amount of Rs17 m. is in relation to other initiatives which are basically being put in place at the level of my Ministry. For instance, a Whistle Blowing Unit which is going to be put in place, because we have seen that whistle blowing is one of the major tools which has to be in place to reduce fraud, corruption, wastage and also malpractices within institutions...

*(Interruptions)*

Of course, we are coming with a Bill. We will be coming with a Whistle Blowing Bill before Parliament after obtaining the approval of Cabinet, of course. This is going to be one of the major initiatives to stop what we have seen - even the BAI scandal. If we had a whistle blowing mechanism where people could report issues and these people, the genuine whistle blowers would be protected from recrimination, retribution, victimisation, then we would detect those cases and not take seven to eight years before we see the situation that has cropped up recently. So, that is one item. Then, of course, there are also other initiatives which are being put in place and the fees in relation to that will be, for instance, the reviews that we will be conducting with regard to the Mauritius Police Force. It is in the *discours-programme* that we are getting rid of the provisional charge system. So, we are coming with a new structure and this will also form part of that, amongst other things.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 303, Madam Chairperson, the last line, item 22900.943 *Financial Crime Commission*, the Minister has informed the House in one of his last speech he made here concerning the setting-up of the Financial Crime Commission. Can he give us some more details where he has reached with that Commission, whether there has been any preliminary studies done, contacts and outside and when Parliament is supposed to discuss this Bill?

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes, absolutely, Madam Chairperson. The setting-up of a Financial Crime Commission is going to be another major initiative which is going to be led by my Ministry. We have seen, for instance, the recent cases of Ponzi schemes and we know one of the reasons as to why this has taken place in our country – not only the BAI case, but there have been other Ponzi Schemes before like Whitedot and Sunkai. One of the main reasons is because there is no synergy; there is no integration in the way that institutions are functioning

in Mauritius, whether it is ICAC, FIU, FSC, FRC and even the Police. So, the Financial Crime Commission is going to be an apex body and as I have stated before, an umbrella organisation which is going to oversee the directorates which are going to be operating. So, you would have ICAC, FIU, of course, you will have the enforcement side of the FSC and also the Assets Recovery Agency which is going to be one body. So, to answer the question of the hon. Member...

*(Interruptions)*

Well, when you look at those fraudsters and the elaborate...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Order! Allow the hon. Minister to reply, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhadain:** When you look at the complexity of the cases that we are seeing today, of course, we need an organisation which is fully equipped both in terms of the legal powers, in terms of the manpower...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** You are disturbing the Minister, he cannot reply. Yes, please, proceed!

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes. I was saying, Madam Chairperson, when we look at the complexity of the cases we are seeing today and the impact that it has on our society, we need an institution which is fully integrated, enhancing, wide encompassing, which is going to have all the legal powers, the human resource which is required and also the appropriate structure. And, of course, we have been consulting with other organisations in the world like the National Crime Agency in the UK, the Serious Fraud Office in the UK and we are getting the structure in place. In due time, we will come with the appropriate Bill and I can assure the hon. Member that we are doing everything to eradicate fraud, corruption and malpractices in our society.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

**Dr. Joomaye:** Under the same item, Financial Crime Commission, a sum of Rs10 m. has been allocated. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether this will be spent in consultancy fees or in setting of the Financial Crime Commission?

**Mr Bhadain:** It will be spent to do all the works that hon. Bhagwan has just asked about.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 302, item 21110.005, *Extra Assistance*, last year, there was an amount of Rs1.5 m. that was spent and this year there has been a massive increase to Rs37.8 m. So, may we have some details on this extra assistance?

**The Chairperson:** Page 302, Item 21110.005 *Extra Assistance*.

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes. I cannot find the number right now, Madam Chairperson, but I can say what the *Extra Assistance* is all about. My Ministry has just been created, it is a Ministry which, of course, did not exist before and we have had to recruit staff. So, we recruited staff on consultancy basis and we have various levels in terms of people who are working as Assistant Managers, Managers and people who are working as analysts as well.

*(Interruptions)*

Of course, this is the Ministry of Good Governance, for God's sake!

*(Interruptions)*

Of course!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Allow the Minister to reply, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhadain:** I have always believed that you learn from your elders and I have.

**The Chairperson:** The hon. Minister has not finished?

**Mr Bhadain:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On this very same item *Extra Assistance*, being given that we are talking about good governance, I would invite the hon. Minister of Good Governance to circulate to the House a list of all consultants who have been recruited since he has taken office indicating in each case the amount of money, of public fund paid to these people identifying the criteria used for selection and specifying the task executed by these consultants.

**Mr Bhadain:** Well, not everybody has been recruited! You can come with a PQ afterwards if you wish, but basically the extra assistance on contract, the provision which is in the Budget is made for 10 Financial Services Managers which will come to a cost of Rs11.4 m., 20 Assistant Manager Financial Services Rs15.6, 20 Analysts on Financial Services which will be Rs6 m., and then, of course, there is the end-of-year bonus which you have to pay by law, which is Rs3.1 m., which comes to Rs46.5 m. Now there will be 50 people. I can tell the hon. Member that all the works which have been done by my Ministry in the last four months, have been done by only probably 10, 12 people, that's all the staff we had and we have achieved so much. Imagine what we are going to do with 50 more!

*Vote 20-1 Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms (Rs522,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

**The Chairperson:** I suspend the sitting for half an hour for tea.

*At 4.35 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.22 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.*

*Vote 21-1 Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives was called.*

**Mr Bhagwan:** At page 128, item 26313.061 - *National Institute for Co-operative Entrepreneurship*, Rs2 m. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether it is the same Institute where we had a famous person who was on bail and who was appointed as chairperson? What is the position? Is he still around waiting for another conviction by the Police to be ejected from his seat?

**Mr Bholah:** Madam Chairperson, yes, it is the same Institution. In fact, following the parliamentary question of the hon. Member the following day, he vacated office.

*(Interruptions)*

No, I spoke to him, and within 24 hours he resigned.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 127 *Current Grants, 26313 - Extra Budgetary Units, sub-item .083, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*. May I know from the hon. Minister the composition of the SMEDA?

**Mr Bholah:** Does the hon. Member mean the Board? The previous Chairman has resigned following the election, and we are yet to appoint a new Chairman.

**Mr Uteem:** On the same item SMEDA, has provision been made in this budget of Rs27.5 m. for the relocation of SMEDA in accordance to what was stated in the Budget?

**Mr Bholah:** In fact, it is for year 01 Jan 2015 to 30 June 2015.

*Vote 21-1 Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Rs94,400,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 21-1 Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** Page 306, item 26313.083 – SMEDA. There has been a significant increase in the operational budget of SMEDA. May we have a breakdown of this?

**Mr Bholah:** We do not have a breakdown. But, in fact, it is a substantial increase, as we are strengthening SMEDA to incorporate also the one stop shop, additional staff, as well as staff from the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS). In fact, this explains the increase.

**Mr Uteem:** Under the same item, being given that the hon. Minister has just mentioned that SMEDA is going to engulf the MBGS, can I know from the hon. Minister the amount of money disbursed under the MBGS Scheme and how many SMEs have benefitted from this?

**Mr Bholah:** I have some figures starting from year 2011 up to 2015. In fact, the numbers of companies which have benefitted are 274. The total amount is Rs222 m. and 84% of these beneficiaries are SMEs.

**Mr Uteem:** Still under the same item SMEDA, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the definition of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) which can benefit from the schemes?

**Mr Bholah:** All those enterprises which have a turnover up to Rs50 m.

*Vote 21-1 Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Rs281,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 22-1 Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Rs8,827,000,000) (January-June 2015) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 22-1 Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, on page 317, item 22120.001 - *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of cases that are heard on average by these Medical Boards and how many are rejected? If she has the figure or she can circulate it.

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Well, I don't have the exact figure because it is by session. What I have been given as information are –

No. of beneficiaries for bedridden aged 75 to 85	3,206
No. of beneficiaries aged more than 90 years	2,972
Children with disabilities	77

**Mr Uteem:** Under the same item *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, it was announced in the Budget that there would be more Doctors recruited for domiciliary visits, but I do not see any significant increase in the budget for domiciliary visit. Is there a reason for that?

**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** Presently, we have 40 Doctors. I understand that the number of Doctors will remain the same. We are having some difficulties because some doctors do not want to take more than a certain number of patients and some Doctors refused to travel long distances. Maybe we will need to review the whole policy so as to better attend to those who are in need of domiciliary visits.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 319, item 28211 *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions - Probation Home for Girls and Probation Home for Boys*. May I know the number of Homes being concerned here and what action is taken by the Ministry to ensure that the children who are sent there are properly looked after?



**Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo:** We have presently one Probation Home for girls and one probation hostel for boys. We have actually seven residents in Probation Home for boys and 8 residents for girls. We are trying to see if we can implement new policies so that we can have random visits at the Homes to see to it that children are being well cared.

*Vote 22-1 Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Rs18,730,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands.*

*Vote 23-1 Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands was called*

**Mr Uteem:** On page 139, item 28212 *Transfer to Households; item .002 – Compensation to Net Fishermen*. I notice that there is no provision made. Is it because the season has not yet started, or because there is no provision made under that item?

**Mr Koonjoo:** Yes, there is no provision for that - does the hon. Member mean for net fishing?

**The Chairperson:** It is Compensation to Net Fishermen.

**Mr Koonjoo:** In the past, 33 large nets and 20 gillnets fishers were in operation. As at date, 16 large nets and five gillnets fishers are involved and 130 fishers are in operation.

**Mr Uteem:** That does not answer the question as to why there is no money provided. Is there no longer any compensation for the first six months?

**Mr Koonjoo:** We have a policy to do away with these lagoon fishing in the future. That's why.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Chairperson, on page 136, *Grants* item 26313.002 - *Agalega Island Council*. There is an amount of Rs150,000 budgeted for the next six months. May I know who is heading the Agalega Island Council and whether it is functional or not?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The Agalega Council is functioning. We just nominated the Chairman for the Council whose name is Mr Bantu and for the rest of the members, the Board will be reconstituted.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 137, item 28213.010 *Transfers to Non Financial Public Corporation, Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd*, may I know from the hon. Minister who are on the board now of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd?

**Mr Koonjoo:** It is a bit the same as Agalega, Madam Chairperson. The board has been reconstituted and we have got Dr. Lalchand who has been nominated the chairmanship and the members, as usual, from different Ministries and we have got one member from our Ministry, Mr Labonne.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes, on the same page 136, item 26313.070 *Outer Islands Development Corporation*, there is an amount of Rs54 m. Can we have some details of this figure, a breakdown?

**Mr Koonjoo:** We have got several projects and the first one is the upgrading of the airstrip, the construction of a T-jetty and desalination plant for water. I don't have the breakdown with me. I will table it for you.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Madam Chairperson, the answer that the hon. Minister just gave, I don't think it is accurate, because there is an amount of Rs54 m. It cannot be that sum for all these projects that have been announced. Only the airstrip will cost about Rs300 m.

**Mr Koonjoo:** Madam Chairperson, as everybody knows, there is a grant given by the Government of India, about Rs750 m. for all the jobs, will start by that, with the Rs54 m.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I am quite surprised, on page 137, item 27210.009 *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash, Funeral Grants*, an amount of Rs10,000 has been earmarked. Can I know who are entitled to benefit from the Funeral Grants?

**The Chairperson:** On which page, hon. Uteem?

**Mr Uteem:** On page 137.

**Mr Koonjoo:** For every Fisher who passed away, accidentally or naturally, there is a grant given to his family or her family which amounts to Rs10,000 to start with.

**The Chairperson:** No questions! You have another question?

**Mr Uteem:** On page 136, item 22090.007 *Security of which Maritime Communications Services*, an amount of Rs10,200,000 is earmarked for Maritime Communications Services. So, may we have some more details about what this Maritime Communications Services is?

**The Chairperson:** Page 136.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 136, item 22090.007 *Security of which Maritime Communications Services*.

**Mr Koonjoo:** For the maritime security, we have got different measures of security for the people fishing outside lagoon and we have got a method of satellite system which we receive and we send and for this, there is a sum of money dedicated in the budget where we have to pay for the department concerned.

**The Chairperson:** No questions! Alright!

*Vote 23-1 Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands (Rs223,700,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 23-2 Fisheries was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 139, item 28212.016 *Transfers to Households, Compensation to Heirs of Fishermen icw Accidental Death at Sea*, the budgeted amount is Rs100,000 only. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how much compensation is paid to the heir of a fisherman if he passes away at sea?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The scheme was initiated in 1998 with the sum of Rs50,000. In 2009, the quantum has increased and it has become Rs200,000 and this compensation is given to heirs of registered professional fishers who die at sea in accident.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 328, item 22120 *Fees*. There is an amount of Rs7.3 m. budgeted, may we have...

**The Chairperson:** No, hon. Ameer Meea. We are still on the six months budget.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Okay.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 140, item 22120.028 *Fees of which Fees for Laboratory Test*. May I know who conducts these laboratory tests, whether it is in Mauritius or it is sent abroad?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The tests are carried out in the port area, Mer Rouge, and we have got a department which carries all the tests for all the fishes which they think are poisonous or something like that. In the laboratory there, Dr. Goordoyal is doing a very fine job and they are posted there with all the apparatus and there is a group of people at his office who are responsible for carrying out tests to see that fishes are not poisonous.

In case they are unable to carry out the test here, they send it overseas to be tested in Italy to confirm. But, recently, we have got one famous lab at Socota. I was there and I visited it. They have got *un laboratoire de dernier cri* in Socota for the testing of fishes. In case the Red Sea can't, they need help, they will definitely turn to Socota.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, no more questions.

*Vote 23-2 Fisheries (Rs139,800,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 23-1: Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** 26323.070 *Grants - Extra-Budgetary Units - Outer Islands Development Corporation*. Hon. Ameer Meea asked a question about Agaléga. May I know from the Rs500 m. planned whether there is any development projects on any outer island other than Agaléga that is scheduled?

There is an amount of Rs500 m. budgeted under *Outer Islands Development Corporation*. Is all the money that has been budgeted to do with the use for Agaléga or will there be any money used for any other outer islands?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The priority projects: construction of a cold room which is pending since a long time; renewal of energy production including solar energy; projects relating to environment protection and pollution reduction; upgrading of the sewerage and sanitation system.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, are you replying to the same question that the hon. Member asked!

**Mr Uteem:** My question is very simple. This Rs500 m. - is it going to be spent only on Agaléga or are there projects in the outer islands other than Agaléga?

**Mr Koonjoo:** Yes, only for Agaléga!

**The Chairperson:** That's it! It's simple. Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On the same issue of this amount Rs500 m., does this amount form part of the fund that Government will receive from the Government of India? Was this a grant or a loan?

**Mr Koonjoo:** The money received from India is a grant.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Is it these 18 million USD?

**Mr Koonjoo:** Yes, Madam Chairperson. It is 18 million US dollars

*Vote 23-1 Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands (Rs941,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 23-2 Fisheries (Rs314,400,000) was called and agreed to.*

*Vote 24-1 Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 143, Madam Chairperson, item 31410.402 ((a) *Rehabilitation of beach*. We are being asked to vote Rs50 m.

**The Chairperson:** page 143! Item 31410

**Mr Bhagwan:** Rehabilitation of beach!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Item 31410! Rehabilitation of Beach!

*(Interruptions)*

Look at the Budget on page 143, please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have not yet asked my question!

*(Interruptions)*

He lost his papers! Lost on the mountain!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, it is for the six-month Budget!

*(Interruptions)*

It is on page 143!

*(Interruptions)*

*Item 31410!*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** Now, I am asking my question!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, please sit down. He has not asked his question yet!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bhagwan:** We are being asked to vote Rs50 m.; can the hon. Minister give us a list of beaches which are being rehabilitated? I am sure the hon. Minister has the list. Also, on the same item *(b) Beach Reprofiling Programme* - Rs5 m., can the hon. Minister give us a list of areas where there are beach reprofiling?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, as far as rehabilitation of beaches for the Republic of Mauritius is concerned we have had Poudre d'Or - Rs14 m.; Cape Malheureux- Rs13.5 m.; Grand River South East – Rs18 m.; Quatre Soeurs – Rs33 m.; Baie du Cap- Rs28.6 m.; Bain Boeuf – Rs34.3 m.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 144, item 31113.425 *Embellishment of Infrastructure Works*, we are being asked to vote Rs5 m.

**The Chairperson:** On top of the page! Page 144! Sit down hon. Minister, the hon. Member has not asked his question yet!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, following the parliamentary question I had asked on the Minister's site visit, works have started at Le Dauguet health track and also the rehabilitation of the health track of the Signal mountain?

**Mr Dayal:** Both projects are being attended to. The Dauguet *parcours de santé* will be completed very soon and will be inaugurated. As far as Signal Mountain is concerned, as well we are going for the contract for the lighting of the track is Solar-based lighting system.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 143, under the same item 31410.402 *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Beaches*, can I ask the hon Minister whether those *transats* and umbrellas, which is for me an eyesore for our beaches - where in the past there have been political agents who have been occupying illegally all these beaches - will be removed from our beaches?

**Mr Dayal:** I thank the hon. Member for the question. Madam Chairperson, we have been attending to it. I personally went to some of the beaches where illegally more than 73 *transats* were placed. I am talking about Trou aux Biches. Directives have been given for them to be removed. And it is happening everywhere, all throughout Mauritius, at Grand'Baie, Choisy and Pereybere as well. If they continue, we are going to remove their licence.

*(Interruptions)*

Madam Chairperson, we are *un Etat de droit*, we take contraventions once, twice, third time and if they do not obey, we remove their licence.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** Madam Chairperson, with respect to the same item *Rehabilitation of Beaches*, last year I was privileged to be part of a workshop at the University of Mauritius during the signature of an MoU where the professor who was present, Prof. Murali, mentioned that the way we have been rehabilitating beaches in the country, is not appropriate, according to him. He said that in a workshop and he explained the reason for that. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the new methodology that we are adopting for rehabilitation of beaches caters for his recommendation?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, one week back, we had a validation workshop where all stakeholders were invited, we reviewed whatever we were doing and now we are going to have the recommendation. In this workshop, we had experts from JICA and we had also representatives of all the donor countries involved through their representatives. Therefore, we are attending to this problem in a very holistic manner. We are taking all factors into consideration.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 144, item *31113 Other Structure, 31113.45 Embellishment of Infrastructural Works*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount under that item has been budgeted for embellishment and infrastructural works in places of worship, mandils, mosques and other religious places?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, we have made provision for the sum that is in the Budget and we are in the process of finalising all the places where we are going to intervene on a first come first serve basis and also on a basis of necessity.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 145, under item *31113.009 Construction of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities/Stations, Cell 6 and Cell 7 Mare Chicose Landfill Site*, can the hon. Minister give us an idea about how long the Mare Chicose will be operational and whether the other cells have been rehabilitated? And secondly, with regard to the *Hazardous Waste Facility at La Chaumière*, can the hon. Minister give us an idea when the waste facility would be operational?



**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, provision for maintenance item comprising of post-closure management of Mare Chicose and maintenance of vehicle and plant equipment thereat is being attended to. As far as I am concerned, we are attending to whatever had to be done at Cell No. 6 and Cell No. 7, but we are not neglecting the possibility of catering for a small landfill site. As far as Government policy is concerned, we are going for a 100% Recycling Scheme as far as Mare Chicose is concerned.

Now coming to La Chaumière, we have projected - the figures are in the Budget - more than Rs245 m. for the construction of a storage facility for hazardous waste. All the procedures have been initiated and it would be commissioned as and when it will be ready.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Has the hon. Minister explored the possibility - we have had a PQ this morning concerning medical waste, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether experts have been asked to work on the possibility of having, within the same area, one same incinerator area for the hazardous waste and also the medical waste, because we are having problems not only in Port Louis, but also in Quatre Bornes and near other hospitals?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, as far as I am concerned, we are attending to all aspects of hazardous waste and medical waste, for me, is hazardous waste. Now, specifically because there has been concern, I am going to attend to it.

**The Chairperson:** Last question, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On page 145, item 26313.003 *Beach Authority*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Board of the new Beach Authority has been reconstituted?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, yes, it has been reconstituted. We have made it a point to get the best element in the country and they are functioning right now.

*Vote 24-1 Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management (Rs708,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 24-1 Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I think I will continue where I left. On page 344, under *Capital Expenditure*, item 26323 *Extra Budgetary Units*, 26323.033 *Beach Authority*. Being given

that we have the best people, maybe the hon. Minister can tell us the composition of this Beach Authority and also explain why we are budgeting Rs30 m. next year for the Beach Authority as capital expenditure?

**Mr Dayal:** We have projected certain specific works to be done on our beaches because of erosion and many other factors. Madam Chairperson, we have a specific report from JICA concerning our beaches and based on that, we have made the provision.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 337, *Capital Expenditure*, item 28222.006 *Solar Water Heater System*, Rs 100 m. has been budgeted. May we have some details on this scheme?

**Mr Dayal:** The scheme is an ongoing scheme based on the philosophy of *Maurice Ile Durable* so that we can have sustainable development. In this House, I answered a PQ based on the Rs100 m. that we are forecasting and I am very thankful to the hon. Member for that, because this is going to help us achieve some of the objectives as far carbon emission is concerned, as far as certain expenditures that we are incurring, as far as electricity is concerned, more precisely in vulnerable groups.

We are now working on the scheme. How are we going to implement it? It will be implemented at three levels –

- (i) low income housing group scheme;
- (ii) as far as people who can afford it, and
- (iii) based on applications on a first-come first-served basis.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 345, *National Disaster Risk Reduction*, I will take it on the Salary of the Director General item 21110.001, can I ask the hon. Minister following his site visit at Morcellement Hermitage, Coromandel where there is an acute and dangerous problem of land erosion which is a permanent danger to the inhabitants of the region, whether the Minister has prepared a plan to implement the project within the coming year to see to it that there are no further problems following heavy rains?

**Mr Dayal:** Madam Chairperson, I made a site visit together with all the elected Members thereat and I invited equally elements of the Opposition because I went there to see *in situ* what is the problem. Some of the problems have been attended to. As far as the

construction of the wall is concerned, this also is being attended to, based on budgetary requirements and based on funding. Therefore, this job will be done in the course of, I hope, this financial year. We have a small problem as far as entering the area is concerned and we have already convinced the person responsible of that area to allow us free entry and he has accepted. Thank you.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under the *National Disaster Risk Reduction*, there is the *Acquisition of Non-financial Assets, Transport Equipment*. We have seen recently the hon. Minister in action therefore, under this item acquisition of vehicles and equipment, is the hon. Minister considering the purchase of a helicopter?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Dayal:** I must enlighten the hon. Member, Madam Chairperson, we have enough helicopters to do whatever we have to do in this country right now!

*(Interruptions)*

...as far as I am concerned, as a *pilote commandant de bord*. The second thing is, we are buying vehicles and equipment based on our requirements and you know very well that some of the vehicles that we are utilizing, be it in my Ministry or at the level of the Disaster Management Centre, they are not capable of moving whenever there are floods and cyclones. These are the types of vehicles that we are buying. We are investing with wisdom and we are investing in the interest of the public.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem, you had a question? Last question!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you. On page 337 under Capital Expenditure, item 28221.012 - *Transfer to Non Profit Institutions, Rainwater Harvesting Scheme* which is a very laudable initiative, I see that there is a budget of Rs15 m. that is earmarked. Can we have more information from the hon. Minister on what this scheme is about and to whom the grant will be given?

**Mr Dayal:** The Rainwater Harvesting Scheme will be incorporated in smart cities. The philosophy behind rainwater harvesting is to provide the backup facility to people who want to go for this scheme. This is based on sustainable development. The scope of the

project is being worked out and the scheme will be implemented because we have found that we are getting landslides in certain areas, in built-up areas, because we have not attended to this important aspect of rainwater. So, this will be done within that framework.

*Vote 24-1 Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, and Disaster and Beach Management (Rs1,806,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*The following Votes were called and agreed to -*

*Votes 25-1 Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Rs308,000,000) (January-June 2015)*

*Votes 25-1 Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Rs672,000,000)*

*(Interruptions)*

*Vote 26-1 Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** On page 152, I am trying to locate the item number. I think I will take it under...

*(Interruptions)*

... the item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, in fact I am not sure whether it is the correct item number, I wanted to know the amount that has been disbursed under the workfare programme, I see *Computerization of Workfare Programme*, item 31132, but I do not see any item for disbursement under the workfare programme.

**Mr Callichurn:** It is under another item.

**The Chairperson:** Under RIE. Did you say under RIE?

**Mr Callichurn:** It is listed in a different item, Madam Chairperson. Does the hon. Member want me to give figures?

**Mr Uteem:** I would like to know how many people are currently benefiting from the workfare programme?

**Mr Callichurn:** The number of workers admitted to the workfare programme, according to statistics 2014, a total of 3880 out of which, 2535 male and 1345 female. The

number of workers who have opted for job placements: 2142 for male and 1141 female, total of 3283. Whereas the number placed for training and reskilling, male 135, female 123, total 258 and a total number of 339 have opted to start small businesses.

Does the hon. Member want the amount as well?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** It is okay. Hon. Rutnah!

**Mr Rutnah:** In relation to item 22030 at page 152, can hon. Minister elaborate on this item insofar as rent is concerned, and state who are benefiting from this rent?

**Mr Callichurn:** Actually, my Ministry is renting the first to the seventh floor of Victoria House belonging to a *Société* called Jolima Co. Ltd. We are paying the sum of Rs1,140,000 per month for the space we are occupying. We also rent two floors, namely the second and third floors, at Crescent House for the sum of Rs206,000 per month. There are regional offices which are rented by my Ministry. There are 12 in total.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister ...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jhugroo, please say on which page and on which item number.

**Mr Jhugroo:** With regard to the renting of Victoria House, which was just mentioned by my colleague, hon. Rutnah, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there had been tender procedures for the renting of this space? If so, can we know when the tender was launched? If yes, can we know how many people have tendered for this space? Can we know what is the rent per square foot for this building?

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, there are different units in the said building. May I know to which unit the hon. Member is referring? Is it the Employment Division?

*(Interruptions)*

I can give the answer now. The Employment Division previously occupied a total area of 16,956 square feet on levels 2, 10 and 11 at Sterling House. Recently, the Employment Division has been relocated to Victoria House, and that was on 01 December 2014.

In view of the relocation of the Employment Division to Victoria House and following the advice from the Public Procurement Office, a negotiating panel was set up by my Ministry in July 2013 under the Chairmanship of the APS to negotiate with the landlord of Victoria House the terms and conditions of the lease. Then, subsequently, on 04 November 2014, a lease agreement has duly been signed between Jolima Co. Ltd and the PS of my Ministry for the renting of an office space of an area of 14,270.77 square feet on levels 10 and 14 of Victoria House at Corner St Louis & Barracks Streets.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 154, Capital Expenditure, the last item; Item *31132.401 - Modernisation of Work Permit System*. There is an amount of Rs5 m. budgeted. May I know from the hon. Minister how many work permits have been processed in 2014 and how many are projected in 2015?

**Mr Callichurn:** I don't have the figures with me at the moment, but I can table it at a later stage.

**Mr Rutnah:** I am grateful for the answer given by my friend, hon. Callichurn, but I would like to take him back to the item on which I have asked a question earlier on in relation to Victoria House.

**Mr Callichurn:** Which page?

**Mr Rutnah:** It is the same page I referred to earlier on; page 152, item *22030 - Rent*. In relation to the company that owns this particular property at Victoria House, is the hon. Minister in a position today to confirm whether he would be able to give the identity of the directors of that company - if there are any directors or any director?

**Mr Callichurn:** There is one Mr Chan Sui Ko and Mr Ramjan who are the shareholder and director of the said company.

*Vote 26-1 Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Rs160,000,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 26-1 Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** On page 362, item 28212, *Transfer to Households, sub-item .028 - Employability Enhancement Programme: (a) Youth Employment Programme*. May I know

from the hon. Minister the number of trainees or people who have been recruited under the Youth Employment Programme in 2014, the projected number of people who will be employed for 2015/2016 and the criteria used for allocation of the training contracts?

**Mr Callichurn:** As at 09 April 2015, there were 13,646 youth registered with the Youth Empowerment Programme. 10,100 have already been placed in companies, out of which 5,111 are females. The number of employers registered under the YEP is 1,594. The criteria are as follows –

- the persons who are registered with YEP must be in the age range of 16 to 30, and
- they should be registered on the YEP database.

**Mr Uteem:** Concerning the allocation of training, it is not a first come basis or matching of skills. What criteria are used?

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, it is on a first registered basis. If they have been registered right in the beginning, they will be given the first opportunity in companies and the selection is basically done by the companies. It depends on the profile of jobseekers they are looking for.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** On the very same item of *Youth Employment Programme*, it was announced - I don't know if it was in the Budget Speech or in the Government Programme - that the training period will be extended from one year to two years, but I see that there is no corresponding increase in the amount budgeted. Does that mean that less people will now be eligible to do the training?

**Mr Callichurn:** Provision has been made. The budget has been increased. The budget provided for the year 2015/2016 is now Rs125 m., which is an increase compared to the year 2014.

*(Interruptions)*

It has been increased; I can assure the hon. Member.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you. On the very last line of page 360 under Capital Expenditure, item 31132.401 - *Intangible Fixed Assets, Computerisation of Registry of Associations*. May I know from the hon. Minister how many associations are registered as at today?

**Mr Callichurn:** It is 360. Which year is the hon. Member referring to?

**Mr Uteem:** That is just a general question under *Computerisation of Registry of Associations*. We are budgeting Rs1 m. to computerise the system. So, I wanted to know how many associations are concerned.

**Mr Callichurn:** As at 31 December 2014, there were 9,825 associations registered with the Registrar of Associations and 370 Trade Unions as well.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Rutnah!

**Mr Rutnah:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to page 359, item 22090 - *Security*. There is a provision for security amounting to Rs200,000 for the coming year. Can the hon. Minister elaborate on what he means by security, who provides security and to whom?

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, basically, the provision is for security services. There are two companies which have a contract with the Ministry. Firstly, Genuine Security Services, they provide security services at Crescent House in consideration for a sum of Rs4,600 monthly and Brink's Mauritius Ltd. for alarm and monitoring of labour offices across the island for a sum of Rs7,000 per month.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you. On page 360 under Recurrent Expenditure, Compensation of Employees with respect to item 21110.001 *Personal Emoluments, Basic Salary, Registrar of Associations*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the post of Registrar of Associations has been filled?

**Mr Callichurn:** Could the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

**Mr Uteem:** We are budgeting, under the staffing there is the post of Registrar of Associations. I am just asking the question whether we have filled the position.



**Mr Callichurn:** Mr Hookoom retired from the service on 17 January 2015. Actually, there is Mr Balluck who is the Acting Registrar and the post was advertised on 25 September 2014. Interview for the post of Registrar of Associations has been scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. Yesterday, the exercise has been completed.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ramful!

**Mr Ramful:** Coming back to the Youth Employment Programme (YEP), from a question put by hon. Uteem, I understand that about 10,000 youths have been placed in different companies. Now, has there been an assessment that has been carried out to see how many of them have retained their employment or how many of them have obtained employment somewhere else after the completion of that programme?

**Mr Callichurn:** Well, I have already stated earlier that out of the 13,646 which are registered with the YEP, we have been able to place 10,100 youths on the scheme of YEP in different companies.

**Mr Ramful:** My question is whether there has been any assessment or monitoring done to see how many of those 10,100 youths have retained employment at the companies where they were placed or how many of them have obtained employment elsewhere after the completion of the programme, to see if this programme is really working.

**Mr Callichurn:** The Youth Employment Programme has just been transferred to my Ministry. Previously, it was with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. So, I am informed that 80% of the candidates have secured an employment.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Rutnah!

**Mr Rutnah:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. May I refer the hon. Minister to page 357, Recurrent Expenditure, under item 21110.005 *Extra Assistance*. There is a provision for Rs3,300,000 for this year. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House to whom this extra assistance is provided and by whom?

**Mr Callichurn:** Extra Assistance, provision is made for salary and allowances to four Advisers to the Minister.

*Vote 26-1 Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Rs485,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 156, item 28211.024 *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Financial Support to Religious Bodies.*

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Which page!

**Mr Uteem:** Page 156. There is only one page!

**The Chairperson:** On bottom of the page!

**Mr Uteem:** Item 28211.024 *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions, Financial Support to Religious Bodies.* May I know from the hon. Minister of Finance what are the criteria used for allocation of this Financial Support to Religious Bodies?

**The Chairperson:** Page156!

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** No, that's not the problem. I am just looking for the information which I don't have.

The Fixed Grant Scheme was launched in Financial Year 1998-1999 and is subject to the following three criteria for eligibility -

- (1) The religious body should be registered with the Registrar of Associations.
- (2) It should not be affiliated to any federation and should itself have branches in Mauritius.
- (3) It should not be receiving grant/subsidy from any federation.

On the basis of the above criteria, currently non-affiliated religious organisations are benefiting from the fixed grant annually since 1998 as follows –

- Shri Sanathan Dharma Mandir *Parishad*: Rs300,000;
- Brahma Kumaris *World Spiritual University*: Rs100,000;
- Swastika: Rs100,000;
- Shree Kabir Council Mauritius: Rs100,000;
- ISKCON: Rs100,000, and
- Chinmaya Mission: Rs100,000.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Osman Mahomed!

**Mr Mahomed:** On page 157, item 26210.035 *UNDP Sub-Office*, last year a provision of Rs5 m. was made and this year it is nil. So, does that mean that we are not funding UNDP anymore?

**The Chairperson:** UNDP Sub-Office.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** The reply is another vote.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Madam Chairperson, I am not sure whether the hon. Minister of Finance has got the correct information. I was asking for item 28211.024 where the *Financial Support to Religious Bodies* was Rs73 m. last year and for the six months it is Rs37 m. which is roughly half of it. So, the name of the association and the amount that he has mentioned is nowhere close to Rs37 m.? That's why I wanted to know about it.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Well, if I don't have the reply, I'll have to circulate it.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes, on page 156, item 28217.002 *Compensation Arising out of Government Liability*, last year there was an amount of Rs74 m. and this year, there is an amount of Rs40 m. which is budgeted. May we know the rationale behind calculating this figure? Because I think this figure is a general provision. Can I know what is the rationale behind it or do we have specific cases for Government liability?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** It depends on cases arising. Is that reply satisfying?

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** I might as well take it here. I would like to have some clarifications on item 21210.002 *Social Contributions, Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*.

**The Chairperson:** On page 156! What is your question, hon. Uteem?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Can the hon. Member give me the item number?

**Mr Uteem:** The item is 21210.002 *Social Contributions, Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** 21210.002, is that so?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes. I would like to know....

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme!*

**Mr Uteem:** ... this *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme* is in respect to which employees and whether it is insured with SICOM or is there another pension scheme that is operating that Scheme.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** The provision made for Government contribution is in respect of pension for new entrants joining the Civil Service as from January 2013. For the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, Government contribute 12% of pensionable emoluments of new entrants while the latter contributes 6%.

*Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs540,000,00) (January-June 2015) was on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 365, item 28217.002 *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Item 28217.002!

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, item 28217.002 *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*. Last year, it was Rs74 m., next year Rs100 m. and then Rs150 m. and then Rs200 m. Is the hon. Minister in a position to tell us as at to date the amount of claims that have been lodged against the Government which can give us an idea of the contingent liability against the Government?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** I have a total expenditure as at December 2014 of Rs74,670,000. Accident involving Government vehicles: 1421, and injury on duty: 32. Is that alright?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Is any amount budgeted in the Rs100 m. for the heirs of people who have been found dead in Police cells? Has there been any provision made in case there is any compensation claimed by the heirs of people who have been victims while being in Police custody?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** The provision made to cater for any compensation to be paid to third parties in respect of Court cases, accidents involving Government vehicles and injury on duty and medical negligence; provision is based on past trend of expenditure. The specific expenditure to be incurred under the item in 2015-2016 is not known in advance.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Jhugroo:** On page 365, item 26313.035 – *Mauritius Ex-Services Trust Fund Board*. Can I know from the hon. Minister of Finance whether the amount budgeted for the three years is meant for the ex-servicemen and, if so, can we know for how many persons and can we know since when there has never been any rise in the amount paid to these persons?

**Mr Uteem:** I would come back to the question I asked in the previous year, which is here 21210.002 - *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*. I had asked a question, what is it for? Because the budgeted amount jumps to Rs75 m. then to Rs125 m. then to Rs150 m. I would like to have an explanation about the exponential growth in the defined contributive scheme.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Pension and other benefits have increased by 6% in 2015. The number of beneficiaries as at March 2015 for ex-servicemen: 1,995; widows of the ex-servicemen: 5042. Now, I go back to hon. Uteem. Would this reply fit the hon. Member? Higher provision is made to cater for full yearly contribution for existing participants in the scheme, one. Two, increase in salaries EOAC and 2015 compensation and new entrants as from January 2015.

*Vote 27.1 Centrally Managed Expenses Of Government (Rs1,380,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 28-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** On page 157, 25120.01 *Subsidies – Financial Public Corporations - Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd – Interest Subsidy on Loans* Rs26 m. May I know what this relates to?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** Provision required for refunding DBM, but the interest amount foregone on various concessionary loans schemes that it manages on behalf of Central Government. Those schemes include computer loan scheme, solar water heater loan scheme, water tanks scheme, special agricultural loan scheme, quasi equity financing scheme, and special loans to SMEs. The provision represents refund in respect of financial year 2014 and the period January to June 2015.

**Mr Uteem:** Under Item 22030 *Rent* – it is on the same page - there is a provision of Rs17.4 m.

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** The rent of Rs17.4 m. is a provision for rental of SICOM Tower at Ebene by Government. This is, in fact, the space that will be occupied for the SMEs bank. The total floor area of SICOM tower is around 170,000 ft<sup>2</sup>; rental is Rs34 per square foot. That is very cheap. The building will house the SME bank; the one-stop shop for the entrepreneurs; the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms; the Mauritius International Arbitration Centre Ltd and the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. The rationale for making provision under this vote instead of individual Ministry votes is to provide flexibility in the use of office space between various Government and public sector bodies. Negotiation on the basis of wholesale and long lease terms instead of retail and short-term and have better rental terms and lower rental cost. In fact, I have been involved in this with SICOM and it is much more advantageous for Government to rent the building on the long-term. The building is then used by various departments and ministries as and when required.

**Mr Uteem:** Rental – we have just learned SICOM tower has been the subject of a lot of PQs, including by hon. Mahen Jhugroo in the past because it used to belong to Mr Gooljaury. It was such a controversial project. May I know from the hon. Minister of Finance what procurement method has been used to identify SICOM Tower? Has there been public tender? Have other people been invited to bid before selecting SICOM Tower for Rs17 m. a year?

**Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo:** SICOM Tower belongs to SICOM. SICOM belongs to Government. If I have to give some preference when we allocate resources, I would go for public sector buildings. I find this quite natural. Likewise my colleague, hon. Minister Bhadain, was looking for space and we were looking for space for the SMEs bank, the building was there; it belongs to SICOM Government owned and we finally got the best rent

we could have got because this is Rs34 when the average rate there is Rs41. I am sorry, I have to defend this case because I know this case. What is good there is that SICOM is going to get a regular revenue from Government in the long-term; it helps also.

*Vote 28-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs210,000) (January-June 2015) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Vote 28-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs1,484,000) was called and agreed to.*

*The following Votes were called and agreed to -*

*29 -1 Contingencies and Reserves (Rs200,000,000) (January-June 2015)*

*29 -1 Contingencies and Reserves (Rs1,800,000,000)*

### **COMMITTEE STAGE**

*(Madam Speaker in the Chair)*

#### **THE APPROPRIATION (2015) BILL**

**(NO. III OF 2015)**

**&**

#### **THE APPROPRIATION (2015-2016) BILL**

**(NO. IV OF 2015)**

*The Schedules were agreed to.*

*Clauses 1 and 2 were called and agreed to.*

*The title and the enacting clauses were agreed to.*

*The Bills were agreed to.*

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

**ANNOUNCEMENT****ORDER PAPER - FRIDAY 17 APRIL 2015**

**Madam Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that in view of the fact that the consideration of the Appropriation (2015) Bill (No. III of 2015) and the Appropriation (2015-2016) Bill (No. IV of 2015) by the Committee of Supply is now over, the Order Paper dated 17 April 2015 by virtue of which the consideration of the above Bills was supposed to be resumed, has to all intent and purposes become null and void.

After the adjournment of the House, a new Order Paper will be circulated and hon. Members are kindly requested to guide themselves accordingly.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Prime Minister:** Madam Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned to Friday 24 April 2015 at 2.30 p.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.

*At 7.01 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 24 April 2015 at 2.30 p.m.*