



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2017

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 15 of 2017

Sitting of 20 June 2017

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 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 beg to move that all the business on today's Order Paper be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 10.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER**SOCOZIA LTD – CATTLE - IMPORTATION**

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Madam Speaker, I am, with your permission, making this statement in response to the point raised by the First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, hon. Reza Uteem, in the National Assembly on Thursday 15 June at Adjournment Time regarding particularly the quality of beef being supplied on the local market by Socovia Ltd.

Socovia Farm was affected by the Foot and Mouth Disease last year. The company was not authorised to sell meat on the local market since 05 September 2016. However, following vaccination of the animals and blood tests carried out by the Division of Veterinary Service and upon the advice of Professor Cardinal, an eminent Veterinary Officer from Reunion Island, the ban was lifted on 18 October 2016 because the meat was found fit for human consumption. However, sensitive organs like head, feet and all lymphatic glands which are known to harbour the virus in greater quantities were not allowed for sale.

Socovia Ltd. had exhausted the stock of animals imported last year and has to import a new stock to provide meat on the market. Moreover, arrangements need also to be made to import cattle for the forthcoming Eid-UI-Adha festival. Accordingly, my Ministry issued a communiqué on 03 May 2017 inviting cattle importers to submit their application for import permit.

Five companies including Socovia have responded. The quarantine sites have been inspected by the Veterinary Officers of my Ministry and only three sites have been found to be in conformity with norms of quarantine facilities in terms of infrastructure and bio-security. Import permits have thus been issued to the three importers.

With regard to Socovia Ltd, 250 animals were still on the farm when the company applied for the import permit. At the request of the DVS, these animals were removed to a remote place, that is, far from the pen where the new arrivals were to be kept. The farm was regularly disinfected under the supervision of the DVS.

A first consignment of 1,600 heads of cattle arrived on 31 May 2017. One of the import requirements was that all animals imported from South Africa should be vaccinated against a number of diseases such as Antrax and rift valley fever. Additionally, 10% of the stock was to be tested for FMD. The DVS has given the clearance for embarkation after the laboratory test result and the Veterinary Health Certificate from South Africa were obtained. All the animals were pre-quarantined for a period of 14 days before embarkation.

Upon arrival of the consignment, all the animals have been vaccinated against FMD. Two veterinary officers of the DVS are visiting the farm every day to ensure that the animals are in good health and to also detect any sign of the FMD. Regular blood tests are being carried out. 197 animals from the previous consignment were on the farm at the time of arrival of the new consignment and they have already been slaughtered. 400 animals from the new consignment have also been sent to the Abattoir.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the remark made by the hon. Member regarding the ban of three years on the importation of cattle, this was to apply for Rodrigues only given that the island was badly hit by the FMD. However, the situation is improving and a decision will be taken in due course to lift the ban at an earlier date.

I would like to re-assure the House that all necessary measures are being taken by my Ministry to ensure that there is no recurrent of the FMD and that the meat being offered on the market is of good quality and safe for human consumption.

Thank you.

(11.44 a.m.)

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2017-2018) BILL 2017

(No. VII of 2017)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2017-2018) Bill 2017 (No. VII of 2017).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Collendavelloo!

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Mr I. Collendavelloo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, when I took over the Ministry, the energy sector, the water sector, the wastewater sector were indeed in a parlour state and I shall come to that as we go along.

Nine years of Labour Party Government had left a legacy which was as dire as it was dismal. Energy, water, wastewater which are the key not only to economic development, but the welfare of our citizens had been left in an abandoned state. I will take one example - the Utility Regulatory Authority. This had been enacted, the law, in 2004 at a time when hon. Ganoo was the Minister of Energy, his handwritten notes on the file witness how he worked very hard on this with the help of the Advisor to the then Minister of Finance, as they worked towards regulating at first the electricity sector. Nothing was done after 2005 although they should have worked towards the establishment of the Board. There were difficulties, of course. There still are difficulties, but that does not mean that we just stay inactive because there are difficulties.

Finally, the Board was set up in September 2016. We need a lot of technical assistance because there is a lot to do. I have been myself to India and France and in the course of these two visits, I met with the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission in India and the *Commission de Régulation* of France and they both are decided to help us. It will take a bit more time than I had forecast, but under the chairmanship of Professor Goolam Mohamedbhai, I have no doubt that we will reach our results very soon. *Fixation de tarifs, protection des consommateurs, permis d'opération et de commerce de produits électriques, promouvoir la compétitivité et l'efficacité.* Those will be the main functions of the authority and, of course, they have got to draft Regulations, they have got to recruit proper staff and they are in the process of doing that.

At the same time, in the course of the two years and a half that I have been at the Ministry, I have tried to enhance our international and regional presence. We are members of

the (IRENA), which is the International Renewable Energy Agency. We are now going to join the South African Centre for Renewable Energy (SACRE) headquartered in Namibia.

Recently, in the course of my visit to India, I had the immense honour of depositing the instruments of ratification of the International Solar Alliance which is a common platform for cooperation among sun rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. This will give us immense benefits on the field of solar energy. Already some of our bright engineers are being trained at the Indian Solar Institute, 50 kms away from Delhi.

We have an Energy Efficiency Management Office. I have asked them to be more efficient now. I have also asked them to be audacious, to be bold and to be aggressive in their campaign. Ils ont un problème que beaucoup de corps paraétatique commencent à faire face. C'est que maintenant le marché des ingénieurs n'est plus saturé comme c'était avant. Avec tout ce qui se passe, avec ce que l'honorable Bodha est en train de faire, il y a des ingénieurs qui sont *excited to do certain things*. Malheureusement, au EEMO, il ne reste qu'un seul ingénieur. Ils sont tous partis parce que c'est un travail qui ne les intéresse pas autant que le *Metro Express*, autant que le *Bagatelle Dam* ou à la CWA. Donc, il y a un problème de mobilité.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I believe that very soon we shall need to recruit engineers from overseas. I am earmarking India and Madagascar to make good the shortfall of engineers. We do not have enough engineers on the market. The CWA, very soon with the Water Sector Reform, we will need to recruit additional staff including engineers. Where will we get them? Our Mauritian engineers are very bright, we see them at the CWA. Within their period of training, they do very well and they perform, but then after being trained at CWA, they go to work in other companies like GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd, Laxmanbhai & Co. (Mtius) Ltd, Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd and then we lose them because we can't pay them enough, because we are bound by PRB. So, all this is something which we will have to review if we want to deliver the goods. I have met the Bureau of Energy Efficiency in India. We will sign an agreement to bring technical assistance to Energy Efficiency Management Office (EEMO) so that we do that campaign which I want them to be.

I have met a company which is entirely state-owned Energy Efficiency Services Ltd, they are in the business of selling led lamps, fantastic at subsidised price. We are trying to

negotiate an agreement whereby they will deal with CEB Green Energy Company Ltd and we will have to see how we market and distribute these led lamps in the light especially of the Budget decision not to allow importation of incandescent lamps of more than 75 watts. If we introduce 8-watts led lamps, then we would be saving about Rs35 m. a year only on lamps.

We have a Master Plan dated September 2016. Let me just say one word on air-conditioning. *Tous les ans, Madame la présidente, nous importons à peu près 60 000, l'année dernière c'était 56,560 climatiseurs. Les climatiseurs en période de pointe, c'est-à-dire janvier, février, mars là où il fait chaud, représente 80MW avec une consommation de 220GW heure, c'est beaucoup.* So, we will have to do something about it in order to get more energy efficient air conditioners in the market and ban others that do not pass the tests. The problem is that *bon marché coûte cher*. We see it on the market, there are lots of air-conditioners which are bought at a very cheap price but then a lot of money is lost on energy because they are inefficient. We have got to label them so that the public is aware, at least, of the quality of air conditioning that they want to put in their place. Public buildings are being audited - the Prime Minister's office, *l'hôtel du Gouvernement*. Local Authorities spend Rs200 m. a year on street lighting, EEMO has directed that they put up standard designs so that all Local Authorities have the same quality of equipment and the same quality of lamps that will give a standard design and, of course, a reduction in costs because of the economies of scale.

Let me have a word on a small, little known but no less important, department of my Ministry, the Radiation Protection Authority. Under the able Chairmanship of Dr. Maudarbocus, the RPA is now regulating 220 facilities using 866 radiation sources like the radiation protection services, the monitoring occupational exposure. Now the RPA is monitoring 922 workers on a regular basis. Very soon I will be introducing a new Bill to replace the existing legislation. Resources have been allotted to the RPA and a new building is being constructed to allow them to perform their work. Let me now come to the energy sector.

Madame la présidente, entre 2005 et 2014, surtout à partir de 2010 nous avons eu droit à des déclarations ostentatoires sur Maurice île Durable. Ces déclarations, malheureusement, ne duraient pas. Un rapport, par exemple, du National Energy Commission fut laissé dans les tiroirs. Nous avions des gens très capables qui essayaient de relancer les énergies renouvelables, je ne vais pas les nommer parce que ce serait peut-être embarrassant

mais ce sont les gens très capables qui travaillaient au sein de Maurice île Durable. Malheureusement leurs recommandations n'ont jamais été appliquées. Moi, j'ai pris le rapport Manraj du National Energy Commission, je me suis dit mais pourquoi ne pas s'en servir pour le progrès de l'énergie renouvelable et c'est ce que j'ai fait. Je n'ai pas inventé la roue, je ne suis pas allé écrire un rapport, je ne suis pas allé chercher d'autres rapports. J'ai pris ce rapport qui n'est pas volumineux, qui est écrit dans un anglais très simple, qui a été fait après des consultations. Je me suis dit que je prends celui-là même et on va faire le Blue Print, et c'est ce qui a été fait, avec succès, comme nous allons voir tout à l'heure.

La seule préoccupation du régime travailliste c'était deux choses. Premièrement 100% charbon CT Power, je ne vais pas en parler parce que l'affaire est en Cour, c'est *sub judice* ; je ne vais pas faire des commentaires qui pourraient porter préjudice à l'affaire en Cour. Et puis il y avait Saraco. CT Power devait nous fournir 110MW. Pour comparer, en ce moment-là juillet, nous sommes sur la barre de 300MW à peu près ; en été nous arrivons à 469MW, ça était le *peak* en janvier 2016. Donc CT Power devrait fournir un quart de puissance. Saraco - il faut se rappeler dans quelles circonstances ce contrat béton fut conclu mais il faut concéder que Saraco fait un travail remarquable, les partenaires allemands du groupe mauricien sont de grands techniciens et ils arrivent à respecter leurs obligations *recta*. Il n'y a aucun problème avec eux. Ils fournissent d'une façon germanique l'électricité qu'ils ont promis de donner. Le travail est très, très bon, 15MW évidemment cela dépend du soleil.

Le secteur de l'eau était en désarroi, alors là c'était vraiment extraordinaire. Le moral du personnel était à zéro. Aucun projet ne démarrait même après, en 2014, il nous a fallu à peu près 18 mois pour essayer de mettre des systèmes pour *shake up* toute la force du travail pour commencer à s'y mettre. Toutes sortes de prétextes étaient bons pour ne pas faire quelque chose. Aujourd'hui ça a changé heureusement. Un milliard de roupies avait été gaspillé dans le projet de Upper Mare Aux Vacoas supposément pour réduire *non revenue water* mais comme résultat nous avons eu 1% seulement. CWA was marred by absence of vision, poor leadership, low staff moral, political interference at all levels, poor governance, high level of customer dissatisfaction, high water losses 60%, high operations and management costs, deliberately disorderly human resource management. We realized there were 300 employees whom, we all thought, were employees of CWA.

When we dig further, we find that they are, in fact, employed by contractors to work in sensitive areas such as procurement, finance - and they were paid by contractors -

attendants, of course, cleaning of yards and all that. In fact, CWA was privatised without anyone knowing because it was a private sector - if you want to call it this – and small private contractors making a fortune on friendly contracts, sweetheart contracts in order to be able to make a fortune on the back of these workers and employees and there was no investment in water infrastructure. Public complaints had become a joke. They were not being treated and of course, we remember the water revolts which occasionally spouted all over Mauritius.

Most projects were delayed and most projects had cost overruns. I will give two examples. A project of Rs166 m. had an escalation cost of Rs135 m. How could that be possible and how could that be accepted without anyone protesting, without anyone querying? We will see the same for wastewater, but worse the debts of Rs226 m. in 2013 simply written off without any explanation. Of course, writing off debts is a regular - but you have got to be satisfied. There are indeed bad debtors and not again that you are writing off debts of people who are close to politicians etc. The CWA had a debt of Rs2.4 billion. Government was providing a subsidy of Rs200 m. a year. CWA had to keep its head over water otherwise the CWA would have been accumulating losses of Rs60 m. every year. This was what I saw when I got in.

Wastewater, that was even worse! We just have to read the reports of the Department of Audit between 2005 and 2014 to see how year in, year out the Director of Audit was just saying: “See how much money is going down the drain.”

The Baie du Tombeau project 2007, original contract price: Rs464 m. was revised to Rs603 m. Variation works amounting to Rs146 m. carried out without any approval, but paid. No approval, no check, nothing! Just the cheque! No check, no verification, I mean! But the cheque, yes, that is paid immediately. That is signed and the rapidity with which these payments are made is mind-boggling. As soon as the contractor asks, it goes through all levels and stops with the chairman, everyone signs and the contractor is happy. We are not children! We all can suspect, but, of course, there is no evidence of what has happened down the line.

The Plaines Wilhems sewerage contract - I am just giving you one or two examples - Lot No. 2, initially for a contract of Rs2.3 billion, Rs500 m. extra. Rs500 m., as if it is a drop in the ocean. They just take Rs500 m. and pay the contractor. On top of that, the contractor is supposed to complete his work in July 2012, he completed it in April 2013 and he is supposed to pay a penalty for delaying, for giving the work after the contractual time. They

waived the penalty and paid him Rs500 m. That is wastewater at that time! Lot No. 1 A, the contract value was from Rs2.8 billion to Rs3.1 billion due to be completed in 2014, was completed last year. This time, they are claiming the penalties for the delay. Hundreds of millions of rupees have gone down the drain with wastewater. What did we do with all this?

First of all, the choice of right people, that is what I am proud of. Retaining Dr. Maudarbocus, although he had been appointed under the old regime because of his competence; Mr Naidoo and Mr Hébrard at the CEB, Mr Hansrod at wastewater, Mr Ismael and Mr Desmarais at the Central Water Authority, and very recently, Mr Makoon has been appointed Ag. General Manager by a panel, not by the Minister as it used to be. Well, by the Board, but on the recommendation of a panel composed of the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry, composed of a senior cadre of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, composed also of Mr Wong So, an engineer. All three of them sat and discussed for at least one month. I don't know what they have to discuss about, I did not involve myself and they came up with a solution which they proposed to the board and the board accepted this proposal.

I have one word to say on Mr Hébrard. I need to do that because it is an unfortunate matter. My hopes were dashed when I heard those horrible news that he had to be taken to France. He is apparently recovering. We wish him well. I did transmit to him the good wishes of hon. Bhagwan. He was very happy to hear that. I can retransmit that message to you. We hope that he will be able to recover, but, unfortunately, I think the future is bleak for the CEB establishment on that personal aspect. Mr Makoon is the Ag. General Manager and we wish him well in his career.

On the Wastewater Management Authority, for years, for two and a half years, we were looking for the appropriate General Manager. Advertisements were made. I must say we had found out one candidate, a Mauritian expatriate. When he heard how the Opposition were treating the people who were being recruited because they were paid a salary which appeared to be exorbitant - I don't think that Rs250,000 is exorbitant for a General Manager of Wastewater Management Authority - they all went. There were two advertisements, they all went! And then, I said: "No, recruit from within because people have been going up in this institution. We have got to show that we have confidence in our staff and the last recruitment, just before Mr Makoon, has been Mr Radhay who is the Deputy General Manager. He was selected by the Board to become the Ag. General Manager with

the approval of everyone. Everyone is happy about this appointment. We shall see how he progresses. We wish him well.

Let me say one word for all these companies on the dedication of these employees, engineers, cadres who have been working very hard. At a certain time, they had lots of doubts as to their future and they thought it was going to be the same game all over. Now, they know that it is not the same game all over. They are working in an independent environment. There are certain people who don't like it. Then, they do all sorts of nasty things, but the whole vast majority are working very, very well.

When I took over the Ministry, the first problem I heard was blackout. We were borderline, as I have said. This is the first thing to which my attention was drawn. We have silenced all the ominous cries of blackouts. The fear which I shared as well was that CEB would not be able to supply adequate electric supply to meet the demand and then we would have had outages, *délestage ciblé* from places to places, like we have in many countries, Madagascar, South Africa, trains not being able to go because of blackouts, etc.

I am convinced that if we had not been returned to Government in 2014, we would have been facing blackouts for a long period of time. First of all, let me reply to hon. Jahangeer. We must not confuse between accidental blackouts such as what happened in the south. When there is an accident, then you have to switch off almost everywhere in order to ensure the safety of people. If there is an accident which trips a wire somewhere and in the south what happened was that there was tripping and the two other *Centrale du Sud* were unable to go into the network to provide addition spurt of electricity and that created a blackout, this is accidental. But this you cannot prevent.

We are talking of power outages, we are talking of *délestage* where voluntarily we cut power supply in order to save electricity. This has not happened. Now, hon. Jahangeer has talked of what he called 'burnouts', I have heard burnouts, but, in fact, I believe he meant 'brownouts'. Hon. Jahangeer knows, because he deals, he trades in these sorts of equipment. We know what has happened. Under the old regime, it was only a question of price. Electrical equipment put on electric poles were bought, the cheapest one. Now, when Mr Hébrard came back, he said: "No, we are going to select suppliers who have good quality equipment and these are the ones from whom we shall select bids." Of course, it is more expensive, but, at least, we get good quality. This is why very often on the particular area, you suddenly see your voltage going down. But it is not fair to say, as hon. Jahangeer said,

that this has led to three accidental deaths. Brownouts means your electricity phases down, it cannot kill people. People are electrocuted when they get into contact with the live wire and this is what had happened in the three cases, which are still under Police investigation.

In 2016, CEB produced 43% of the electricity requirement while the remaining 57% was provided by independent power producers. This is why we have to put the URA well on track. CEB will have to be corporatised. There is a plan which had been drawn up in 2004 for the corporatisation of CEB and then, of course, forgotten in 2005. I am reviving this and we are coming with a plan, for the corporatisation to submit to the Prime Minister and then to Cabinet and if it meets the agreement, then we shall see. I am not talking of privatisation; I am talking of corporatisation, that is, making of CEB a company, so that it competes on the same level playing field with all other producers. They provide only half of the electricity. There is no reason why they should be treated better. There is no reason why they should be the ones who are judge and party, who fix the tariff, who decide how much they are going to pay one producer. I am sorry, I have told that to the *encadrement* of CEB, I am not going to allow this. We have to work in time. This is where the Indians' assistance is going to be very helpful.

The CEB must be geared to meet present and future demands. This is why we have done many things. Concerning St Louis, we have faced a lot of obstacles. First of all, on the procurement side, challenges, Supreme Court, now we are facing, at least, six trials, six cases in different Tribunals and Courts. We are battling all these obstacles. Luckily, we are convinced that we are right and the cases will continue their way. For the moment, the machines are going to be operational in September of this year, September 2017, they have made good headway. This is an investment of Rs4.2 billion.

One word on the environment, the African Development Bank, which is the funding agency, has been very careful to monitor that all environmental standards are met, state-of-the-art, environmental standards, noise, smoke, pollution, etc.

Up to now, all the reports are favourable. All environmental guidelines are being satisfied and all the conditions set out in the Environment Impact Assessment licence are being complied. This is the top priority, the top directive which I have given to CEB on St Louis and for the tank farm to which I will come immediately.

Regarding tank farms, of course, with that development we need to store. Well, we need to store somewhere. We have to make a choice as to where we store. Again, we will

make sure that no damage is caused to the neighbourhood or the environment. We have received complaints. Hon. Mrs Selvon, my colleague, hon. Wong Yen Cheong and hon. Baloomoody have either asked questions or privately talked to me. Hon. Armance also has talked to me about this and all the MPs of the areas we have discussed. We have committed an independent engineer to survey whatever houses they pretend have been damaged and to make an independent report.

Each one or collectively, they may have other counter reports. And, of course, if the construction of the tank farm has been creating damage through the fault of the contractor, well, CEB will have to bear the bill, because it is unacceptable that we do work for our own profit and benefit and then we damage other people's houses. This is not my style. Certainly, we are not going to allow that sort of thing. Of course, people are concerned. Of course, people are worried, because there were at first problems of Ramsar; this is behind us. Now, it is the problem of material damaged. The CEB has invested Rs500 m. in these storage tanks because they are outdated.

One word on Combined Cycle Gas Turbine near Fort George, this is interesting. This will be at a cost of Rs1.6 billion in two gas turbines of 35 to 40 Mw to be fuelled by diesel and in the second phase we will invest Rs4 billion for the setting up of a steam plant to significantly improve the efficiencies of the gas turbines.

Then...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Is there somebody else's phone ringing or is that an alarm or I don't know?

(Interruptions)

Whose phone is this? Can you go out with your phone because you can't keep on interrupting! I have said in the past that there is a decorum in the House which has to be maintained. Whose phone is it? I don't see anybody going out with his phone.

(Interruptions)

Yes, please proceed!

The Deputy Prime Minister: The dam of Sans Souci will also be upgraded.

I have mentioned in the past our long-term plan to shift progressively to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). First of all, the plant at Fort George would be converted for use of LNG. This is a real opportunity to move towards cleaner energy. There has been a debate when the MARENA Bill was introduced that LNG was not renewable energy. Of course, it is not renewable energy. But, MARENA is also looking into it.

LNG is not only for CEB because if we are going to use LNG for CEB the cost is too high, we cannot meet it. What is required is long-term planning and to see how it can be diversified. Concerning transport, in Delhi I have seen all the buses and the little *tuk tuk* are on LNG. How they have been able to convince a whole population of taxi drivers, bus owners, *tuk tuk* owners to convert to LNG, I don't know, but if you go to Delhi, you will see all these buses, no pollution at all! This is fantastic. With the Metro going and the buses running on LNG and the *tuk tuk* and the taxis, it is marvellous! We can do that. Have our transport on gas, gas in the houses but also gas in bunkering.

33,000 boats leave Singapore to go down the Cape to other regions and they pass near Mauritius. Certain South African bunkering agencies take their bunker from Durban, they go and meet the ships in the Indian Ocean, not far from Mauritius, they transfer the bunker and then the boats carry on. Well, this we can use here not only for petroleum but also for LNG because more and more with the carbon tax, ships are being - four ships now are leaving Norway with LNG engines and it is going to go on and on. In Australia, which is a producer of gas, Australia ships are full of LNG all over the world, especially on the Asian Continent.

So, what has happened, unfortunately, is that we wanted a feasibility study; it has been delayed because a first bid exercise had to be cancelled. A new bid exercise has been launched and the bids are being evaluated. We expect the study to start in September.

Now, the next wing is transmission. We do not want to go very long but we have to enumerate. The grid, we are going to have three sub-stations in La Tour Koenig, 7 gas insulated sub-stations at the airport, Fuel, L'Avenir, Côte d'Or, Eau Bleue, Ébène and Wooton, refurbishment along transmission lines, construction of new networks, refurbishment of networks and, more important, undergrounding of networks on feeders at La Tour Koenig, Case Noyale, Jin Fei, Rose Belle Cyber City and Côte d'Or.

Similar works are underway at St. Paul, Vacoas, Belle Mare Saint Géran, Le Morne, Tamarin and Rose Hill. All these are starting at the same time. There are certain

environmental nuisances, we have intervened, the day before yesterday itself, I went on site with the Chairman and with Mr Dabidin who is the acting DGM. I believe now and we saw the damage which the contractor was causing. I have asked Mr Makoond to put order immediately with this in order to stop creating nuisances in the name of CEB. Hon. Bhagwan has collaborated - I must put it on record - very well with us in order to try and improve that situation. Other networks also are being constructed.

Smart Grid - we are installing smart meters probably to reach 80000 users in 2020. We are going to integrate small-scale and medium-scale distributing generation systems to reduce energy losses. We are going to reduce the system interruption frequency, reduce interruption durations, all this because of the use of smart meters.

I now come to renewable energy. I do not believe in catchy slogans. I do not believe in clichés. I believe that the work must be done and that is all. So, I do not do a big razamataz when I am doing something. But when I go back in time and I look at what has been done in the field of solar energy, it is fantastic! I never thought I would have been able to do this in the space of two years and a half.

We have set up MARENA which will act as a regulator for renewable energy, which will set standards, which will license operators and check on the manner in which they are performing their work, they are recruiting staff. I mentioned wind power. 9.4 MW wind turbine at Roche Noire operational in April 2016, at a standstill since 2012! For four years! For two years at least these poor people were just waiting for clearances from one Minister to another Minister because some people were scared that the turbines were going to disturb them when they were in their *campement*! So, everything was done to stall them. We, with the help of my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands, cleared all these. All clearances were given and now it is working.

Plaine Sophie, in gestation since 2009, Madam Speaker! 2009! I wonder how these investors had the courage to keep on, on this. Of course, the contractual price they are going to get is quite interesting but still, having waited for all this time and now it is on board and now they have settled all their differences.

Solar PV, between 2015 and 2016 we have increased photovoltaic by 15.4%. That is amazing! By the end of our mandate photovoltaic electricity - well I hope our mandate ends

in 20 years but by end of this mandate - there will be a mindboggling increase of more than 400% from about 18MW to more than 115MW by 2018!

Let me call it a photovoltaic revolution because never have we done. On this economy of scale, there are very little countries, apart from Morocco, which with the help of Abu Dhabi is launching a huge program in the desert. Here, we have 3 solar farms - I am sorry but I have to go into some detail there - of 2MW between 2015 and 2017 in the space of these 2 years: Petite Retraite, Choisy and l'Esperance. They will generate 10GW/hour annually. 3 solar farms of a total capacity of 41MW will be put in operation at Solitude, Queen Victoria and Henrietta in 2018. 3 projects of solar PV, from 1MW to 9MW for a cumulated power of 22MW to be operational in 2018 at Anahita, Petite Retraite and Petite Rivière. CEB Green Energy Company Ltd will invest in a solar farm of 2MW at Henrietta to produce electricity. In the second phase, it will increase to 13MW.

The company will install 2000 solar PV of 1KW each intended for families who benefit from social tariffs. I heard hon. Jahangeer who said: "Well, if you want to put solar PV, you need to put one battery for each solar PV", that is not correct at all. Hon. Jahangeer must know, he is an engineer. I am not an engineer, but I know what my engineers tell me. It is not necessary to put the batteries because they will have the help of the electrical network so that when there is no sun, for example, at night, the electricity network will provide them electricity. They do not need batteries, but what is interesting is that they will get 50 units free of charge from the CEB to compensate all this. Therefore, we will not need batteries and we will not install batteries on the rooftops. Biomass, use of cane trash as well as bagasse, waste to energy I do not know what is the problem there. I have been battling; the technicians always tell me that there is a problem, now the latest exercise shows us that none of the bids was responsive. Well, probably none of the bids was responsive because the specifications were drafted in such a way that no bid could be responsive. I do not want to interfere in this or else I will be accused of favouring bidders, etc. Now we are awaiting and finally I have left it to the African Development Bank to help us in launching a new bid.

One word on medium scale, that is, places like Bagatelle, Super U of Flacq, etc - to put it simply, CEB needs to be paid because they are providing a service whenever these large scale solar photovoltaic are put at Bagatelle. CEB said you have to pay us Rs212. then I understand now that with the assistance of Business Mauritius, a compromise has been

reached on the price so that we will have the big commercial centres investing in medium scale distribution energy projects.

Small scale, I must concede and admit that we have been proceeding on a rather low pace. I have taken the Chairman several times to task about it. I have amended the law so as to facilitate the permit process; I hope that we will be able to proceed faster. We have announced in the Budget 3000 NHDC units, energy storage batteries, investment of Rs3.4 billion for network.

Let me have now one word on the CEB companies on which some furore has been raised by this side of the Opposition. Madam Speaker, there is a limit to demagogy. Protests of course, complaints, disagreements, that is the place where all this is debated, but there is a limit. The present Leader of the Opposition, when he was a senior Minister in 2009, was not in charge of CEB. The CEB has set up a CEB investment Company Ltd for one single purpose, to take money and put it in 26% of the capital of CT Power Ltd. Then there was nothing wrong. Without going to Parliament, without saying anything, in utmost opacity, one day we woke up, we heard - what is worse - that CEB money was to be chipped in first so that the CT Power would not put money, wait for CEB to put in 26% and then we do not know what would have happened. That was the programme of the Leader of the Opposition when he was the Minister. Did they worry about procurement at that time? Did they have any, of that sort, of worry?

The fibre net: in 2001, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy put together, they probably have forgotten - Mr Jean Mée Desveaux, who was the advisor, was the main proponent of this. He said there was earth wire in the electricity network, and he said, I am quoting from what I have seen on the files - 'Let us replace that earth wire with an optical ground wire network which has 300km optical fibre network.' The plan, ever since 2001, was to use this network. In order to make my explanations simple, I have brought a piece of that network to show what it is, with your permission, Madam Speaker, I promise not to use it for any other purpose.

(Interruptions)

That is the outside but inside we have all these little fibres. Now CEB is using, let's say, 10% or a little bit more 25% of this wire. The original plan - at a time there was no big internet revolution in Mauritius, but it was the time when Ebène was being thought of, and I suppose,

on advice of experts, because I do not think either hon. Bérenger or Ganoo or Jean Mée Desveaux had technical expertise. So they invested in additional, that is, all these remaining, which are idle - 330km are idle.

When we took power, I looked at the file and I saw what had been done, what was being done. I did not understand much about it and I asked the Ministry which was then headed by the now Prime Minister. He looked at it, he told me: "Let us get cracking on this"; because it was in our plan in 2000-2001, let us do it. But to do it, CEB, with its huge structure, with its legal impediments, could not do it. So I said I will find the legal solution, we have got to do it in full transparency what was intended to be done in 2001 must be done in 2016. That is the simple thing about Fibre Net. We are going to use it for telecommunications and I shall explain that later.

CEB hired a consultant and we had a committee composed of people from the Ministry of IT and the Prime Minister's Office. We worked on it and there was a consultant by Artelia which is specialised in the use of surplus fibres of the electricity network to carry out feasibility study. Their findings were conclusive and they said: 'You are sleeping on money. If you use this, you can lower the price of Internet connection and make money as a profit.' So, this is how we incorporated CEB FibreNet Co. Ltd. I am not going to go into details. There was a restricted bid exercise and a telecommunication vendor was appointed and this is ECI. ECI is a well-established company. It serves some of the world's largest service providers and critical infrastructures across the globe. History of 60 years! Germany, one of the strongest economies of the world, no doubt, is a great example of ECI's showcase. Their equipment is installed in most of Germany's largest utilities.

(Interruptions)

Yes, they come from Israel! But MBC is equipped with Israel under the Labour Party. So, what is the thing about this Israel? If we can get the best equipment for the best price, I shall say Israel.

(Interruptions)

What is this?

(Interruptions)

Yes, telecommunications!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, they are the best. I want to have the best for Mauritius and this is what has been done.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

The Deputy Prime Minister: And nobody can challenge this on any account. They are in Namibia, Tanzania, Rwanda and Cameroun. These people, you think they are stupid. They say: 'No, Israel, no.' Netherlands, France, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Portugal. They are in all these countries.

Now, we are going to deploy this full-scale and we are going to serve our customers better. This is going to be a huge success story for Mauritius. The collaboration is between the Ministry of IT, the CEB and our Ministry. We are working full speed under CEB Fibre Net. One word about supposedly the ...

(Interruptions)

I am sorry! When I came with my proposals, it was in Cabinet. The Prime Minister was Sir Anerood Jugnauth. The actual Prime Minister was the Minister of Finance. The Leader of the Opposition was the Deputy Prime Minister, seated on my left in Cabinet. I put it in a Cabinet paper. I said: 'This is what I am going to do.' Did he say: 'Oh, we don't agree etc.?' What is worse, when he came to Parliament, he put up a fake document to say: 'See, what the Finance Act says?'

(Interruptions)

Menti, menti, Madam Speaker! Not true! This is not what it was. Then, what we see is simple. The law was passed, - and I have got to rebut all these because people have been saying things - there was a debate on it. The Leader of Opposition voted for it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please sit down! I just heard some comments saying that you have disclosed what happened in Cabinet. My appreciation of what you have just said is that you have not disclosed anything. You just said that you brought the matter to

Cabinet and who was sitting on your right, who was sitting on your left and then you talk about that document which was tabled. So, I think this clears the air. What I consider as disclosing what happened in Cabinet is that you go in details and you say who had what point of view on which matter. Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not going to waste my time with people like this. So much about these companies, but what is more. The matter went to the Supreme Court. Aerowatt? What happened was that Aerowatt challenged a decision of CEB to award a contract. Aerowatt is the one who does the wind farm in Roches Noires. They challenged the award of the CEB for a solar PV contract to Voltas. They went to IRP. CEB's lawyers said: 'No, see the section of the law.' That law was passed when the Leader of Opposition was in Government. CEB's lawyers challenged this application. The IRP found that Aerowatt was right. Same argument as the Leader of Opposition was using: 'Ah, it is not possible. You need to go through the Central Procurement Board.' CEB went to the Supreme Court only as a matter of principle. The Supreme Court has delivered a judgement saying that the point taken by CEB - the case is the Judicial Review Application of CEB versus Independent Review Panel. The Independent Review Panel ruled against CEB wrongly as certified by the Supreme Court. So, I am fortified by debates in Parliament, by the law and a judgement of the Supreme Court. Do I need now a signature from the Leader of the Opposition, who himself had agreed to it? So, let us stop that demagogy once and for all.

I now come to the water sector. Very difficult, Madam Speaker! A reform of the water sector is to be undertaken by Government with the collaboration of the World Bank and the IFC. I do not need to go back. Since 1997, there is, at least, one dozen attempts at reforming the water sector. But I am determined to succeed where others chickened out. Because they did not fail, they just chickened out, they got scared. But we are going to do it. All sorts of permutations have been proposed over time. We need to do it or else we will not be able to deliver on our promise.

Now, I am happy to announce - because last time I said if I don't get funding, I would not do it - that a few days ago, I have been informed that the international agencies will provide us with the funding on condition, of course, that there is part funding from the Minister of Finance. I don't think there will be any difficulty since we are getting that money from World Bank, IFC etc. in form of grants, in dollars.

The World Bank has made recommendations for a 15-year affermage contract to a private operator to operate and maintain the potable water distribution system with the CWA to continue to own the water distribution and supply assets. The IFC will act as Transaction Advisor. The World Bank will continue to provide advisory assistance to the Government on the reform.

The global infrastructure facility will provide us a total of \$875,000 to support the preparation of the project of which \$475,000 has been allocated for the support to be provided by the World Bank and 400,000 to the IFC as it leads the preparation structuring of the project.

So, now that we have the funding, I can announce firmly and formally that the water sector reform is on in accordance with the recommendations of the World Bank and the policy of the Government in this matter. In the Budget, in fact, we see a provision of 14 m. for the transaction advisory services. Now that we have the in principle agreement, I am going now to work on the legal aspect together with my colleague, the Attorney General, to work out the agreement with IFC as quickly as possible.

Many of our colleagues have raised issues concerning labour issues. All measures will be taken to ensure that there is no redundancy, I mean, compulsory redundancy, of course, and that everything is done with due regard to the rights of the workers. The rights of the workers at CWA have sufficiently been trampled on all these years. I am not going to preside over a further trampling of their rights. Now, for this Financial Year 2016/2017 until we vote our budget, we earmarked Rs2.3 billion for replacement of 185 kms of ageing pipes dating back to 50 years.

Rs1.2 billion has been allocated for the construction of new and upgrading of existing treatment plants and service reservoirs. In April 2015, 161 households in Mauritius were having access to water round the clock. On my watch, Madam Speaker, between April 2015 to April 2017, the number of households obtaining water round the clock has risen from 161,000 to 211,000 households which are now receiving water round the clock. Of course, you cannot have 24/7 overnight. But I will show you how we are progressing towards 24/7.

Subscribers have increased from 327,000 to 360,000. 56,000 households which consume less than 6 m³ are benefiting from water free of charge. It is either because they are saving water or because the CWA is not supplying them with enough water or because they

are very careful when they use their water or they are small families. But, it is 56,000, they get water free. The bill indicates zero for their consumption. In certain regions, the hours of supply has increased from 6 hrs to 10 hrs. 24,000 households have benefitted from this increase in water supply.

There are still some hotspots, Trianon, Plaine Magnien, Beaux Songes, Coromandel, Rose Hill, the biggest hotspots. Rose Hill is, probably, going to be the last one to benefit from 24/7, but it is coming. The plan is there, the strategy is there but, as I have said, I do not do razamataz. I do the work, people see the work and then they stop shouting. That is enough for me. People are angry, of course, when it does not work. When it works, they do not applaud. But, never mind, that is the fate which we have to go through!

We have certain complaints of pipe bursting; this is because of the pressure of water. We are going to experience it with the Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant. The water comes with high pressure in these old pipes which burst or because contractors have been working and they burst a pipe. Now, Bagatelle Dam will be finally completed this month, it is already at 99%, rain fell and we were very lucky that God sent us all this water to fill up Bagatelle Dam, to fill up the rivers which feed in the Bagatelle Dam.

Construction of the treatment plant has taken time, again, because of challenges on procurement and it went on and on until the Supreme Court, again, found that we were right. All these challenges finally end up in the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court gives a judgment saying: ‘Of course, the CWA is right to have selected that and that bidder.’ Now, the work has started, it is going to end, to be ready in 2018. But, in the meantime, the Chairman, Mr Desmarais and the General Manager, Mr Ismael, have put up a plan for temporary pipelines and mobile treatment plants to channel the water to Plaines Wilhems region, so that at least there will be a beginning of *soulagement* for these regions.

La Nicolière, we will upgrade very soon. La Ferme Dam one word, I see no one from No.14.

(Interruptions)

I see no one from No.14. But let me just say, there is an issue here. La Ferme Dam is a dam which was constructed in 1910. All the advices are that it has got to be rehabilitated. But to rehabilitate, there are two issues –

1. there are people who have constructed houses on their own land which they have bought near the dam, and
2. the other is squatters.

In fact, the squatter problem has become easier now, because of my colleague, the Minister of Housing and Lands. We put up a committee, difficult in the beginning. We had a plan, finally, hon. Minister Soodhun said: 'Forget about your plan, I'll take it over.' And he came with the plan which is going to put the squatters - because my plan was a complicated one where we had all sorts of problems - he came, he rode roughshod over all these obstacles and he said: 'I am going to do something for the alternative rehousing of these squatters.' Very good, very bright, wonderful, lovely, big clap for Minister Soodhun!

(Interruptions)

A bigger clap for Minister Soodhun!

The capacity of the dam will be raised from 11 million m³ to 14 million m³, 3 million m³.

Now, I come to Rivière des Anguilles Dam. The feasibility study and detailed design contract from Rivière des Anguilles Dam is expected to be awarded as soon as the decision of the CPB is obtained. This is something that has lasted a long time. It will have a storage capacity of 14 million m³ with an annual yield of 50 million m³. Hon. Jahangeer said that Water Resources Unit was dealing directly with the bidders. I have checked. That is not correct at all. That is not correct; Water Resources Unit is not dealing with any of the bidders.

For the boreholes, I am going to speed on all the projects - 12 projects which have already been completed: Tyack, Rivière des Anguilles, Solferino, John Kennedy, Curepipe, transfer of water from Midlands Dam to Piton du Milieu Water Treatment Plant for the North, Pereybère, etc. Pipeline from Piton du Milieu Water Treatment Plant to Hermitage; Melrose Reservoir to Montagne Blanche, Service reservoir at Mont Blanc Water Treatment Plant where we have enormous problems.

In the region of the East, today 84% of households are getting water 24 round-the-clock over seven days. It is tremendous, the progress that has been done and clean water at adequate pressure. Now, the contracts have been awarded for replacement of 125kms pipes all over the place. We will put in, at a later stage, a statement to give details of each and every kilometre.

Now, the Build Mauritius Fund, one word, there were concerns on the slow disbursement of funds under the Build Mauritius Fund. The reason is that most capital intensive projects and civil works for pipe replacement, construction of service reservoirs and water treatment plants take more than one financial year and sometimes two financial years. A few disbursements have been done in the first year. As of date, Rs784 m. under the Build Mauritius Fund has already been awarded amounting to 100 kms of pipes. Water tank project extended.

I now come to wastewater. The newly appointed Wastewater Management Board had no alternative but to impose a change on the work culture of that organisation. Today, 89,500 premises are connected to the public sewerage system representing 27% of the population. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development - that is the only adverse report we had from the Director of Audit this last year for 2015 - has been granting loans to Wastewater, but Wastewater has been unable to reimburse because the revenue generated is not enough to pay even the interest. We shall have to discuss further as to what we do with this because that is not sound financial governance.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Collendavelloo, can you just give us an indication of...

The Deputy Prime Minister: Half an hour!

Madam Speaker: Half an hour.

The Deputy Prime Minister: In half an hour, I shall be finishing or 20 minutes let's say.

Madam Speaker: 20 minutes, okay!

(Interruptions)

Let me just say, if yesterday we have had to bear with long, long speeches in spite of the fact that the Chief Whip was drawing attention to the fact that we have to continue. Okay! If it is for 20 minutes, we can bear with it. I don't think we will go on for half an hour. It would be more appropriate, I think that when we resume, then we resume with the speech of hon. Bérenger and then the hon. Prime Minister, if it is only for twenty minutes.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: We will bring some Red Bull for you!

(Interruptions)

But I have to go over all these parastatal bodies. Now, the wastewater, just for projects...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You want to take my seat...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am going to speed up, don't you worry. I am not going to listen to your entreaties. Eight work contracts now: the Pailles-Guibies Sewerage Project, Phase I; the contract for Cipaille Brulée in the region of Vallée des Prêtres because people have got to know where these projects are going to be done for Rs76 m.; La Cure, Paul et Virginie and Palmerstone for Rs130 m.; Cité Marcel Cabon was awarded on 04 March 2016 because up to now we have been doing day by day monitoring. Now, there is going to be a contract for Cité Marcel Cabon awarded already on 04 March for a contract value of Rs8.3 m. The contract was completed in October 2016. 13 households have been connected. Now, a new framework agreement for house connections has been implemented. Let me just summarise it in a few words.

What has happened is that Wastewater Management has cut down on the exaggerated cost. It has cut down on cost escalation. It has cut down on huge consultancy fees; to connect one house to the main sewer, you needed a consultant. So, now all this is done in-house which means that money is now available for a greater number of projects, for a greater number of minor house connections and this is done under framework agreements as authorised under the Public Procurement Act. There will be Highlands, there will be Tranquebar, Vallée des Prêtres and may I add other projects, the sewerage project at Résidence Sadally, Vacoas to start in financial year 2018-2019 with a 31 house connections and 275 metres of sewer pipes and Camp Rouillard, Eau Coulée, but that will be in 2019 for 194 house connections. I turn to hon. Bodha because I know how he has been anxious that this is done.

Let me just have a word now on my Constituency and that of No. 20 in order to reply to hon. Lepoigneur. Contrary to what he says, there have been a lot of projects in Rose Hill. We work in a team. There is the PPS, Mr Aliphon, myself, the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Councillors, even the Councillors of the PMSD although they are in Opposition, they work

hand in hand although one or two, of course, don't agree with this system, but as a team we have to do this for the benefit of the town. Drains are being constructed; lamps, street lighting 110 led lights, we are going to add in; *Salle des fêtes* du Plaza renovated in 18 months; Jogging track in Plaisance; construction of a Centre Social in Trefles, Trochetia; renovation of *pétanque* at NHDC Camp Levieux; installation of led lights in Rose Hill. Express Metro, this is the town where we are ahead of all towns on development of Metro Express.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Wait for Beau Bassin, please!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur, please!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Don't get upset!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, calm down! You have seen hon. Bérenger said he is already fainting because he hasn't had lunch. Let him complete his speech!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Metro Express - we have with the Minister of Public Infrastructure worked on a new town which is going to be built in Rose Hill. Then, we are going to have the theatre, a football ground at avenue Cretin at Camp Le Vieux, the Medi Clinic of Stanley - how many years people have been asking for this, now this is going ahead, cremation ground at avenue Cretin at Camp Le Vieux, Avenue Berthaud. That is extraordinary, after so many years, finally now hon. Ramano is going to be able to drive from his place down to Rose Hill without any problem, and people will be able to drive from their place in Rose Hill to the Candos Hospital without any problem because Ligne Berthaud finally is starting up. We had to acquire land. We had to design, appoint consultants, do all these and we are doing it. Now, Trefles football ground, I have said upgrading of tennis court, multipurpose complex. Culture - Arts and Culture we are doing tremendous work in there. We must not forget we are going to have *expo vente* of fruits and vegetables etc.

Now for Beau Bassin, 4.5 kilometres of drains, 60 led lights lamps. Jardin Balfour - who has forgotten in what state it was? We have renovated it. The Beau Bassin market is

going to be upgraded, new benches in the taxi stand in Beau Bassin, *terrain de foot et complexe sportif* of Vuillemin, *terrain de foot* at Barkly, *terrain de* Mont Roches with new led lights, upgrading of *Centre Social de Mere Teresa*, green space and jogging track at Morcellement Chapman; the second phase of renovation of Jardin Balfour, social centre, new led lights, etc. The number of projects is mind boggling as to what is done in Rose Hill and Beau Bassin. Let me have a word in reply for hon. Adrien Duval. Municipalities, he says, do not give access to leisure places and this is why they go to drugs. In Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, the town that I know and for which I am working, that is not true. That is true in Curepipe where they had PMSD Municipality for two and a half years; where they used Rs700000 for one *spectacle* in Cité Atlee, nothing serious was done in the Municipality.

One last word, the attacks against the Financial Services Commission, it is extraordinary. An editorialist writes an article to say that I talked to Mr Sobrinho *les yeux dans les yeux*. It is not true. I never said that. I have listened to all interviews and anyone who can come up should bring the proof. I will tell what happened. *C'est extraordinaire ce que le subconscient joue dans l'esprit des gens*. 13 years ago, he had been put in a Police cell; he asked me to come. He told me : *regarde-moi les yeux dans les yeux, dis-moi si tu crois que je suis coupable*. The same night, I got him off and the next day the case was taken; ultimately the case was struck off on a technicality. They appealed and then the Parquet step aside and his case was struck off on this technicality.

It is amazing how 13 years later, this same phrase could come up. Let me tell the House, at first, I did not take it very seriously because it came from the PMSD quarters. Why I take it seriously? It is because in his speech hon. Bhagwan clearly thought that I had said these words. Now, when it comes from the MMM or hon. Bhagwan then I have got to take it seriously because if they are going to believe it, it means that they believe that it is true, whereas these other people I don't really worry about what they think and what they say.

(Interruptions)

It is not necessary because of this to go into insulting language.

Hon. Sesungkur is a Chartered Accountant. The Leader of the Opposition is also a Chartered Accountant. They are two colleagues in the same profession.

(Interruptions)

I am going to be very patient, Madam Speaker. Has the Chief Executive given now his authorization for the group to restart the activities? Do you want me to put it in creole for you as if hon. Sesungkur cannot understand English? This is the arrogance, the insulting language that we hear week-in week-out from the theatricals. You see the movements of the hands; he tries to imitate his predecessor. He imitates him by shouting, lifting this voice, being *emmerdé* and all that.

(Interruptions)

Doing cinema, you can't just imitate, be yourself, be what you are and then people will pay attention to you. Now what we see every time there is a PNQ, apart from being a *cheap comic*, there is nothing of substance...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Collendavelloo, I do not think that you can use the words 'cheap comic'. I think you should withdraw those words because it is not appropriate for any Member to make remarks and comments on the conduct of another hon. Member.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Entirely agree! I withdraw, of course, this lapsus which I made. I should not have slip into the same sort of language that is used by the PMSD. Of course, I regret the use of the words *bebet rasoir dan la main zako* as used by hon. Quirin. I am sure he must have regretted the words as soon as he had spoken them because they are so reminiscent of what I heard, when I was a child during the election campaign of 1967. I think it is a little piece of contamination from people on his extreme right coming to their.

Madam Speaker, I must conclude with the FSC. The Kroll report which the Leader of the Opposition quoted does not say that. The Kroll report, in fact, says that there is no reference to A. Sobrinho or Pinto to be found on a list of companies; no information found involving A.S in searchers of the following online regulatory. The CEO of Chartered Standard Bank - we talked of reputation, this is what he is talking about, reputation. I say that the FSC was entitled to act as it did.

The CEO of Chartered Standard Bank: first, I actually did my own research and so far, I have not seen any conviction of that man in anyway. Second, he is being banked by a lot of global banks. That man is holding bank accounts with global banks that are regulated so anything else is not my call. That is what FSC has followed. The Lisbon Court of Appeal, the FSC must have acted on this. This is what the Lisbon Court of Appeal had to say- three

times the attachment of the appellant. Appellant, Mr Sobrinho, was ordered. On three occasions, the Court of Appeal overturned these attachments orders.

For the fourth time, the prosecution is returning to the matter and repeating the measure with the approval of the examining Magistrate. The premises are false and unreasonable, the appellants are obliged to persist in this way, that is, to make appeals against a measure which the Appeal Court has always declared unjustified and without basis on account of persecutory stubbornness and contempt and disrespect for the inherent authority of the decisions rendered by the Lisbon Court of Appeal.

How can we expect the FSC to continue the sanctions only on the basis of Press articles? I say that the FSC is unstinted on this matter. I shall leave aside the nasty critics made against the President of the Republic in connection with this affair!

Madam Speaker, when all is said and done what do we have? We have a Budget which is *un budget de transformation*. We shall have a new Mauritius as we enter our 50 years of Independence. A man who was just a child at the time of Independence is now going to take Mauritius to that new leap and it is good that we had the criticisms that we had especially from that side of the House which were constructive criticisms apart from the *blah, blah, blah* which we hear on another side of the Opposition. These criticisms will be taken on board, as I did when hon. Mohamed, hon. Ganoo and hon. Uteem had criticised me for the CEB companies. I took these into account and we corrected the initial measures. This is what Parliamentary debates are all about! Parliamentary debates are not about invectives, insults and demagogy.

I congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for his Budget. I am sorry to have taken more time than I had anticipated. I am over my time by 24 minutes. That is not too much considering what I have had to suffer last night until early in the morning.

(Interruptions)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.23 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.03 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bérenger!

Mr P. Bérenger (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): *Madam Speaker*, malgré l'amélioration en cours de l'économie mondiale et de l'économie européenne et malgré l'aide généreuse de l'Inde, le budget 2017-2018 n'amènera pas la croissance de l'économie mauricienne et n'est pas *sustainable* c'est-à-dire viable dans la durée. C'est malheureusement la vérité des chiffres et des faits et sur cela tous les économistes et commentateurs sérieux sont d'accord. Le budget 2017-2018 n'amènera pas la relance de notre économie et n'est pas viable dans la durée.

Parlons relance d'abord. Présentant le budget 2016-2017 en juillet de l'année dernière, le ministre des Finances avait prédit une croissance ou *GDP growth* de 4.1% en 2016-2017. Il a ramené cela à 3.9% mais en fait la croissance sera finalement plus faible que 3.9% en 2016-2017.

Dans le présent budget, il prévoit cette fois que c'est en 2017-2018 que le *GDP growth* sera de 4.1%. Ce qui n'est pas suffisant et qui de plus risque à nouveau de ne pas être atteint. La cause principale de cette absence de croissance est l'insuffisance du budget de développement de l'État et *underspending*, soit la sous-utilisation de ce budget de développement lui-même insuffisant. 43% du budget de développement n'a pas été dépensés en 2016-2017. 43 % ! Incroyable mais vrai ! R 8.4 milliards ont été dépensés alors que R 14.8 milliards avaient été prévus incluant les *Special Funds*.

Cet *underspending* du budget de développement a deux causes essentiellement. Premièrement, le besoin de contenir le déficit budgétaire et deuxièmement les lenteurs administratives et les incompétences. Cet *underspending* se répètera certainement en 2017-2018, les mêmes causes produisant les mêmes effets. Ce qui ramènera la croissance en 2017-2018 à moins que les 4.1% annoncés. On nous avait promis un miracle économique, c'est le marasme économique qu'on nous sert.

Quant au déficit budgétaire, il n'est tout simplement pas *sustainable*. Il n'est pas viable dans la durée. Le ministre des Finances prévoit qu'il sera de 3.2% en 2017-2018 mais ce chiffre est complètement bidon. Ce chiffre inclut dans les revenus de l'État les R 5.7 milliards qui proviennent du *Build Mauritius Fund* et du *National Resilience Fund*, les deux derniers *Special Funds* qui sont enfin fermés. Ce chiffre estime que les R 5.4 milliards de

grants venant de l'Inde seront déboursés *in toto* en 2017-2018 et ce chiffre ne prend pas en considération les R 4.1 milliards de *redeemable preference shares* qui vont être injectés dans le Métro Express en 2017-2018 à travers la *State Bank of Mauritius*.

Le vrai déficit budgétaire en 2017-2018 sera en fait autour de 5% du *GDP* ce qui n'est pas *sustainable*. De plus, il faut se rappeler que les *grants* de l'Inde seront disponibles en 2017-2018 et 2018-2019 seulement. R 5.4 milliards en 2017-2018 et R 5.5 milliards en 2018-2019. Et il faut se rappeler que les deux *lines of credit*, qui sont des prêts de l'Inde de USD 500 m. et de USD 130 m. financeront des projets qui ne généreront pas de revenus tels que les archives nationales, la rénovation du Plaza et de l'hôtel de ville de Curepipe, le *social housing*, le remplacement des CWA pipes et cetera alors que ces deux *lines of credit* de USD 630 m. en tout, soit R 28.5 milliards auront à être rembourser avec intérêt.

On sait que la sonnette d'alarme internationale se met à sonner quand le déficit budgétaire d'un pays dépasse 3% du *GDP*. Du côté de la dette, il est bon qu'enfin le gouvernement abandonne une définition « mauricienne » et farfelue de la dette qui a été utilisée jusqu'à présent pour s'aligner sur la définition du *FMI* et de la Banque Mondiale, qui est reconnue, elle, internationalement. Mais cela a amené le gouvernement à reconnaître aussi que cette dette a atteint 66.1% du *GDP* ce mois-ci. Et ce chiffre n'inclut pas les milliards des victimes de la *BAI* que le gouvernement a pris l'engagement légal de rembourser. Et maintenant, le gouvernement a recours au *gimmick* de la *State Bank of Mauritius* et des *redeemable shares* pour arguer que le *line of credit* de USD 500 m. de l'Inde ne doit pas être inclus dans la dette.

Le ministre des Finances a dit l'autre jour, en réponse à une *PNQ*, que d'après les règlements du Fond Monétaire International, tous les *redeemable shares* n'entrent pas dans la dette. En fait, d'après le *FMI*, je cite en anglais –

« *Redeemable shares are treated as equity and not debt under strict conditions and if they are participating shares.* »

Or, le ministre des Finances a aussi dit l'autre jour que les détails des *redeemable shares*, les détails n'ont pas encore été finalisés. Attendons voir ! Et nous verrons aussi ce que le *FMI* pensera de tout ce *gimmick* autour du *line of credit* de USD 500 m. qui augmenterait la dette du pays par 3.7% du *GDP*, si ces USD 500 m. étaient comptabilisés comme dette et non *equity*. En tout cas, *gimmick* ou pas, un emprunt est un emprunt. Et sans la garantie de

l'Etat mauricien, « l'arrangement » *State Bank of Mauritius-Export-Import Bank of India* n'existerait pas.

L'honorable Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, alors ministre des Finances, avait prévu en 2015 de ramener la dette du pays de 61.5% en décembre 2014 à 58.6% du *GDP* à fin juin 2016. Elle se situa à 65%, comme l'a dit l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth dans son Budget de 2016. Dans ce Budget de 2016, Pravind Jugnauth, à son tour, avait prévu de réduire la dette à 62.8% à fin juin 2017. Elle se situa, fin juin 2017, à 66.1% du *GDP*, comme vient de le connaître l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, ministre des Finances, dans son discours du budget de cette année. Il prévoit maintenant de ramener la dette à 63% à fin juin 2018. La dette devrait, en fait, dépasser les 70% à fin juin 2018, surtout si le *line of credit* de *USD* 500 m. est comptabilisé comme dette et non *equity*.

Or, on sait que la sonnette d'alarme internationale se met à sonner quand la dette d'un pays dépasse 60% du *GDP*. Et là, il est bon de rappeler que dans son dernier rapport en date de mars 2017, Moody's ayant décidé de garder le *rating* de Maurice à Baa1 pour le moment, s'empessa de prévenir que, je cite Moody's –

« *A deteriorating trend in debt matrix would exert downward pressure on the rating of Mauritius.* »

Madam Speaker, il est inacceptable que le ministre des Finances n'ait eu rien à dire sur le Brexit, alors que 40%, 20% et 10% de nos exportations proviennent du textile, du *canned tuna* et du sucre. Ce qui est, par ailleurs, prévu, du côté des petites et moyennes entreprises, des *SMEs* et de l'*Ocean Economy*, ne mène pas loin. L'absence de toute référence au *climate change* interpelle. Rien de sérieux non plus concernant notre secteur financier. Or, il traverse pourtant des moments difficiles qui deviendront de plus en plus difficiles, malheureusement, avec les *anti-tax evasion initiatives* de l'OCDE et de l'Union Européenne déjà en cours et avec l'impact d'ici avril 2019 et après de l'entrée en vigueur du nouveau *Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement* entre nous et l'Inde.

Dans un autre ordre d'idée, et comme l'ont dit de nombreux orateurs avant moi, il est évident que comme en 2016-2017, beaucoup de mesures annoncées dans le présent Budget resteront les effets d'annonce. En 2016-2017, les immenses espoirs suscités par le *Subsistence Allowance* ou *Top Up Allowance* ont été déçu. Cette année, alors que pas un mot n'a été dit sur le salaire minimum, est mis en avant un *negative income tax* pour les *full-time employees*

- les *full-time* seulement - touchant moins de Rs10,000 par mois. Mais Rs10, 000 y compris l'*overtime*, les *piece rates*, les *leave pay* et même la pension vieillesse ; d'après la note à l'arrière du discours du budget, *Negative Income Tax* dont les contours demeurent très flous, et pour lesquels pas un sou n'est prévu dans le budget.

Madam Speaker, une annonce d'une portée considérable et très inquiétante annoncée dans le budget est l'intention déclarée de mettre sur pied un *Mauritius National Investment Authority* qui contrôlera et investira les R 130 milliards de *surplus funds* du *National Pension Fund* et du *National Savings Funds*, de même que les *surplus funds* des autres *public sector bodies*, sans qu'on ait dit aux salariés et aux syndicats, qui gèrera ce *Mauritius National Investment Authority* et par qui, ils seront nommés, et surtout, comment sera garanti son indépendance et son professionnalisme. Concernant le *LRT*, nous sommes restés sur notre faim.

Le *updated feasibility study* du consultant singapourien de même que le rapport de ce consultant singapourien sur les offres de deux firmes indiennes en concurrence pour la construction du Métro Express, du *LRT*, n'ont toujours pas été rendus publics. Nous ne savons donc toujours pas quel sera le coût final du projet, ni combien de subsides il faudra prévoir chaque année dans le budget dépendant du coût du ticket. Par contre, après ce qui s'est passé avec la route Terre Rouge/Verdun et le *Bagatelle Dam*, entre d'autres, la population a raison de s'inquiéter quant à la façon que le projet Métro Express - *LRT*- sera exécuté.

Dans le cas d'Agaléga, il est impardonnable que la façon de répondre du Premier ministre ait causé encore plus de doute et d'inquiétude. En 2003 déjà, alors que j'étais Premier ministre, Maurice et l'Inde étaient tombés d'accord sur la piste d'atterrissage et le *jetty* et l'Inde n'avait posé aucune condition. Récemment Dr. Navin Ramgoolam est venu dire que l'Inde avait voulu lui imposer - quand il était Premier ministre - certaines conditions qu'il avait refusé, mais qui selon lui ont été maintenant acceptées. Il ne peut en rester là. Il est de son devoir de préciser les choses. En tout cas, il est devenu plus nécessaire que jamais de rendre public le *Mauritius Maritime Security Agreement* signé récemment par l'Inde et Maurice.

Madam Speaker, il est inacceptable que pas un mot n'ait été dit dans le discours du budget sur l'affaire Betamax alors que des déclarations contradictoires avaient été faites par l'ex-Premier ministre et le ministre Sinatambou en tant que porte-parole du gouvernement.

En tout cas, le gouvernement doit prendre bien soin de ne pas, comme dit l'anglais, *add insult to injury* en faisant appel à la légèreté ou en ayant recours à des *delaying tactics* grossiers. Ce qui ferait beaucoup de tort à notre crédibilité en tant que centre financier et en tant que terre d'accueil pour les investissements étrangers. Pareillement, il est inacceptable mais éloquent que pas un mot n'ait été dit dans le discours du budget sur la corruption et les abus en tout genre.

Madam Speaker, dans l'affaire BAI, l'exercice de *pas mwa sa, li sa* auquel se livrent certains est tout simplement indécent. En particulier, l'ex-Premier ministre est venu nous dire qu'il avait été mis en minorité par ses ministres sur ce dossier, qui avaient fait le contraire de ce que lui préconisait. En tout cas, on nous avait toujours donné la garantie que pas un sou d'argent public serait utilisé pour réparer les dégâts causés par ceux qui révoquèrent *the Banking Licence* de la *Bramer Bank* et causèrent l'écroulement de tout le groupe Rawat. Bien sûr, les victimes de l'affaire BAI méritent d'être aidées, surtout les pensionnés et les petits investisseurs. Mais utiliser des fonds publics ou un emprunt de la *State Bank of Mauritius* ou de *Maubank* serait un terrible aveu et constat d'échec pour lequel certains auraient à rendre compte. Par ailleurs, il n'est inacceptable que le ministre, aujourd'hui Premier ministre, n'ait rien dit jusqu'ici concernant la fameuse et scandaleuse bande sonore, Dawood Rawat, Sattar Hajee Abdoula, Swadeck Taher. Bande sonore sur laquelle on entend clairement la loi du boss.

Madam Speaker, j'en viens à l'affaire Álvaro Sobrinho. Il est choquant qu'ici même au Parlement, le ministre responsable du secteur financier et de la *Financial Services Commission (FSC)* se soit comporté l'autre jour en véritable agent d'Alvaro Sobrinho et je me joins au *Leader* de l'opposition pour réclamer sa démission. Tout comme sont choquantes les décisions de la *FSC* qui a jugé bon de lever la suspension sur les compagnies de Sobrinho alors qu'on n'entend plus parler des enquêtes de la police, des enquêtes de la *CCID* sur les fausses déclarations sur la base desquelles Sobrinho a obtenu ces permis.

Madam Speaker, permettez-moi de revenir sur le fond de toute l'affaire après ce que j'ai attendu dans la bouche du ministre responsable du secteur financier et aussi ce que j'ai entendu dans la bouche du Ministre Ivan Collendavelloo aujourd'hui même. Permettez-moi de revenir sur le fond de toute l'affaire et ce que je vais dire ne me fait pas plaisir parce que nous parlons d'un pays frère, l'Angola, membre comme nous de la *SADC* et de l'Union Africaine.

Madam Speaker, l'Angola et le Nigéria sont les deux plus gros exportateurs africains de pétrole et l'Angola était appelé le Dubai africain. Avec la flambée des prix du pétrole pendant des années des milliards et des milliards de dollars sont entrés dans les caisses de l'État Angolais, et étant angolais qui est jusqu'aujourd'hui une dictature contrôlée par le Président dos Santos, sa famille et une clique dont fait partie Álvaro Sobrinho. Ces milliards de dollars on peut profiter au peuple Angolais, l'Angola étant toujours un des pays les plus pauvres d'Afrique. Mais au fil des années ces milliards de dollars ont été détournés par la clique au pouvoir en Angola, y compris Álvaro Sobrinho surtout vers le Portugal, l'ancien pouvoir colonial, gouverné par un gouvernement de Droite jusqu'aux élections de fin 2015 remportées par la Gauche qui depuis met de l'ordre.

Entre-temps, *Madam Speaker*, en 2014, la deuxième Banque du Portugal, La Banco Espírito Santo, avait fait faillite. Cette banque avait une subsidiaire angolaise, La Banco Espírito Santo Angola (La BESA) qui fut dirigée par Álvaro Sobrinho jusqu'à fin 2012. En 2014, la presse portugaise rapporta que La Banco Espírito Santo Angola (la BESA) ne pouvait retracer des milliards de dollars de prêts faits alors que Sobrinho dirigeait cette banque. Mais tout le monde sait où sont passés ces millions de dollars. Tous ceux qui veulent savoir!

Il est vrai qu'à ce jour, Álvaro Sobrinho n'a été condamné par aucune Cour de justice mais les enquêtes se poursuivent au Portugal et ailleurs. Sur l'affaire Banco Espírito Santo Angola en particulier mais aussi sur bien d'autres affaires auxquelles a été mêlé Sobrinho.

Sa réputation n'est plus à faire de par le monde. Encore une fois ceux qui veulent savoir, devraient savoir. Dans l'intervalle, Madame la présidente, la république d'Angola est devenue le seul pays au monde - la république d'Angola dont le vice-président de la république a été inculpé sept années pour corruption par la justice d'un pays de l'union européenne, le Portugal, ce qui l'a empêché de se porter candidat aux élections qui se tiendront le 23 août prochain en Angola et qui sont supposés voir le départ du président de Santos après 40 ans de pouvoir absolu.

Il faut souhaiter qu'Angola évolue dans la bonne direction mais même cela n'effacerait pas ce que le président de Santos et sa clique y compris Sobrinho ont fait ces dernières années ; le pillage d'Angola ces dernières années. Ça n'effacerait pas tout cela et c'est tout ce qui s'est passé qui fait qu'aujourd'hui Sobrinho et toute cette clique cherchent des alternatives au Portugal où cacher leur fortune volée au peuple angolais et c'est ce genre

d'individu que j'ai entendu deux Ministres au moins défendre ici dans ce Parlement, Madame la présidente.

Madame la présidente, il y a eu beaucoup d'oubliés dans le budget 2017/2018 et ils me pardonneront de ne pas les mentionner tous mais trois choses me tiennent particulièrement à cœur. Les enfants d'abord, victimes ces jours-ci de tant d'abus et qui n'ont eu droit dans le discours du budget qu'à une phrase annonçant une fois de plus un *Children's Bill* qui tarde tant à venir. Les handicapés ensuite qui ont été totalement oubliés dans ce budget et le new Cancer Hospital ensuite au sujet duquel j'adresse un appel spécial au nouveau Ministre de la Santé.

Avons-nous enfin choisi le partenaire stratégique indispensable pour le succès de toute l'entreprise et pour que le bon choix soit fait concernant les équipements *state-of-the-art* qui vont coûter très, très chers. Quand commenceront les choses sérieuses alors que les malades du cancer se font traités dans des conditions de plus en plus inhumaines. Madame la présidente, je terminerai en revenant à mon point de départ et à l'essentiel.

Le budget 2017/2018 n'amènera malheureusement pas la relance de l'économie et n'est pas *sustainable*. C'est pourquoi il nous faut revoir le budget en profondeur et c'est pourquoi mon souhait patriotique est que le pays aille aux élections générales avant la présentation du prochain budget afin qu'une nouvelle équipe revoit le budget en profondeur et donne à notre économie les moyens de prendre un nouveau départ.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Speaker : Hon Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me at the very outset, thank all Members who have participated in the debates on the Appropriation 2017/2018 Bill on both sides of the House, and I must say that I have, of course, appreciated some praise from a number of Members. There are also some Members who have made constructive criticisms which, of course, I do appreciate and I will look into those constructive criticisms. But I must say on the other hand, there have also been some very unfair comments and not to say outright demagoguery.

Madam Speaker, let me address some of the general remarks made by the Leader of the Opposition and other Members of the Opposition. I have listened also to the main fundamental argument of the hon. Member from the MMM, Paul Bérenger.

Let me start with the argument that the Budget does not do enough to boost up economic growth. Madam Speaker, I would say, it is totally ludicrous to say that all the measures and the policies that have been announced in the Budget would not bring about higher investment, growth and job creation in the country. First, this Budget is about massive investment in public infrastructure and other developmental projects. These infrastructure projects will cut across almost all sectors of the economy with tremendous multiplier effects that will significantly improve our economic landscape.

Second, the Budget is not only about investment in physical assets but also about investment in human capital, in the development of skills and promoting more knowledge-based development because we want to create a new dynamism in our economy and, in particular, for the services industry.

Third, this Budget has proposed bold institutional reforms such as the setting up of the Economic Development Board, the National Economic and Social Council, the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council, the new SME Mauritius and a series of mergers and re-organisation of various public sector bodies.

Fourth, the Budget puts an unprecedented focus on strengthening the Research and Development and Innovation ecosystem.

Fifth, the Budget announces concrete and strong actions to further facilitate investment and doing business.

Sixth, it is extending the scope of the Speed to Market Scheme, which was introduced last year, in fact, in the context of Brexit, and we are extending it to a wider range of products.

Seventh, the Budget introduces a fundamental reform of tax policies, reducing the tax rate on net income from exports of goods from 15 per cent to 3 per cent only, Madam Speaker. This is indeed a bold measure. This will concern not only existing firms but will also attract more investment in export-oriented production. Again, there has probably been some misinterpretations because I heard some people saying that: "Well, it is with regard to SMEs". SMEs, of course we know, most of them do not, in fact, pay any tax because of a

number of schemes which are wide ranging and which cover practically now every activity in Mauritius, every sector. But this is for all companies exporting goods. So, you can imagine there is no micro, no small and medium. It concerns the largest, the biggest company in Mauritius.

Eighth, the Budget has introduced powerful sectorial policies to diversify the export base and enhance competitiveness. It also encourages domestic oriented firms to enter the export market, including supporting the new dynamism of the tea industry, investing in new agricultural products, modernizing production and promoting the application of digital technologies at all levels of productive activities.

Ninth, the Budget also puts a prominent emphasis on empowering SMEs to expand their business and also to become more outward looking.

Tenth, the Budget addresses the challenge of expanding demand for our products from abroad and seeking new markets, especially in Africa and Europe, to diversify our export markets.

Madam Speaker, I am not the only one who is confident on what the Budget will deliver. I hear a few hon. Members have been saying that *“tous les économistes dignes de ce nom sont unanimes à dire que ce budget ne va pas relancer ou ne va pas améliorer la croissance.”* Well, let me here quote from the Post-Budget Outlook and I hope it is a well respected opinion because, in fact, talking about IMF, World Bank, I know they regularly discuss with MCB Focus and I don't think MCB Focus is, I am not saying that I am not in good terms with them, but they are not particularly my friends. Not to say that I can influence them, in that sense, Madam Speaker, I am saying and I respect their objectivity. And in fact, to say that at times they have been critical of certain measures taken by this Government. That is why I am quoting them and I am not saying that because I don't want anybody to infer anything wrong about it. But this is what they have to say. And I quote-

“ (...) it is, first and foremost, interesting to note that it attempts to rise up to some key challenges faced by the Mauritian economy by notably aiming to foster higher growth and job creation (...)” –

Higher growth and job creation! These are the words.

“(...) undertake substantial investment in infrastructure (...)”

Well, this is so obvious. It goes without saying.

“(...) consolidate macroeconomic fundamentals, (...)”

This is what I have been accused, we have been accused of.

“(...) and improve living standards of the population. Specifically, the Budget seeks to enhance the quality of the business environment, alongside earmarking dedicated initiatives meant to boost the productive activities and export performances of key economic sectors as well as assigning measures destined to shore up the value added of the domestic-oriented industries and foster the development of emerging sectors.”

These are the words of MCB Focus. And let me also quote from their preliminary forecast made in the same document of the MCB Focus. And I quote -

“Looking ahead, economic growth is, in view of the improving context, foreseen to gain further steam, with real GDP growth at both basic and market prices projected to attain 4% in 2018 as suggested by our preliminary baseline scenario.”

Madam Speaker, of course, these are forecasts. Each one has made his own forecast, but we will live to see whether we are able to reach those targets. But the good thing is that independently of Government, independently of us this is what the private sector has to say. It is either, Madam Speaker, I would say only pure demagoguery or utter ignorance to say that the Budget does not do anything to boost the economy. And there have been also, I would say that I consider to be a really ridiculous statement made by the Second Member of Quatre Bornes and Belle Rose last Friday. Do you know what he said, Madam Speaker? That the economy will grow by only 0.6% over the next three years. By only 0.6% over the next three years! This is what I call ‘Bad economics’! ‘Bad economics’!

Madam Speaker, real GDP will grow from Rs447.3 billion in 2016/17 to Rs507.5 billion in 2019/20 – this represents an increase of 13.5 per cent over three years and certainly not 0.6 per cent as alleged by the Member.

On the other hand, the public sector debt as a ratio of GDP, excluding the purchase of two aircrafts by Air Mauritius, will go down from 66.1 per cent in 2016/17 to 60.5% in 2019/20.

Madam Speaker, let us be candid about debt. Public sector debt is created when the public sector, including the Government runs a deficit. And I cannot recall when was the last time that we did not have a budget deficit in this country. And I would say, moreover,

Madam Speaker, as an upper middle country we need to invest in infrastructure to ensure growth and development. But, of course, we have to be fiscally responsible as well and we have to base our decisions on the principle of sound fiscal management. And as long as the debt being incurred is being used to finance capital expenditure and not consumption, we are sure to reap the benefits in the future. Our own development experience has shown that each time we have borrowed to invest in major public infrastructure there have been hefty dividends in terms of higher growth, higher income and improved, of course, standard of living generally.

Madam Speaker, let me speak about the line of credit from India.

First, any money that Government and public sector bodies will borrow through the issue of preference shares will be invested in projects that will generate revenues - I maintain that - although I have just heard that they will not generate revenue. Metro Express, Water and Electricity projects and the new administrative city, I maintain that all these will generate revenue. Of course, whereas social housing projects will have a subsidy element which will be financed partly from the grant obtained from the Government of India and from the Government Budget.

Second, the other social projects will be financed from a normal line of credit of USD 130 million and not through the issue of preference shares because some Members are mixing everything to say how are we going to get, therefore, revenue. As I have mentioned those projects which are going to generate revenue and, of course, there are a number of social projects which are meant for such purpose, and of course, are not expected to generate any revenue and these projects, I heard the hon. Member before me saying that we have not provided for cancer and so on. We have provided: state-of-the-art equipment like Linear Accelerator for Victoria Hospital. The new Cancer Hospital...

(Interruptions)

Well, this is what I understood that they have not...

(Interruptions)

But anyway!

But the equipment is to improve treatment for cancer patients and the hon. Member from Quatre Bornes, not the Leader of Opposition, the other Member, said that we are wasting

money, we are spending money on cancer patients, we are wasting money because they do not generate revenue. These are his arguments.

Similarly, for the fire-fighting vehicles, market fairs, incinerators, swimming pools, sports complex and many other projects. Madam Speaker, we cannot deny the population the facilities and amenities that they badly need to improve their daily life.

Third, this Government does not implement projects on the basis of financial returns only, but for economic and social returns as well. Therefore, projects are implemented as long as they are feasible from a financial, economic and social point of view and, of course, we must see whether they are affordable from a financial point of view, without having destabilising effects on the financial soundness of Government and macroeconomic fundamentals of the economy.

But, I am sure, outside this House, the population has understood all these and the Budget has created a new platform for the economy to climb to a new threshold of development.

And I must say, Madam Speaker, on the social front, there is also broad consensus in the country that Government has been bold and innovative in coming up with a truly new social paradigm.

Let me substantiate, first, the Negative Income Tax that will reach out to some 150,000 workers at the bottom of the income ladder. This is about increasing the purchasing power for these families, supporting those who are making efforts and improving their standard of living and quality of life. I am confident that this policy will also result in higher productivity in the economy and embed a strong element of social justice in our productive system. This, Madam Speaker, is over and above the monthly subsistence allowance that was introduced under the Marshall Plan against Poverty last year.

Second, the Budget is earmarking an unprecedented amount for the construction of social housing for families with very modest income.

Third, this year the Budget provides Rs32.9 billion for social protection. This is an increase of Rs11 billion over the year 2014 – Rs11 billion from 2014 - and yet we are accused, we are being said that not much is being done for social protection.

I am speaking here, Madam Speaker, about money that will go to support directly - I am saying directly - vulnerable families, people with disability, pensioners, orphans, widows, children and to address issues of social exclusion.

Fourth, over and above the Rs32.9 billion, I have just mentioned, we are providing Rs12.1 billion for free health care, Rs16.9 billion for free education from pre-primary to tertiary. These three Budgets alone will cost Government Rs61.9 billion as compared to Rs45.2 billion in 2014, again, an increase of Rs16.7 billion from 2014.

Fifth, this year the Budget makes substantial provision of Rs1.7 billion to upgrade local infrastructure across the country, both in urban and rural regions and I am sure that this will definitely impact on the daily lives of our citizens. Therefore, our policies on the social front clearly demonstrate the commitment and determination of this Government to lift up the standard of living and the quality of life for all.

Madam Speaker, let me address some other issues that have been raised as well by the Leader of the Opposition and some other Members. Hon. Reza Uteem has said - and I heard also hon. Bérenger saying - that the budget deficit should have been 4.4 per cent of GDP instead of 3.2 per cent.

Well, I must say they are wrong because when transferring the Special Funds to the Consolidated Fund, both the revenue and expenditure items have to be taken into consideration. Yet, in their calculation of the deficit, they have used total expenditure which already includes the expenditure that would have been made from those special funds but did not include the revenue from those special funds.

Some Members of the Opposition have also claimed that only 300 jobs have been created in the country in 2016. Well, I think no one can believe that. You can criticise and you can say a number of things but just to say that only 300 jobs, of course, this is not true at all. Government alone has, in the past year, employed 4,215 people and that I have tried to get the figures also for those who have been employed by public sector bodies.

This is excluding all those parastatal bodies and all the other institutions and I am also not talking about the private sector, of course. And, here, I must say it has also been observed that there is a lot of mobility amongst those holding School Certificate and Higher School Certificate precisely because there are a number of job opportunities that are open to them because the private sector has been complaining that when they have vacancies in the lower grades and posts requiring School Certificate and Higher School Certificate and when they take a list from the Employment Exchange, almost all those on the list, not all of them but

quite a number, in fact, they say that they are already working. This is a fact, it can be checked. That is why, Madam Speaker, with regard to job creation, I am not saying that we have done everything that we could do, we can do better, we have to do better.

I heard also – he is not here – hon. Shakeel Mohamed, I think, talking about lack of job creation in this Budget. Let me say that again, it is interesting to note what the hon. Member himself said when he was Minister of Labour in an interview to “L’Express” on 06 August 2010. The hon. Member then was very quick to shift the blame from Government to the jobless men and women of this country.

This is what he had to say, I quote –

“There are more than 20,000 vacancies in the private sector!”

(Interruptions)

No, at that time, I am quoting -

“There are more than 20,000 vacancies in the private sector! But Mauritians (...).”

This is what hon. Shakeel Mohamed said at that time -

“But Mauritians don’t want to do hard jobs. If they did, we could find jobs for each and every one of them. And there are training possibilities. What more do you need?”

This is what he said. Well!

Madam Speaker, the Opposition has also spoken about the issue of Betamax arguing that the necessary provision should have been made in the Budget. Again, I will refer to IMF and according to IMF, contingent liabilities such as potential legal claims, which are claims stemming from pending Court cases should not be reckoned in the computation of the public debt figure, but merely as a memorandum note to the Balance Sheet.

Madame la présidente, j’ai entendu l’honorable Reza Uteem dire, et je cite –“*The MMM was the only party which stood against the contract allocated to BETAMAX in 2009.*”

Il a aussi ajouté que, *I quote* -

“We were not agreeable with the way that we were going to bind this population for the next 15 years; a contract that was signed in total opacity, without any tender procedures being followed.”

Il a également dit, et je cite, *with regard to CT Power this time* -

“We, in the MMM, objected because the way the contract was awarded, the opacity surrounding the award. The fact that it was an unsolicited bid, that is why we objected.”

Concernant BAI, il a dit ceci, *I quote* –

“Yes, hon. Paul Bérenger questioned the Government about BAI. Yes, we were concerned. We were concerned that the insurance levels, the related party ratios were not being addressed correctly.”

And hon. Bhagwan also referred to the BAI, Betamax and CT Power, amongst others, in the Budget Speech. Maybe I should remind hon. Bhagwan also after having quoted all this together with hon. Uteem, what hon. Bhagwan said also in the past, and I quote –

«Mo préfère bwar lysol ki alle fer l’alliance avec parti Travailleste.»

(Interruptions)

I am just saying what the hon. Member has said!

(Interruptions)

Yes. This is...

(Interruptions)

It does not matter!

(Interruptions)

It does not matter!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I will go away!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Calm down!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, don’t make provocations yourself!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan also, calm down please! Hon. Prime Minister, please proceed!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: You will outlive me, you will outlive me! Good for you!

(Interruptions)

And yet in spite of all this, the MMM...

(Interruptions)

In spite of all that has been said, Madam Speaker, because hon. Uteem was saying that the days were good when we were - okay, fair enough! Good! I accept that criticism but in spite of having said all this, what did they do? They allied with the Labour Party!

(Interruptions)

They started praising Navin Ramgoolam...

(Interruptions)

...and they started...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Non, mind your language!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: And they started campaigning for him to be the next President with accrued powers!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, hon. Uteem and hon. Bhagwan were present...

(Interruptions)

I remind them because they have forgotten that they were present at Hennessy Park, Ébène, on 17 September 2014 for the first public get together between the MMM and the Labour Party. *Comme quelqu'un a dit de l'autre côté de la Chambre : « Les paroles s'envolent mais les écrits...mais il y a aussi les photos qui restent. »* I do not want to remind them...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Calm down!

(Interruptions)

Calm down!

(Interruptions)

Calm down! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! If we do not have order in the House, we will not be able to proceed with the business of the House! Please, proceed!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Moi, j'ai eu mon baisemain, mais ça je ne sais pas...*

(Interruptions)

Mon baisemain - aller pas faire narien! Non, mo pas koner! Mais celui-là comment vous allez décrire cela? C'est quel genre de baiser?

(Interruptions)

Well, maybe I should table this one then!

Madam Speaker: No!

The Prime Minister: When I went through...

(Interruptions)

Oui, ils donnent des leçons, ils sont en train de donner des leçons, mais s'ils ont ces mêmes principes, pourquoi ils ont fait cette alliance ? Pourquoi ils ont commencé à dire « Navin Ramgoolam » ? Reste tranquille dota !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order!

The Prime Minister: When you spoke...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order please! Order! Can I ask hon. Members to mind their language, please, because there are certain parameters within which Members can express themselves. But I would remind them that they have to be decent in the way that they are addressing each other.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, when hon. Paul Bérenger intervened earlier, I sat down quietly and I think all the Members sat down quietly and listened to him. I think I need your guidance on this, Madam Speaker, that when I am intervening, unless there is a point of order, I should be able to intervene peacefully.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, since disorder has started in the House, I have been trying to calm down everybody, and this is my role as Speaker so that the business of the House can continue. So, I am trying to calm down both sides of the House and I am asking Members on this side of the House as well as Members on the other side of the House not to make provocations so that we can continue with the business of the day. Please!

The Prime Minister: And I should be able to reply! I am not out of order because I should be able to reply to what they have been saying. This is why I remind them, going through the newspapers headlining about "*l'événement du jour*" at that time. I have shown a picture; I can table it to refresh his memory. It is a picture of hon. Bhagwan kissing Ms Nita Deerpalsing and hon. Uteem proudly standing around the photograph session of Mr Lormus Bundhoo, the famous author "*il faut penser en dehors du boîte.*" Then there were no Betamax, no CT Power, no Ponzi Scheme of BAI and so on. They have forgotten everything, and interestingly, Madam Speaker, of this party we can see – they are having a nice - I do not know what they are drinking, but we see that hon. Mohamed was not there. Normally, he is not invited, just like the parties at the Clarisse House. I know they are tired...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Order! Calm down! Calm down!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: He should keep calm! Keep cool! As he used to say: keep cool!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Reza Uteem also spoke about, and I quote –

‘In those days, the MSM was doing what they called *Opposition loyale*. That was before they joined hands with Navin Ramgoolam in the 2010 elections.’

He also mentioned, I quote –

‘But in those days, the MSM was with the Labour Party! Honeymoon period!’

But let me remind him that in 2014 - Madam Speaker, this is good for people to know - while the MMM was in the remake, they were in an alliance with us, at the same time they were negotiating with Navin Ramgoolam, with the Labour Party. They were courting each other...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo! Do not interrupt the hon. Prime Minister and do not make provocations!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: They were courting each other then *au vu et au su de tout le monde*. I am replying to hon. Uteem’s argument. He should remember very well, he was part of that very restricted, selective committee where we used to meet at La Carverne, at Sir Anerood Jugnauth’s residence. Because it was *au vu et au su*, because we heard it from so many quarters; we questioned hon. Bérenger then. Sir Anerood asked him: “well, these are rumours we have heard. Is it true?” He said, “Ah, Sir Anerood, how can you believe in such rumours? How can you think after I have convinced you to resign as President of the Republic...”

(Interruptions)

Reste tranquille! Let me tell the true story to the people, the population is listening to me.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order! Can I...

(Interruptions)

Can I just remind hon. Members that I have given certain leeway to all hon. Members to make their comments and remarks on the Estimates. Now, can I remind hon. Members that they should not bring in extraneous arguments, and then, can I also remind them that it is out of order to use unbecoming words or expressions or to use offensive languages about Members of the Assembly across the floor from a sitting position.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, that is why I have quoted hon. Reza Uteem, what he has said. And I cannot let it go unrebutted. This is why I am replying to what he has said. Why is it that they are allowed to make comments? In fact, they are outside the Budget, I agree, but they have been making such comments. That is why I should reply, and I am maintaining...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Bhagwan, I have just drawn your attention to Standing Order 42!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I was saying, Madam Speaker, the meeting at La Caverne when they...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! If we continue like this we will never finish. Hon. Bhagwan, Please!

The Prime Minister: I was saying, Madam Speaker, during the meetings at La Caverne, Sir Anerood Jugnauth queried hon. Bérenger and asked him...

(Interruptions)

There are witnesses!

(Interruptions)

Rubbish! Hon. Bodha was there! Hon. Soodhun was there!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun was there!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Enough!

(Interruptions)

No, if we are going to start again, at what time ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem, please!

(Interruptions)

Can I calm down the hon. Members?

(Interruptions)

Please! If you continue, I will have to suspend! Last night, we had a very late night. Everybody, I am sure, must be tired with the work that we had last night. If we continue on this trend, at what time are we going to start the Committee of Supply? Please!

The Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Speaker, I was saying that at La Caverne, we had meetings and since some people have been ...

(Interruptions)

Reste tranquille!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

No! Hon. Bérenger, can I just remind you ...

(Interruptions)

I am just reminding you that there are certain words which are accepted in Parliament, but there are certain words which cannot be accepted and you have just used the word which is not acceptable in Parliament. I am not going to repeat what you said, but there are certain words which are not acceptable and which are considered to be unparliamentary. I am just reminding you once more not to use ...

(Interruptions)

No, I am not going to use the word you used, but I am asking you once more not to use an improper language.

The Prime Minister: Let me restart again. I was referring to the meetings at La Caverne ...

(Interruptions)

Yes!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, this so hon. Member, Paul Bérenger, has uttered the word '*sousseur*' towards me.

(Interruptions)

I want a ruling.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Unacceptable!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Bérenger, please withdraw this word!

Mr Bérenger: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker: Okay! Thank you.

The Prime Minister: Thank you for withdrawing. May be it is good that I should refresh their memory. Who were present on the other side? Hon. Bérenger, of course! Hon. Uteem! Hon. Ganoo was there! There was the former hon. Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie! I can't remember, maybe ..., hon. Bhagwan, of course! You were there!

Madam Speaker, can you imagine while we were in the 'Remake', the question that Sir Anerood had asked - because we had heard those rumours also from some people in different quarters - is whether those rumours are true or not. And the hon. Member said: 'Well, how can you believe in all these rumours? You know, I came to see you at Réduit and I convinced you to resign as President of the Republic to join us.' This is how the 'Remake' ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, can I be allowed to make my speech without being interrupted and to be saying the truth without being interrupted by this hon. Member? When he spoke I kept quiet. We listened to him.

Madam Speaker: I am asking both sides - and I am repeating myself - of the House not to interrupt the hon. Prime Minister. Both sides of the House, not only this side, but the other side as well. I am asking all of them not to interrupt the hon. Prime Minister. Please, continue!

The Prime Minister: He dispelled all doubts saying that he was sincere in the alliance and that is why the 'Remake' was made. In fact, why do we call it 'Remake'? It was not an Alliance. The 'Remake' was because to make Sir Anerood Jugnauth come back and become the Leader of this Alliance and the same terms and conditions would apply to this 'Remake' as it was when there was the alliance of the MSM/MMM in September 2000. *Ça c'est la vérité! Ça c'est l'histoire!*

(Interruptions)

C'est bien que je suis à la télévision pour raconter à la population l'histoire, comment cela s'est passé. Mais cette trahison en même temps, Madame la présidente, célébrer l'anniversaire de Sir Anerood Jugnauth, venir couper le gâteau et lui donner un bout de gâteau comme ...

(Interruptions)

Je ne sais pas quel genre de considération et quel genre d'appréciation. L'honorable Membre ce jour-là avait fait un discours pour dire: 'Sir Anerood Jugnauth est l'un de plus grand patriote que l'île Maurice ait connu.' Ce même soir, il quitte le plus grand patriote pour aller avec qui ? Avec Navin Ramgoolam ! Pour aller contracter son alliance! Ça, c'est la personne en l'honorable Paul Bérenger. Ça, c'est lui!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, at that time, in 2014, only seven PNQs were then asked by the then Leader of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger, for the whole year of 2014 and on top of that, I would not qualify those PNQs, some of them were like *des billets doux* to Navin Ramgoolam. *Ils ont même tombé d'accord pour fermer le parlement pendant neuf mois en 2014 pour pouvoir continuer koz kozé.*

It is interesting and revealing to note that what hon. Bérenger then had to say in his defence and the marketing of the alliance MMM/Labour Party in 2014, forgetting, of course, all those scandals that he used to *denoncer, critiquer depuis 2005. Qu'est qu'il avait dit?* I quote hon. Bérenger -

« Mais le passé, c'est le passé. Nou pa pou get le passé. »

Madam Speaker, l'honorable Reza Uteem a le culot de venir dire « opposition loyale ». Mais ça, c'est quoi ça ? Quel genre de l'opposition c'était ça ? Il était déjà au gouvernement. D'ailleurs il y a certains qui avaient déjà identifié leur *bodyguard*.

Madam Speaker, let me say that it is this Government that has restored the image and reputation of this august House. We had, in fact, 44 Parliamentary sittings in 2015 and 40 sittings in 2016 and these figures speak for themselves.

I see what hon. Veda Baloomoody had said. I must say it is shameful and really regrettable that a hon. Member who is a lawyer, using this House to comment on a case which is presently ongoing at the Intermediate Court and, therefore, *sub judice*.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member does not have to be under Parliamentary Immunity to make false and gratuitous allegations. Prakash Maunthrooa ...

(Interruptions)

There is a case, but he has not been convicted of any offence so far.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

The Prime Minister: Prakash Maunthrooa - there is a case, but he has not been convicted of any offence so far.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member is talking about that. If he is talking about that, but okay let me reply to this...

(Interruptions)

They have forgotten that during the by-election of Quartier Militaire and Moka, they fielded a candidate called Ashok Jugnauth, not only for the by-election, for general elections...

(Interruptions)

Aster chacha!

(Interruptions)

Aster chacha!

(Interruptions)

Aster chacha!

(Interruptions)

Met poison dans l'esprit dimoune!

(Interruptions)

Empoisonne l'esprit dimoune, oui!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Silence, please! Silence! Please continue, hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

The Prime Minister: Two general elections also, of 2010 and 2014. Despite the fact that he was guilty of electoral bribery on various counts by the Supreme Court, he has appealed to the Supreme Court and went to the Privy Council.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Uteem!

The Prime Minister: All these Courts have confirmed these judgements.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! The more you crosstalk, the more there is disorder!

The Prime Minister: And they have the guts then to talk about people who have not been convicted. I do not want to use the same kind of argument as hon. Baloomoody. Because for me, somebody even if he is before the Court, he is not yet guilty, he cannot be accused.

(Interruptions)

Medpoint ! Claque tu as eu! Ils ont eu une claque avec la Cour Suprême!

(Interruptions)

La Cour Suprême les a claqués!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bérenger!

The Prime Minister: *La Cour Suprême les a claqués!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I have been appealing to you to have some order in the House. I have been appealing to you not to crosstalk. I have been appealing to you also not to use provocative language. You will no doubt appreciate that there are Government officials already in the Gallery waiting for the Committee of Supply to start. Can I ask for your indulgence, please?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Si cet honorable membre a le courage de dire dans sa conférence de presse, de venir dire n'importe quoi sur Medpoint, qu'il répète ce qu'il a dit ici en dehors de la Chambre, then, I will say hats off!*

(Interruptions)

Aller do, le bouffon!

(Interruptions)

Le bouffon!

(Interruptions)

La Cour Suprême a rendu un jugement et a donné une claue magistrale à Paul Bérenger.

(Interruptions)

Le Chef Juge - une claue magistrale !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Vous avez été bottés par la population ! Coup de pied pendant les dernières élections!*

(Interruptions)

Il n'y a pas de respect pour la Cour Suprême, le jugement qu'a rendu la Cour Suprême!

(Interruptions)

Il continue avec son Medpoint, Medpoint! Allez dire ça dehors!

(Interruptions)

Allez dire ça dehors, then I'll take you to task!

(Interruptions)

But his party – he is talking about Medpoint - his very Secretary General, Ajay Guinness ...

(Interruptions)

Le shérif, s'il vous plaît!

(Interruptions)

Tout d'abord je crois qu'il est déjà en Cour actuellement pour un case de gratification...

(Interruptions)

Pas enkor condamné maintenant!

(Interruptions)

Pas enkor condamné maintenant!

(Interruptions)

Aryo! Aryo, Veda! Aryo, Baloomoody! Aryo! Pas enkor condamné!

(Interruptions)

Pas enkor condamné! Bouffon!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker:...order in the House! Now, things are really getting...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

Now things are really getting out of my hands, and if this continues, I will have to suspend.

We will take all the time we need to discuss among yourselves and then we will start again.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Les gens vont apprécier pour Prakash Maunthrooa condamné, pour Ajay Guinness *pas enkor condamné !*

(Interruptions)

Ça, c'est le cinéma du MMM!

(Interruptions)

Ça, c'est leur principe!

(Interruptions)

Pas enkor condamné! Mais seulement son cas est toujours devant la Cour Suprême...

(Interruptions)

Et je suis d'accord, Madame la présidente, il n'a pas encore été condamné. Contrairement à eux, moi, je dis il n'a pas encore été condamné. Moi, je ne le condamne pas. Mais je mentionne...

(Interruptions)

...cet exemple parce que quand ça les arrange, il mentionne un cas. Quand ça ne les arrange pas, ils sont sur la défensive, alors ils viennent dire autre chose. Et puis, il y a le shérif, comme Ajay Guinness, qui s'est comporté comme un shérif. Tout le monde sait ! Tout le monde sait ! Son beau-frère qui a été arrêté par la police en conduisant une voiture après avoir consommé plus qu'il n'en faut la limite de l'alcool. Il a été arrêté, il a été à la station de Flic en Flac. Mais c'est le MMM, ça, c'est le style MMM! Ajay Guinness, Secrétaire Général : 'vous savez qui je suis, moi ?' il entre dans la station de Flic en Flac : 'vous savez qui je suis, moi ?' Il n'est pas ministre, il n'est pas député, rien là; déjà il se comporte comme ça pour dire: 'Hey, lâchez-le, laissez-le partir !' On verra...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Ta* ‘Boolumoody’! ‘Boolumoody’!

(Interruptions)

‘Boolumoody’!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I think I better suspend the sitting, otherwise this will continue.

(Interruptions)

I suspend the sitting for some 10 minutes so that Members can calm down. I suspend for 10 minutes.

At 4.37 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.51 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated! Hon. Members, I hope you have been able to calm down, but still I will appeal to your good sense because, as I said, we had a late night and, as at now, we have not even started the Committee of Supply. So, as you know, as Speaker, I have to maintain the dignity and the decorum of the House. And for me to be able to maintain the dignity and the decorum of the House, I need hon. Members to help me. So, what I am asking from you is that your good sense prevails, and that you understand that we have got a serious work in front of us and that we should not lose more time in this. You will also appreciate that it is not appropriate for me each and every time to suspend the House because of lack of order in the House. In fact, we are being watched by the whole population and I believe the whole population will make their own judgment on what is happening to this House this evening. So, once again, I appeal to your good sense and I would request the hon. Prime Minister to restart his speech and then we may conclude at some point in time.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Restart!

Madam Speaker: Continue, please!

The Prime Minister: Madame la présidente, je sortais de La Caverne pour aller à Flic en Flac et de Flic en Flac j’ai été interrompu. Donc, de Flic en Flac, pour répondre à ce que

l'honorable Baloomoody avait dit comme critique à l'égard de mon *Senior Adviser*, laissez-moi lui faire rappeler le cas de Bidianand Jhurry qui a été trouvé coupable of *five counts of public official using his office or gratification in breach of section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002*. Cela me fait de la peine de le mentionner, mais c'est parce que nous avons été sujets à ces critiques que je mentionne ce cas. Et puis l'affaire de BAI, c'est vrai que c'est le Leader de l'Opposition d'alors qui avait, à travers *a PNQ in this House*, critiqué Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Il lui avait dit que « *This was the biggest Ponzi Scheme* ». Mais le MMM n'a pas hésité de prendre R 10 millions de ce même *Ponzi Scheme* au détriment des *legitimate investors and policyholders*. *This is why I say they claim to be clean, Madam Speaker*.

(Interruptions)

Let me...

(Interruptions)

Jean Paul Fook Yune, vous savez qui avait donné le permis ?

(Interruptions)

Qui était le...

(Interruptions)

Laissez-moi ... à la population! Le ministre des finances d'alors était l'honorable Paul Bérenger...

(Interruptions)

... et c'est à cette époque que ce même Jean Paul Fook Yune qu'ils sont en train de mentionner, a eu son permis.

But let me reply also to hon. Baloomoody. He criticised us on the issue of drugs, drug combating. I think he should have - at least, I thank hon. Ameer Meea.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Don't crosstalk!

The Prime Minister: *Il a eu quand même le courage de dire et de féliciter le gouvernement pour* this exceptional work that is being done in order to combat drug trafficking. Concrete results, Madam Speaker! Within a period of four months, a total of about 185 kilos of hard drugs namely heroin has been seized at a total estimated value of Rs2.7 billion. And within the same period, just giving an example, cash money suspected to be proceeds of drug dealings of about Rs15 m. has also been seized. Equipment have been seized; bobcats, vehicles that have been bought from proceeds of drugs. Several high profile drug dealers have been arrested. I must say again this Government has fulfilled its promise in setting up a Commission of Enquiry on drugs.

Now, one and all can appreciate the excellent work that is being done and we are also looking forward, not to say that we are waiting, because I heard previously one hon. Member of the Opposition was saying that: “Well, Government is not acting.” Prior to all these seizures, one Member has been saying that: “Yes, we have set up a Commission of Enquiry just to let things go on, wait for the conclusion of that Commission and then we are going to act.” No, not at all! We have acted! We have acted and we have had concrete results as everyone can see. But let me say also - and there are certain things, unfortunately, I am not able to divulge to the House at this stage, but which will be made public much later on. People will see the effectiveness of our actions.

Mais pendant tout ce temps, Madame la présidente, dans cette Chambre, que ce soit le MSM, que ce soit le MMM, avait demandé à l'ancien Premier ministre, Navin Ramgoolam, de mettre sur pied une commission d'enquête. Il a systématiquement refusé. Systématiquement refusé ! And throughout these years, you know how many millions – I say millions, maybe more – that those drug barons have been accumulating in terms of wealth, in terms of cash, in terms of money! Maybe people are thinking only in Mauritius, the connection is worldwide. I will not mention countries. And yet, hon. Baloomoody said, if I can recall his intervention: ‘what is this ‘*Zenfant lacaz! Zenfant lacaz!*’ Just repeating any nonsense! He does not know how we have been able to bring Kistnah back to Mauritius. He does not know! People do not know. But why I am not able to say everything today, it is because I don’t want to cause prejudice to, first of all, the enquiry, and secondly, I don’t want to give information with regard to the other drug traffickers that are also operating right now. And I must say it is unfortunate that this country has been poisoned, *a été pourri à plusieurs niveaux. Là aussi, je ne peux pas donner tous les détails. Certaines institutions que moi-même je n’aurais pas imaginé, certaines personnes - je ne dis pas les institutions en tant que*

telles - qui sont dans ces institutions. Mais on est en train de les traquer un par un. Et on va les avoir parce que nous sommes déterminés.

Let me also express my appreciation - I am not claiming that it is me or this Government. We are not doing it alone - and gratitude to all those honest, hardworking Police Officers in the Police Force, in ADSU and officers at the Customs. I am saying all those honest and hardworking officers and in other institutions like the MRA. In fact, in this Budget, we have taken a number of measures to beef up ADSU and the other institutions together. I have made it a point, Madam Speaker, together with the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, that there is a coordination, - in fact, that was also lacking before - a sharing of information, that we are looking beyond Mauritius in order to be able to combat those very- *je ne pèse pas mes mots* - powerful people *avec des contacts incroyables*, but thus relentless fight to combat drug will continue, I can assure you of that.

I am sad, to say that, at the dawn of the 50th Independence Anniversary, I was not present, but I read the speech of hon. Mrs Aurore Perraud, who has made really disgusting and dangerous communal declarations.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I hope the hon. Member should shoulder her responsibility of those despicable statements and of the harm that this can cause to the unity of our society - these vile and communal statements. I just wish to restate my resolute commitment to unite each and every component of our multicultural nation, and protect our peace...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, some Members in the Opposition are talking about by-election that will cause a general election. I will not go into and waste my time talking about all this. Let me say and I speak out my mind. I can assure this country and this House that I will have two more Budgets to present to this House and the general elections will be at the end of our mandate. So, people can feel free to do what they have the right to do, what they want to do. Of course, we will deal with any situation that will arise, but again let me say that we have a lot to do. Not only this Budget, previous Budgets presented by hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, myself; this is the second Budget, there will be other Budgets. As we all know - and I fully agree with that - we can have very good Budgets, nice Budgets, a number of measures, but we need to be able to implement all those measures. I do agree this is one

fair criticism that has been made by the MMM. When we look at the past with regard to capital projects, we have earmarked billions of rupees, but, in order to be able to achieve our targets in terms of growth, job creation, raising the standard of living, making people enjoy the amenities, infrastructure and so on, obviously we have to be able to implement all these projects. This is where we, on Government side – it is not only this Government, the previous Governments - have had to face this problem in terms of process, in terms of procedures, but we have to address this also. We have to address the process, the procedures, while respecting regulations, the laws, but, at the same time because this is within our means, we have a duty to be able to see to it that those projects do come to life.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, almost five decades of independence, of perseverance and hard work have taught us that progress can only be achieved if we make fundamental choices when we have to.

There are times in the history of a nation when we must dare to set high objectives and chart new pathways to attain them. Those times have come for our country and for our nation.

Budget 2017/18 reflects fully the resolve of this Government to change the way we do things, shunning mediocrity and inefficiency - embracing a future that is driven by high technology, efficient transportation systems and better environment to work and live.

Budget 2017/18 is also about changing the things we do so that our country and our population can live a healthy life in modernity; so that our children can grow up with the confidence that they will be able to live their dream; so that, as a nation, we renew the values of hard work, integrity and compassion; so that, as a nation, we can rise up to the challenge of our ambitions.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 5.08 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.02 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - VOTE ITEMS – TIME ALLOCATION**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that in keeping with past practice, after consultation with all parties concerned, an indicative time allocation has been worked out in regard to each vote item in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 73 (4).

As we proceed, the time allocation in respect of each vote item will be announced. As usual, I will exercise some flexibility wherever the need arises. We will proceed page by page for the orderly conduct of the Committee of Supply.

I would kindly request hon. Members not to address any policy issues. In this context, your attention is drawn to Standing Order 73 (3) which provides that discussions at the Committee shall be confined to the details of the Estimates and shall not refer to general principles of Government policy and administration. I also appeal to hon. Members to be brief in their questions and hon. Ministers to be brief in their replies. I rely on your collaboration.

Hon. Members, I have also to inform the House that the hon. Prime Minister who has been assigned the responsibilities for the portfolio of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor has made a request for the votes of the Office of Minister Mentor, Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues to be called out of turn, that is, immediately after the Committee would have considered the votes of expenditure for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. I have acceded to the request of the hon. Prime Minister and I take it that hon. Members have no objection. Thank you.

(6.05 p.m.)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Vote 1-1 Office of the President was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Page 1, Office of the President, I will take it on item 001 – *Basic Salary President of the Republic*, Estimates 2016/17 and the forecast for 2017/18, much has been said during the current weeks and months concerning the overseas missions of Her

Excellency the President of the Republic, figures have been published in the Press. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, if he could let us, the population know how much exactly has been disbursed for the Estimates of 2016/17 for overseas missions by Government - public funds - and how much is being earmarked for the coming year 2017/18 and if there is any list of missions already established?

The Chairperson: Are you on page 1, hon. Bhagwan?

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, page 1.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Bhagwan: Basic Salary.

The Prime Minister: On Basic Salary, the item for travelling is not included, as far as I know.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister under which vote then funds have been disbursed for the overseas missions carried out by the President? Normally, we can take it on a general vote and have answers also.

The Prime Minister: Well, I take it the hon. Member should ask questions with regard to an item. I am ready to answer any question with regard to an item but the hon. Member must specify which item he is talking about.

Mr Bhagwan: But, can we know under which item overseas missions of the President of the Republic falls? Please give us the number.

The Prime Minister: Well, I am told that it falls under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with regard to missions. So, when the item will come for missions, of course, I can give the answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Chairperson, compensation of employees item 21110 - *Secretary to the President*, I wonder why is it that this post is vacant and will remain vacant as obviously, the President needs good advice as to what she ought to be able to do and not to do under the Constitution. I think it is a shame that that position is empty and not to be filled. Would you consider that position to be filled?

The Prime Minister: Well, in line with PRB the position of Secretary to the President is assigned to a Permanent Secretary and no one is appointed in a substantive capacity to that post hence, there is no provision.

The Chairperson: Page 2, hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, it is mentioned Rs600,000. In the Estimates of 2016/17 this is not mentioned and I see that we have an amount of Rs600,000. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: Extra Assistance is to cater for the salary increase for Adviser and housekeeper.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 2, item 22120 – *Fees*, for last year it was Rs100,000 and now it is Rs1,300,000. May we know why we have that increase and who is/are the beneficiaries of these fees?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson and members of Boards and Committees. I have more details here. The increase is due to the fact that fees payable to the Chairperson and members of the Commission on Prerogative of Mercy which comprises of one Chairperson and four members will be met under this item. In fact, previously these expenses were met under the item of allowances. So, I can give or circulate the composition.

The Chairperson: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: On page 2, item 31111.408 – *Upgrading of State House*, Rs16 m. last year or this financial year. Can I ask how much of that has actually been spent, please?

The Prime Minister: Well the project value was for Rs45m. The sum is meant for repair of the roof leakages of the *Château*. A consultancy firm, MacBeth Architects and Designers was awarded a contract on 19 October 2016 for a sum of Rs1,282,000, excluding of VAT. During the preliminary survey, water leakages emanating from the air conditioning system were detected, which resulted in the amendments in the bidding document. Now bidding documents have been amended by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, and has been forwarded to the Project Plan Committee. The bid for the repairs of the roof is expected to be launched shortly. So, out of the Rs16 m. voted in year 2016, Rs3.1 m. have been used for the rehabilitation of the new Office for the President, and for

architectural consultancy services, and for submission of preliminary and final report and drawings for the repairs of the roof leakage at the *Château*.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Chairperson, as a general point. I cannot see, as we have in previous years, the actual amount spent. That would have avoided us asking every time what is the amount. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, why this year there are no, what they call provisional actual figures? Because this is really bothering the whole Opposition. We cannot ask all the time how much have been spent.

The Prime Minister: Well, this is how it has been prepared.

Mr X. L. Duval: Every year, there are revised estimates provided with the Budget so that we are able to compare. This year, there are no revised estimates. So, you will get many more questions than usual.

The Prime Minister: But I will answer the questions. I will be provided with the information.

(Interruptions)

I am told that last year we prepared the Budget after a period of vote on account. And that is why there was provisional...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to vote 31121.801 - *Acquisition of Vehicles*, we see that Rs3.2 m. has been provided for the estimates 2016/2017. May we know the make, model, and to whom it is assigned?

The Prime Minister: So, two vehicles have been purchased in year 2016/2017 -

- (i) One Tipper lorry, make Mitsubishi, for agricultural section, and
- (ii) 116-seater passenger-van, make Toyota, for office use.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to the upgrading of State House again, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is the professional advisor on this project. May I know from him, why is it that we have recruited a private architect in addition to the architect already practising at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure?

The Prime Minister: Well, this is the information that I have; I just mentioned Macbeth Architects and Designers. It seems that they are the specialist in this type of buildings and I believe that MPI does not have the proper expertise for that kind of building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, there has been a substantial increase from Rs7 m. to Rs9.6 m. May I have the details of this amount?

The Prime Minister: The increase is meant to meet the costs in respect of conferences. Is that it? Which item is the hon. Member talking about?

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*.

The Prime Minister: *Other Goods and Services*, it is for provision made for payment of uniform allowance to office auxiliaries, drivers, sanitary attendants, laundry attendants, general workers, household attendants, gardeners, an office of procurement and supply cadre. There is also provision made for the payment of salaries to secretariat staff. I am giving all the details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Prime Minister, if I may. If there is a long list following the question, it can be circulated.

The Prime Minister: Well, I can circulate. But then the hon. Member, I am sure, will be asking further questions on this because there is a list.

(Interruptions)

Okay, I will circulate.

Mr Uteem: Item .010 - *Service to Mauritius Programme*.

The Prime Minister: Decimal what?

Mr Uteem: It is just before 21111. Just before *Other Staff Costs* - the middle of the page.

The Chairperson: Middle of the page!

Mr Uteem: Page 2! This relates to *Service to Mauritius Programme*. And we have this in many other votes also. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this has been discontinued for State House? Because there is no more any amount provided for the next years to come.

The Prime Minister: I am informed that as from financial year 2017/2018, the allowance payable to interns recruited under the *Service to Mauritius Programme* has been made under *Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government*.

Mr Ganoo: Madam Speaker, I am intervening on page 2, item 21111 – *Other Staff Costs, .002- Travelling and Transport*. From Rs2.6 m. which are the estimates of 2016/2017, and for year 2017/2018 it is Rs3 m. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who have benefited from this item of travelling and transport?

The Prime Minister: The provision is made for refund of bus fares, payment of travel grant, PRB travelling, commuted travelling, and petrol allowance to staff, and the increase is due to additional offices eligible for travel grant as per PRB and refund of bus fare for the additional staff.

Mr Rutnah: In relation to *Capital Expenditure* at page 2, I am interested in item 31122 – *Other Machinery and Equipment*, and there is item .802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*. And then, thereafter, we have got a further item - *Intangible Fixed Assets, .801 - Acquisition of Software*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in relation to item .802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, that is inclusive of any software, or exclusive?

The Prime Minister: Well, first of all, let me explain.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Do not interrupt! Hon. Ameer Meea! Even at Committee stage!

The Prime Minister: The provision has been made for the replacement of personal computers and laptops, and the acquisition of high quality portable projector and projection screens, installation of Wi-Fi access points, and purchase of any other IT-related equipment.

With regard to the software, a stores management package will be procured for the Procurement and Supply Section to enhance the operations and service delivery of the Stores and Supplies Division of the Office of the President.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Madam Chairperson, item 31113.429, may we know which shelter will be upgraded to the tune of Rs1 m.?

The Prime Minister: Upgrading of Shelter, so the project value is Rs2.5 m. The provision is made to meet expenses in connection with the construction of covered walkway from new Administration Building to Administration Blocks Nos.1 and 2.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Madam Chairperson, *item 22060 - Maintenance* - can I have the scope of the maintenance of Rs8 m. announced there and what has been spent out of the Rs7.3 m. budgeted last year?

The Prime Minister: I have this here. It is for the increase in the provision to cater for the maintenance, cleaning, painting, pest control and eradication of termites for the following buildings –

- Administrative Block No. 1 (that is now being used as President's Office due to water leakages in the Château);
- Administrative Block No. 2;
- Administrative Block No. 3 (occupied by the SMF);
- Ex-Archives Building;
- New Administrative Block;
- Agricultural Store;
- Laundry;
- SMF Barracks;
- SMF Quarters, and
- Sentry Boxes.

The repairs and maintenance are also for fencing, kiosks, *parcours de santé*, pathways, lighting, nurseries, Animal Park and of garden and maybe because we have 240 acres of land.

So, for the repairs, maintenance and servicing of vehicles also, and generators, air conditioning, the ventilation system, the lift, the ride on mowers at the State House.

We have also a list of maintenance contracts.

The Chairperson: Last question on this item, hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, it has already been replied.

Vote 1-1 Office of the President (Rs91,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-2 Office of the Vice-President was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: At page 3, item 22030 – *Rent*, we can see that the Estimates for 2016/2017 the sum is Rs850,000 then it increases to Rs1,050,000 and it goes on. May I know why?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the provision is made for payment of a rent of Rs70,000 per month for the Office of the Vice-President situated at Avenue Farquhar, Quatre Bornes. The first contract that was signed was for a period of three years with effect from 01 January 2009 and was subsequently renewed from January 2012 to December 2016. The contract has again been renewed from January 2017 to December 2018. They also include the rental of equipment, that is, there is provision for rental of CCTV facilities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 21110.004 – *Allowances* Rs1 m., can we have some details?

The Prime Minister: So, it is provision for payment of House Allowance, Rs9,500 monthly and Duty Allowance of Rs48,300 monthly for the Vice-President and Acting Responsibility Allowances for staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Under item *Rent* – 22030, may we know the original value of the contract signed in 2009?

The Chairperson: We pass on to the next question and, in the meantime, you can get the reply!

The Prime Minister: I do not have the original value, but I can probably be communicated. It is the same amount. So, there is no increase.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to item 21110.001 - *Basic Salary*, no provision has been made again for the position of Personal Secretary and the next person in line is an Office Management Executive. Can I ask clarification from the hon. Prime Minister as to whether someone in the cadre of OME is

acting as Personal Secretary to the Vice-President as opposed to a Permanent Secretary for the Office of the President?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am told that the post of Personal Secretary is not funded and one Confidential Secretary is performing the duties of Personal Secretary against payment of an *ad hoc* allowance.

Now, if you want the name of the person...

(Interruptions)

No!

The Chairperson: Does anybody have any question on page 4? Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, can I have a breakdown on which survey it is being done?

The Prime Minister: Studies and surveys?

Mr Lepoigneur: Yes.

The Prime Minister: No provision has been made to meet the cost of consultancy services and preliminary expenses for the construction of an office/residence for the Vice-President as same will not be undertaken during this financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: On page 4, item 22120, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister what these fees relate to?

The Prime Minister: Provisions required to meet fees for training courses that are provided to the staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval! Page 4!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to maintenance, may we know what maintenance are we talking about?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr A. Duval: Same *item 22060*, page 4.

The Prime Minister: Provision for maintenance of buildings, there are minor works for the Office of the Vice-President. There are also for Plant and Equipment. I am told that for repairs and maintenance of air-conditioners, fax machines and photocopiers, there are for

repairs of three official cars and for hardware and software of the IT equipment, furniture, fixtures and fittings and grounds. So, in fact, the decrease in the provision is based on the trend of expenditure for financial year 2016/2017. It is a good thing, isn't it?

The Chairperson: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Rs3 m. were spent on a survey, Rs3 m. for a house that will never be constructed? Is that what you are telling us?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr X. L. Duval: *Item 22130*, on page 4, Rs3 m. for a survey for a house. Just a survey!

The Prime Minister: Well, I must check whether these are estimates and whether they have been spent.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I will give you an answer.

So, the project has been put on hold in view of its high cost. The amount mentioned above is, therefore, unutilised and is no longer provided in the budget. So, we have not wasted that money.

Vote 1-2 Office of the Vice-President (Rs14,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-3 National Assembly was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier! We are on page 5!

Mr Barbier: Yes, on page 5. I have a question on general principle. Madam Chairperson, in previous exercises, concerning the personnel, we have been used to have one column where we could read the number of posts on establishment. This time we do not have this information, but we have in one column 'In Post' and another column 'Funded'. I would like, on a general principle, to know which one is to be read as the number of posts on establishment or neither of these columns can give us this information. Secondly, now that we have a Broadcast Unit in the Parliament, may I have the figures how much is costing our expenditure concerning the total, because the posts are scattered on 3 pages? Can I have a figure concerning the operation cost of this new unit?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, with regard to the first question the first column is the number of those people employed in post as at March 2017 and whereas for the

second column, it is what is the number of posts that are funded but if there are any questions specific to any posting, of course I will answer.

With regard to the second question, well the hon. Member must tell me under which item he is asking that question, how would I be able to answer a general question?

The Chairperson: Page 6, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the vacancy with regard to Assistant Hansard Editor, it is a new post and no provision has been made. We know, in fact, that there is a backlog of more than 6 to 7 years with regard to the Hansard reporting. May I know when allowance would be made for the filling of that post?

The Chairperson: Assistant Hansard Editor.

The Prime Minister: Assistant Hansard Editor, well I see it is a new post but the hon. Member is right there are no provisions, why?

Mr Baloomoody: We have a backlog.

The Prime Minister: Okay. Let me get the answer so that we can clear this backlog - Assistant Hansard Editor. So I am informed that the scheme of service has been prescribed only on 29 May 2017 and that the post is now to be filled.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Taking up where my hon. friend Baloomoody left, with respect to these Hansard Editors, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister when was the last year when we had final Hansard as opposed to unrevised ones? He mentioned there is a backlog so I want to know when was the last...

The Chairperson: No, I do not think hon. Member that this question can be answered by the hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to Management Support Officer, we see that there is funded for 14.

The Prime Minister: Which one?

Mr A. Duval: Sorry. Well it is the same item number, there is only, page 6 - Management Support Officer 11 in post, 14 funded. May we know when these posts will be filled; if there will be MSOs available for MPs and Leader of the Opposition for their office?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am informed that the three additional MSOs have been posted to this office on 23 March 2017 to provide support to the Hansard Unit and salaries are being met by MCSAR.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, with regard to live broadcasting, we see that there is a post of Manager Broadcast then Operations Officer Broadcast and then Assistant Operations Officer Broadcast. Can we know whether all these posts related to the live broadcasting have been filled?

The Prime Minister: Well Operations Officer Broadcast I have 2 in post as from March 2017 and funded also 2.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, on the same page, what about Parliamentary ICT Officer and Parliamentary ICT Support Officer, there is none in post whereas we are moving towards IT in the Parliament.

The Prime Minister: The post of Parliamentary ICT Officer has been created in EOAC Report 2013, but I am told that the scheme of service has not yet been prescribed thus the need for funding at this juncture does not arise.

The Chairperson: We move to page seven. Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 7, under item 22060 – *Maintenance*, in 2016/17 it was Rs7 m. why is there such a raise for 2017/18 to Rs20 m.?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I have a long list.

The Chairperson: You can circulate.

The Prime Minister: I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armanca!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22060.005 - *IT Equipment*, Rs15 m. has been budgeted; can I have some details please?

The Prime Minister: IT Equipment - so the provision is made for maintenance of IT equipment, that is, maintenance of the control room and other associated equipment: Harel Mallac Rs7 m., Robotics cameras, Harel Mallac Rs4 m., Wi-Fi Mauritius Telecom Rs0.6m., I-pad and Software - it is a company called iSpace and Company Rs0.7m., Digital Recording System and Servers Harel Mallac Rs1.7m., the Pre-Press Unit equipment company is iSpace and Company Rs0.3m., heavy-duty printing machine from CBE and Co. Rs0.2m., and then general maintenance for other equipment Rs0.5m. - iSpace I must say it is written iSpace.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under item 22120 – *Fees*, the amount has been increased from Rs900 m. to Rs2.5m. May we know why such an increase and also if we can have the details of this figure to whom it is payable?

The Prime Minister: Fees - the provision is for the training of staff and expenses with the setting up of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus. The training is to be provided as follows – interesting: training of MPs by a foreign consultant – Rs500,000; Gender Audit in public sector Rs1.2 m. and Secretariat of Parliamentary Gender Caucus Rs700,000. The increase in provision is for training of staff and Members of Parliament in using new IT tools as the National Assembly is moving towards the e-Parliament and the setting up of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 26210.187 - *Association des Parlementaires - Commission de L'Océan Indien*, I see there is an increase. Can I know whether this association has been set up? *Où est son quartier general?* Can we have some details about who are the representatives of our Parliament there?

The Prime Minister: *Contribution to International Organisations of which Association des Parlementaires - Commission de L'Océan Indien*. So, provision is for the contribution to the above association calculated on 20% of the whole budget of the Association turning around 102,655 Euros at an exchange rate of Rs38.5 that comes to about Rs800,000. Of course, all these different countries made their contributions.

The Chairperson: Page 8, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: On page 8, Madam Chairperson, *Capital Expenditure*, item 31122.824 *Live Broadcasting Project*, I see Rs120 m. has been earmarked, out of which Rs100 m. has been spent on equipment, I suppose. There is another provision for the next financial year which is Rs20 m. May we know what is it for?

The Prime Minister: This is for the Live Broadcasting project. The provision is for the Live Broadcasting Unit, construction of the Control Room and other offices to be located in the premises lately occupied by the Security Division in the Old Government Building wing. The contract has already been awarded to Bolah Jeetun Co Ltd for a total sum of Rs24 m. Works have to be started shortly and will be completed in about 90 days.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to the Live Broadcasting project, may we know out of the Rs100 m. for this year, how much has been spent so far?

The Prime Minister: Well, Rs91 m.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member has a question on page 8! I don't see his name on the list.

Mr Uteem: The last line, e-Parliament Project. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there has been any variation, whether all the amount budgeted has been spent or has there been any claim for variation for the e-Parliament project?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Well, I have to get the information of how much has been spent. The amount of Rs3.4 m. in Budget 2015-2016 was used for the purchase of hardware, software and upgrading of digital recording system which has reached the lifetime of five years. The workstations used in the Pre-press unit had to be replaced and its software upgraded together with training for staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, last question!

Mr Ganoo: Page 8, item 31112.421 *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House*, a sum of Rs3 m. has been budgeted for year 2017-2018. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister which part of the Old Government House is being upgraded and refurbished?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am informed here that it is for repairs of the wooden structure of the Old Parliament House. The tender has been launched with closing date of 03 July 2017. Now, which part of the wooden structure of the Old Parliament House, I would not know!

Vote 1-3 National Assembly (Rs257,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.48 p.m.)

Vote 1-4 Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 9!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 9, *Personal Emoluments Basic Salary Chairman, Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission*, we have been asked to vote Rs421,000. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development where matters stand concerning this review of our boundaries, whether works have started, whether the money has already been spent for the review of the boundaries as prescribed by the Constitution?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't know about the review of the boundaries. Report due at the beginning of next year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: On the same item, Madam Chairperson, 21110.001 - *Basic Salary Secretary, Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission*, in post and funded, in both of these columns there is no figure. Can we ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this is a new post and what is the situation with regard to that post?

The Prime Minister: Actually a Deputy Permanent Secretary from Cabinet Office is acting as part-time Secretary.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if we intend to recruit a full-time Secretary to the Commission?

The Prime Minister: I believe so. Maybe this is just a temporary arrangement. There is not a new post for Secretary.

Vote 1-4 Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission (3,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(6.49 p.m.)

Vote 1-5 Office of The Electoral Commissioner was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance! We are on page 10.

Mr Armance: Item 21110.001 *Electoral Officer*, we are having three more Electoral Officers and there is nearly the same budget as last year, may I know why?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for payment of basic salary and yearly increment for 76 funded positions, but right now the number of officers in post as at March 2017 is 66. The hon. Member wants for the Electoral Officer!

(Interruptions)

The funded vacancies will be filled in the financial year.

(Interruptions)

They will be filled. But we will provide the money, of course.

Mr X. L. Duval: I think the question is this: there are 12 officers with the same pay as nine officers? I think that is the question.

The Prime Minister: But this is in post as at March 2017.

(Interruptions)

They have just been recruited! Savings in other budget! That is why I have said the amount will be funded.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I refer to page 10, on the vote of Electoral Commissioner, who is a very competent person, internationally known. We have been hearing the other day that there might be a by-election in Quatre Bornes some of these days. So, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Ask the question, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Do you know what will happen to you tomorrow? So, why are you replying! Whether you will be here or not!

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, ask your question, we have only five minutes more.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Listen, try to learn!

The Chairperson: There are five minutes more, hon. Bhagwan.

Mr Bhagwan: We have heard in this House, some days back, of the possibility of a by-election in Constituency No. 18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes. So, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House, whether an estimate has been carried out of what will be the cost of the by-election, and whether the Electorate Commissioner has started getting himself ready for this very important election?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: When there is going to be a by-election, of course, Government will take the necessary decision.

The Chairperson: Page 11!

Mr Baloomoody: On item 22120.015 - *Fees icw Registration of Electors*, there is an increase in the cost of registration of electorates. May we have some more clarification why the high increase from Rs2.5 m. to Rs17 m.?

The Prime Minister: For the year 2016/2017, the amount spent is Rs12,782,137 for Rodrigues Regional Assembly elections and Rs17,100,000 fees for Registration of Electors. The increase in the provision is to cater for training of staff and House to House Enquiry 2018.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I think my question has been answered.

Mr Ganoo: Madam Chairperson, on page 11, under item 26210 – *Grants*, with regard to the *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the sum budgeted? Also under item 26210.188 - *Réseau Des Compétences Electorales Francophones*, may we know what utilisation has been made of the funds that have been budgeted for 2016/2017 and the proposed sum for year 2017/2018?

The Prime Minister: For the first one, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance that is based in Sweden, the yearly contribution is 10,000 USD about Rs370,000 which has been budgeted; for the *Réseau Des Compétences Electorales Francophones*, the membership fees amount for 2016/2017 to 1,500 Euros which is approximately Rs60,000 which has been budgeted.

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 11, item 22030 – *Rent*, where there is an amount of Rs11 m., may we have details of this rent and also a breakdown on the floors space area occupied and where the offices are being rented?

The Prime Minister: The provision is to meet payment in connection with rental of five floors for office premises at Max City Building, and the rental of space at Fatima Building for storage of ballot boxes and election materials. With regard to Max City Building, office premises on third, fourth, fifth, sixth and ninth floor, the owner is H.B Property Management Ltd; the office occupies a total of 26,862 square feet and the rent payable is Rs814,912 per month. With regard to Fatima Building, it is used for the storage of ballot boxes and election materials. The owner is Sunni Cutchi Memon Society of the Jummah Mosque. The rent payable is Rs97,538 per month for an area of 3,896 square feet. Now, I am informed that the increase in provision is due to the increase of rental at Max City Building from Rs814,912 for period ending June 2017 to Rs824,429 per month for the period of July 2017 to June 2018 as per the actual contract.

Mr A. Duval: With regard to item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*, we see that for year 2018 there is almost double cost, yet it goes down again for year 2019. Is that a sign of general elections to come?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member had listened to my intervention for the Budget - I have stated, in no unclear terms, that general elections will come at the end of this Government's mandate. But we will provide funds for the same amount to be purchased.

Vote 1-5 Office of the Electoral Commissioner (Rs74,000,000) (2017/18) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-6 The Judiciary was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem !

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 12, under item 21110.001 - *Justice of Appeal (New) and President High Court (New)* respectively, there is no longer any amount budgeted. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether a decision has been taken not to go ahead with the Court of Appeal?

The Prime Minister: Well, I see that there is President of the High Court where there is a funded position for one in 2017/18. Let me get the information.

(Interruptions)

Well, it does not say much, because the decision will have to be taken. I am told that these positions have been created in the context of the establishment of a Court of Appeal, but they will be filled in due course from among the Puisne Judges already in post.

Mr Ganoo: On page 12, under item 21110.001 - *District Magistrate*, I can see that in post for this year we have 12 and, in the other column, funded for next year 2017/18, I see the figure of 25. And in the third and fourth columns for the estimates of 2016/17 and 2017/18, I see that the sum has been reduced from Rs11,500,000 to Rs9,234,000. So, does the Judiciary intend to recruit new magistrates as it appears in the first two columns, from 12 to 25? Therefore, have provisions not been made for that possibility?

The Prime Minister: No, let me explain! There are 13 funded vacancies in the grade of District Magistrate, 7 State Counsels have been assigned the duties of District Magistrate and vacancies have been advertised and will be filled by the JLSC in due course. In fact, 3

months' provision has been made available to fill in the 13 funded vacancies. So, there is no question of reduction.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I refer the hon. Prime Minister to the *Director of Court Services* and the *Deputy Director Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies*, which is a new post but no provision has been made. The post was not filled in year 2017 and no provision has been made for the year 2017/18. May we know whether we are going ahead to fill these posts or are we going to abolish these posts?

The Prime Minister: The posts have been listed for abolition as there are no qualified candidates.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: On the same item but for *Legal Research Assistant*, there is no funding for any of the years to come, may we know why?

The Prime Minister: On page 12?

The Chairperson: Page 12.

The Prime Minister: *Legal Research Assistant*, I have nothing, no explanation. Now, this one is better, the Scheme of Service is not ready.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the *Deputy Master and Registrar and Judge in Bankruptcy*, I see that there are two funded positions and yet the amount budgeted is not increasing significantly for this year but it is only as from 2018/19 that there is an increase. So, do I take it that there is no plan of filling this position in the year to come?

The Prime Minister: The *Deputy Master and Registrar and Judge in Bankruptcy*, the President, Industrial Court has been assigned the duties of the *Deputy Master and Registrar* with effect from 16 May 2016 and following the promotion of the incumbent as Master and Registrar, one additional post created against abolition of the post of Assistant Master and Registrar. I am also told that this is the prerogative of the JLSC.

The Chairperson: Page 13, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: I would like to have some clarifications with regard to *Management Support Officer*. We see that there are actually 30 now, but there are funded only 17 for the coming financial year. There is also a reduction in the Estimates for the years to come. Do we take it that they are reducing the number of Management Support Officers?

The Prime Minister: The posts have been reduced against creation of 19 posts of *Assistant Financial Officer*.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the item *Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer*, I see there is an increase from 11 to 14 and I don't understand because there is actually a decrease in the budgeted amount from Rs8 m. to Rs5.8 m. So, how are we increasing the number and reducing the budgeted amount?

The Prime Minister: Well, the increase in funded position but the decrease in provision is due to officers with lower salary in the grade joining the Department.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I am on page 15, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: No, we are still on page 13. Page 14, hon. Baboo!

(Interruptions)

We have got two more pages; we are now on page 14. Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Madam Chairperson, item 22090, may we have full details of the company providing security services for the sum of Rs2.4 m.?

The Prime Minister: Item 22090, the contract for security services for period 01 January 2016 to 30 June 2017 was awarded to Rapid Security Services Ltd. A new contract for period 2017/18 is under process. The actual expenditure is Rs1,873,300.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 14, under item 22060 - *Maintenance*, there is an amount of Rs42.7 m. earmarked for 2017/18. Can we know how this sum is going to be spent, please?

The Prime Minister: Which one in that maintenance?

Mr Quirin: 22060 – *Maintenance*.

The Prime Minister: Maintenance, well, the list is very long, I can circulate it unless the hon. Member has any specific question?

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 22040 - *Office Equipment and Furniture*, there is an increase of Rs3 m., may I know why?

The Prime Minister: This is provision made for the acquisition of IP PBX at New Court House Rs3 m., air conditioners at Curepipe District Court and the replacement of old equipment and purchase of more equipment as and when required. This includes also office furniture, provisions are made to replace the old furniture and put new furniture for additional staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Sub item 22030 – *Rent*, may we know which building we are referring to and why the rent is going down drastically?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, again here I have a list of rented buildings, so if I can circulate?

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am interested in item 21110.004 - *Allowances*, there is an amount of Rs35,950,000 for Estimates 2016/17, whereas it goes down in 2017/18 and thereafter it picks up again. Can we know the allowances include what sort of items?

The Prime Minister: There is a list –

- provision for payment of entertainment allowance;

- housing allowance;
- special judicial service allowance;
- current yearly judicial and legal allowance, that is, robing allowance;
- drivers' allowance;
- duty remission on car;
- fees to Chairperson and Members of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission;
- allowance to Court Ushers to compensate them for extra hours put in;
- the black jacket allowance to eligible Court Officers and Court Ushers, and
- other allowances.

And, I have the corresponding amount which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Page 15, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister on item *31132.401*, the last Annual Report of the Judiciary speaks about the e-Judiciary project – Phase 2, I see that no provision has been made? Page 15.

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Rughoobur: The last item *31132.401 – e-Judiciary*. I see that provision was made for Phase 1, the Annual Report of the Judiciary speaks of Phase 2, but for the next coming three years, there is no budget. May I know the status from the hon. Prime Minister, please?

The Prime Minister: It has been partially implemented. The moving of the location of the Supreme Court to Edith Cavell has suspended the implementation for the time being, that is, in two years' time to prevent a waste of resources.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: *Item 31112.015 – Construction of Courts – New Supreme Court Building*. Can I know from the Rs100m. budgeted last year, how was this spent, and the Rs245m. budgeted for this year is for what?

The Prime Minister: Well, Construction of Courts, therefore we have a new Supreme Court Building with a project value of Rs1, 100,000. The status is: awaiting detailed drawing by 15 July 2017. However, there has been upgrading of different courts -

- (i) The Supreme Court, project value Rs41.1m., the repairs to the balcony of the Supreme Court was executed in 2016/2017;
- (ii) New Court House, project value Rs16.44 m., provision for a barrier at the 5th floor of the New Court House, and
- (iii) The other Courts, project value Rs45.93 m., there is a list comprising of the renewal of fencing and so on.

So, instead of taking the time of the House, I can circulate those information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 26 – 26210 Contribution to International Organisations.* Can I know which international organisations we are referring to?

The Prime Minister: We are referring to *Association des Cours Constitutionnelles ayant en Partage l'Usage du Français*, The Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, the World Jurist Association, the *Association des hautes juridictions de cassation des pays ayant en partage l'usage du français*, the Association of African Public Services Commissions and the World Conference on Constitutional Justice.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In relation to *item 31122.802 - Acquisition of IT Equipment*, at page 15, we see that the estimates for 2016/2017 amount to Rs17m. odds, and then for 2017/2018 they amount to Rs28m. odds. So, may I know whether, in relation to *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, District Courts are also included in the acquisition of *Digital Court Recording System*?

The Prime Minister: Well, the list of projects, amongst others, includes therefore the *Revamping of Digital Court Recording System* with a project value of Rs25m. This one is for the court rooms of the Supreme Court, and extended to the Intermediate Court, Industrial Court, Court of Rodrigues, and all the District Courts the next year. Therefore, this Digital

Court Recording System, which is more than 10 years old, needs to be revamped. With a new system the judiciary will benefit from better security features and so on.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: *31122- Revamping of Digital Court Recording System.* The project value is Rs25 m. and the estimates are Rs36 m. - Rs12 m. and Rs24 m. Can I know why? How much has been spent from the Rs12m?

The Prime Minister: Which one?

Mr Lepoigneur: *Revamping of Digital Court Recording System.*

The Chairperson: *Revamping of Digital Court Recording System!*

The Prime Minister: Well, the contract for the amount of Rs29.9 m.

(Interruptions)

Sorry? That was awarded but how much has been spent? I will get the information on how much has been spent. Signature done today! It is good! So part payment by next week, Rs5 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *item 31132.401 - e-Judiciary Project-Phase 1.*

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Osman Mahomed: *31132.401.* In the last report of the Director of Audit, paragraph 3.12, page 71, mention is made of irrecoverable losses/revenues due to lack of record as at 30 June 2016. Now, can the hon. Prime Minister enlighten the House as to what extent has the e-Judiciary resolved this problem because we are talking about paper records which are lost, and this leads to loss of revenue to the Judiciary?

The Chairperson: Can we pass on to the next question by the time we get this one?

The Prime Minister: It is coming not as fast as the e-mail. It is revenue collection e-Judiciary.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Item 31112.415 - *Upgrading of Courts- (c) Other Courts*. I see that the project value, in terms of the upgrading of Courts is Rs45.930 m. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in view of the Budget provided for year 2017/2017, whether the construction of two Courts with regard to Savanne District Court and Bambous District Court are being envisaged among these Courts to be built?

The Prime Minister: This is for the new Court House. For Souillac, I am informed that we are awaiting the vesting of the land in the Judiciary, in the SIFB Building. Bambous...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No! Next question hon. Uteem! One question at a time hon. Ganoo! Just one question at a time.

The Prime Minister: For Bambous, there is no project for the time being.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you Chair. *Item 27210.010 - Legal Assistance in "in forma pauperis"*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the amount that has been spent last year out of the Rs1.5 m., and what are the criteria for eligibility?

The Prime Minister: Well, legally it is granted to needy people drawing income not exceeding Rs10,000 per month, and owning property not exceeding Rs500,000. Under the Legal Aid Scheme, expenditure includes fees as well as refund of air tickets to and from Rodrigues to attorneys and barristers. Let me give the figures - from January to June 2015 Rs456,166; from July 2015 to June 2016 Rs1,195,240; and from July 2016 to May 2017 Rs991,364.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to item 26313.126 - *Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies*, I see it was Rs5 m. and now it is Rs2.5 m. May I know for what purpose this contribution is being made and what is the budget for this IJLS because as far as I know Counsel and Senior Counsel contribute on a yearly basis to that

institution? May I know what is the budget of that institution and why we are reducing the contribution from Government?

The Prime Minister: Well, the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, I am informed, has some savings in the bank and, therefore, any amount which is required will be drawn from those savings.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is simple. What is their annual budget? Because we contribute and up to now we have never seen a budget and we are forced to contribute to practice as Barrister?

The Prime Minister: I can find out how much has been spent for the last year. It is about Rs20 m.

Mr Baloomoody: Can we have the details?

The Prime Minister: I will request for details and circulate.

Mr Ramful: With regard to item 27210.010 - *Legal Assistance in "in forma pauperis"* cases. Well, the hon. Prime Minister, being a Barrister himself, knows very well that the amount that is given to Barristers and Attorneys are very meagre. Does not the hon. Prime Minister think that the amount should be increased?

The Prime Minister: Well, that is why it is called "*in forma pauperis.*" It is legal aid and it is also a contribution of Barristers and Attorneys to the country, to those people and to the judicial system, but I'll take the point.

(Interruptions)

And we will also look into it.

Vote 1-6 The Judiciary (Rs848,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.23 p.m.)

Vote 1-7 Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission was called.

The Chairperson: We are on page 16. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: In regard to *Registrar, Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission*, there is one funded for this year, but the estimates had dropped from Rs545,000 to Rs175,000 and then raised again for 2018/19. Can I know why?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Armance: *Item 21110.*

The Prime Minister: The post of Registrar of Public Service Commission, is it?

Mr Armance: There is a drop.

The Prime Minister: Yes, because the post is vacant and the scheme of service is being reviewed.

The Chairperson: Page 17. Hon. Thierry Henry !

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. Item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*, pourrait-on savoir qui est le prestataire de services, s'il vous plait?

The Prime Minister: First, there is provision for washing of towels and curtains by office auxiliaries.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I am coming to that also!

Provision for cleaning services by Mauriclean Ltd. at the rate of Rs21,000 monthly. The increase in provision is to cater for the cleaning of additional space of the new wing. The total area has increased from 9,000 to 21,000 square feet.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under Item 22030 – *Rent*, we can see that for 2016/2017, the cost is Rs50,000 and then it increases for 2017/2018 to Rs150,000, it goes on and then it decreases again. May I know why?

The Prime Minister: Well, initially the provision was for rental of a container from Multibox Ltd. at the rate of Rs4,025 monthly for storage of files and documents and the increase is for provision of one additional container to be rented.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In relation to item 22120 - *Fees*, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to whom these fees are paid and for what?

The Prime Minister: There is a provision made for payment of fees to members of Departmental Tender Committee and Bids Evaluation Committee. There are fees for training also. So, the increase in provision is to enable officers to benefit from training opportunities relevant to the needs of the Commission and there are also fees in connection with examinations and interviews. The provision is meant for payment to officers assisting the interviewing panels and expenses such as setting papers, designing of questionnaires, markings and invigilation fees in connection with examinations. The decrease in provision is based on the trend of expenditure and lastly, the fees to Mauritius Qualification Authority. In fact, there is no provision made as no fees will have to be paid.

The Chairperson: Page 18, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Madam Chairperson, item 31112 - *Non-Residential Buildings*, there is an amount of Rs12.2 m. Can I have some details, please?

The Prime Minister: It is for the construction of office building. I see that there are new wings. There is a list and it is quite long. Can I circulate it?

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: My question pertains to the same one, but the list is being circulated. Just a point of clarification! Are we doing two things within the same contract, that is, construction of a new building and renovation of an existing building at the same time? Is that correct?

The Prime Minister: I see that there is provision for upgrading of office building, renovation of toilet and painting works of the existing old building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Under the same item, Madam Chairperson, 31112.401 - *Upgrading of Office Buildings*, can I know which office building has been upgraded and how the amount of Rs1.8 m. has been spent?

The Prime Minister: No, it is the provision for upgrading. So, I suppose the toilet must be in a state where it needs to be upgraded and there are painting works.

Vote 1-7 Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission (Rs90,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.30 p.m.)

Vote 1-8 Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 21110.001 - Secretary Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, no provision is made and no intention to fill the post. Are we going to abandon that post?

The Prime Minister: No. Regarding the Secretary of Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, I can give the name, Mr Sheik Farhad Vydelingum...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but he is the Assistant Permanent Secretary, he is currently acting as Secretary to the Tribunal.

Vote 1-8 Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal (Rs14,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.31 p.m.)

Vote 1-9 Office of Ombudsman was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody! No, we are on page 21. Hon. Barbier, page 21!

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Madam Chairprson. At item 21110, the post of *Investigation Officer (New)*, it is there since last Budget and still not filled. May I know when this post is going to be filled?

The Prime Minister: Well, new post created to expedite investigation of complaints, funds will be sought following prescription of scheme of service of the post. So, we are waiting for the scheme of service.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know for item 22030 – *Rent*, the rent was Rs1.2 m. and now it has come to Rs1.9 m. Why is there such an increase?

The Prime Minister: So, the provision for rental of building for Bank of Baroda is Rs52,184 monthly till relocation of Office to Société City Screen. The contract with the present lessor has not been renewed because of relocation and the new lessor, Société City Screen, at the rate of Rs155,069.50 monthly for five years. The area of the office space is 3,200 square feet and the Letter of Intent issued to the lessor has been issued on 29 May 2017 and we are expected to sign the lease agreement in October 2017.

So, the increase in provision is due to additional cost of renting of larger office space.

Vote 1-9 Office of Ombudsman (Rs13,400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.34 p.m.)

Vote 1-10 National Audit office was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110.001- Auditor, I think it is very good that we are increasing the number of Auditors, the Auditors are doing an excellent job. But we are moving from 30 to 37, there is only an increase of Rs200,000 for seven Auditors for a year. So, may we know what explains this meagre increase of only Rs200,000 for their fees?

The Prime Minister: Six vacancies occurred following the promotion as Senior Auditor and one Temporary Auditor reverted to his substantive post of Deputy Chief Examiner of Accounts, the seven vacancies have already been reported to the Public Service Commission, together with draft advertisement on 21 April 2017.

Vote 1-10 National Audit office (Rs160,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(7.35 p.m.)

Vote 1-11 Employment Relations Tribunal was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramphul!

Mr Ramphul: With regard to item 21110 - Registrar, Employment Relations Tribunal and Deputy Registrar Relations Tribunal, Employment, would you believe it that for nearly two years now, these two posts have not been filled? May I know when this will be done? There is no Registrar, no Deputy Registrar at the Tribunal.

The Prime Minister: With regard to the Registrar of the Employment Relations Tribunal, I am informed that the incumbent resigned with effect from 10 January 2017, whereas the Deputy Registrar, the new post created in PRB 2016 to assist the Tribunal in the administrative and technical function.

The Chairperson: Page 26, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22030 – Rent, may we know which site we are talking about and the surface area?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for payment of rent at the rate of Rs403,052 inclusive of VAT monthly. The rent is comprised of officers on level 18 and of stores, archives found in the basement of Newton Tower Building, total floor area is 6,265 square feet and the contract period is from 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2019 and 01 November 2016 to 31 October 2019 respectively.

The owner of the building is Belem Ltd represented by Directors, Michel Chan Sui Ko and Michael Chung Kai Shing.

Vote 1-11 Employment Relations Tribunal (Rs23,500,000) was called and agreed to.
(7.37 p.m.)

Vote 1-12 Local Government Service Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Page 28! Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *Capital Expenditure, item 31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment*, there is an amount of Rs6.3 m. budgeted for last year 2016/17. Can we know if this amount has totally been spent and, if yes, can we have a breakdown of the equipment purchased, please?

The Prime Minister: The procurement of new IT and IT related equipment, mainly servers, scanners, and PCs had to be taken in a holistic manner. Given the integrated computerized and online system already in place at the Commission, due care is taken not to disrupt the activities of the Commission by replacing part equipment and run the risk of any dysfunction.

The procurement of the abovementioned items was taken simultaneously for subsequent easy testing and commissioning at one go and part of the Rs6.5 m. has been used to purchase, therefore, the IT equipment and the estimates for 2017/18 are Rs2.7 m. for the acquisition of servers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea! Page 28!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, page 28, item 31112.001 - *Construction of Office Buildings*, there is a project value of Rs48 m. May we have some details on this construction, whether tender procedures and award of contract have already been completed and also where this building is?

The Prime Minister: First of all, the construction is for Rs48.6 m. Provision of Rs15 m. represents preliminaries and general cost in connection with the extension of the LGSC Building, second floor.

And although an amount to the tune of Rs20 m. was earmarked for financial year 2016-2017, the project could not be initiated earlier for the following reasons - the project cost was revised in January 2016 following which the Project Plan Committee approved the revised cost in May 2016. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure informed that design works would take six months. The consolidated final drawings were completed in April 2017. And to note that the drawings include those from the Energy Services Division and the Central Informatics Bureau. And bidding exercise started in June 2017 with the deadline to bid being 06 July 2017. So, in view of the above timeline, it was indeed not possible to incur any expenditure on the above capital item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21111 *Other Staff costs*, despite we have all the expenditure relating to staff on other votes, we have this - I think it is new - staff costs which is for Rs3 m. and more. Can we know for what purpose?

The Chairperson: *Other Staff Costs, 21111.*

The Prime Minister: Well, the Other Staff Costs is provision made for the payment of travel grant, travelling allowance and refund of bus fares to staff. There is also provision made to meet payment of overtime to the following -

- security guards for excess hours put in on weekends;
- manual workers who are called upon to perform duties of watchmen on weekends and on weekdays also, and
- Office auxiliary for cleaning of office premises on Saturdays.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 21210 *Social Contributions*, can I have some details?

The Prime Minister: *Social Contributions:* provision for payment of contribution to the National Savings Fund for Government employees at the rate of 2.5% of the monthly salary up to a ceiling of Rs416 per month per employee. The increase in provision is to cater

for the increase in the number of staff in post and the increase in the rate payable consequent to increase in salary.

Vote 1-12 The Local Government Service Commission (Rs52,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-13 Independent Commission Against Corruption (Rs212,000,000) was called and agreed to.

Vote 1-14 National Human Rights Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I find that this year we are making provision; for the last financial year it was Rs25 m., then the next financial year it will be Rs27 m. when, in fact, we are making at the next page allowance for the Independent Police Complaints Commission which is now part of the National Human Rights Commission. So, we expect the budget to be reduced. How is it that we are increasing the budget of the National Human Rights Commission when in fact, the Police Complaints Division is moving out, and we are going to have an Independent Police Complaints Commission? So, may I know which is which?

The Prime Minister: I have a list of expenses, running expenses and to meet administrative and running expenses. I can circulate this list unless there is any...

Mr Baloomoody: No, my question is not the list. We are providing Rs27,300,000 for the next financial year. Now, the Human Rights Commission has got three divisions. As from next year, we are making provision for an Independent Police Complaints Commission and you will see on page 33 another Rs17 m. What I am saying is that the Police Complaints Division of the Human Rights Commission is going out now, so the budget should automatically reduce. How is it that we are increasing the budget of the Human Rights Commission?

The Prime Minister: This is why I am saying unless the hon. Member wants me to read the whole list of all the expenses. I can circulate. That is what I am saying.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Item 26313.060, can I have details of the *Other Operating Costs*?

The Chairperson: *Other Operating Costs!*

Mr Lepoigneur: For Rs7 m.!

The Prime Minister: 26313.060, this is what I just answered. I will circulate.

The Chairperson: *Other Operating Costs!*

The Prime Minister: Yes.

The Chairperson: The list will be circulated. Hon. Barbier!

The Prime Minister: It is a list of detailed items with the equivalent amount unless you want me to read the whole list.

The Chairperson: Circulate it!

The Prime Minister: I am circulating.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Item 26323 *Grants*, usually grants are under *Current Expenditure*, but exceptionally here we have grants also under *Capital Expenditure*. There is provision for Rs1,300,000 for *Grants* under *Capital Expenditure*. Can we have the details, please?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for the purchase of one motor vehicle.

Vote 1-14 National Human Rights Commission (Rs27,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-15 Office of Ombudsperson for Children was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: Madam Chairperson, item 21110.001 *Management Support Officer*, there is an increase of 51%. May I know why? There are still four in post.

The Prime Minister: Management Support Officer, there are four in post, so why is there an increase! I have no explanation. Maybe another question can be asked in the meantime.

The Chairperson: No question.

The Prime Minister: Well, that does not really answer the question! MSOs have been posted by the Ministry of Civil Service. Let me circulate.

Vote 1-15 Office of Ombudsperson for Children (Rs13,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-16 Independent Police Complaints Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from this Independent Police Complaints Commission when it became operational, if not, when it will be operational? Who is the Chairperson and who are the members?

The Prime Minister: Not yet selected. As you know, the Chairperson is not easy to - if you look at the qualifications, but then we are looking for the appropriate person and we will, hopefully, quite shortly...

(Interruptions)

You can.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Along the same line, for this vote we don't have the staffing structure. So, can the hon. Prime Minister at least circulate the staffing structure of this Commission?

The Prime Minister: Okay, we will do so.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: So, if this Committee has not been set up, last year there has been a budget of Rs15 m. May we know whether part of this amount has been spent or none, I suppose, it has been spent?

The Prime Minister: None has been spent because it has not yet been set up.

Vote 1-16 Independent Police Complaints Commission (Rs17,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-1 Prime Minister's Office was called.

The Chairperson: Page 35. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Prime Minister let us have a list of all the Chairpersons and Members of the different Tribunals and their respective allowances - *President, Equal Opportunity Tribunal; Members, Equal Opportunity Tribunal; Chairperson, Environment*

and Land Use Appeal Tribunal; Vice Chairperson, Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I will circulate.

Mr Bhagwan: Under *item 22120.017- Legal Fees*, we are being asked to vote for Rs16 m. I hope it is not the famous 19-million man. Who are the beneficiaries? Under *item 22900.959 – Expenses i.c.w. Development of the National Air Access Policy* Rs25 m. can we have some details?

The Prime Minister: I have the payment of fees to external lawyers for providing advice to Government on sovereignty matters and payment of fees to foreign lawyers for specific assignment.

(Interruptions)

I can circulate the details. With regard *item 22900.959 Expenses i.c.w Development of National Air Access*, it is provision for carrying an intensive promotion campaign in both Africa, Asia and South East Asia.

Mr Armance: *Item 31122.814 - Acquisition of Air-Conditioning Equipment*, there was an amount of Rs14 m. last year, can I know how much has been spent, and why is there Rs20 m. more this year?

The Prime Minister: It is a provision for the supply and fixing of three chillers to replace the old and faulty ones which are over 15 years old at the new Treasury Building.

Mr A. Duval: Thank you Madam Chairperson. With regard to *item 22900.960 Vision 2030 Blue Print*, for this year it is Rs7 m. and for next year there is another Rs7 m. What is the total cost of the Vision 2030? Secondly, who has been appointed or given that contract if it has been outsourced. Thank you.

The Prime Minister: There are fees to consultants for finalising Vision 2030 Blue Print. As far I can recall, it must be the SCE Rs3 m. There is also the awareness campaign and the monitoring of the implementation of Vision 2030 Blue Print. I believe it must be SCE - Singapore Corporation Enterprise.

(Interruptions)

Yes Rs7 m. is the total, but out that Rs3 m. I said awareness campaign Rs2 m., monitoring of the implementation of the Vision 2030 is Rs2 m.

Mr Baboo: Madam Chairperson, under item 22060.001- *Maintenance of Buildings*, may we know which building is maintained for Rs3.8 m.? Is there any maintenance contract with any particular company?

The Prime Minister: It is the maintenance of New Treasury Building in connection with wooden parquet and other maintenance works. The contractor is System Building Contracting Ltd.

Mr Ameer Meea: In relation to the Vision 2030, what is the total cost of this project because, last year, there was an amount of Rs7 m. and next year also there is another amount of Rs7 m. Does this Vision keep on evolving? How come that we have Rs7 m. every year?

The Prime Minister: It is the vision to 2030 so we have to move along those lines.

Mr Ramano: Merci Madame la présidente. Sous l'item 22100-*Publications and Stationery*, ça passe de R1.6 million à R5.6 million. Pourrai-je savoir du ministre la raison de cette augmentation, et aussi pourrai-je savoir sur les R1.6 million quelles sont les différentes publications qui sont concernées?

The Prime Minister: Well I will get the details. I can tell you it consists of paper and materials, printing and stationery. There is a long list which I can circulate.

Mr A. Duval: With regard to item 22900-*Other Goods and Services*, we see that there is an increase of Rs40 m. May we know exactly for what it accounts?

The Prime Minister: It is Rs32.8 m. to Rs34.3 m.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baboo: Madam Chairperson, under item 22040-*Office Equipment and Furniture*, the amount is remaining constant - Rs2.7 m. May we know which items have been acquired for Rs2.7 m. and which items will be acquired for the same amount for the years to come?

The Prime Minister: It is for the purchase of computers, shredders, printers, office tables and chairs.

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 22900.901-*National Day Celebration*, there is considerable increase - Rs37 m. We agree.

The Prime Minister: I do not have the information.

Mr Bhagwan: I do not want details. We do not have any problem with the amount of Rs75 m., if it is not sufficient; I think the population will agree. Can the Prime Minister give us some indication? Are there preliminary works which have started for this celebration? Has any consultant already been appointed, if not, which Ministry, apart from the Ministry of Arts and Culture, is responsible for the organisation?

The Prime Minister: Well, I will have to get the information to circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhadain!

Mr Bhadain: Yes. Under item 21110.005- *Extra Assistance*, Madam Chairperson, on page 37, the estimates have moved from Rs7 m. to Rs11 m. May we know what type of extra assistance we talking about?

The Prime Minister: *Extra Assistance*, so, the provision for payment of salaries refund, casual/annual/vacation leaves, bonus and contributions to the National Savings Fund at the rate of 2.5 per cent of basic salary to the following advisers -

- Sir Bhinod Bacha;
- Mr Chaumière;
- Mr Ally Dahoo;
- Mr Maunthrooa;
- Mr Thumiah;
- Mr Veeren;
- Mrs Rawat Currimjee;
- Mr Veeramundar;
- Mr Appadoo.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900.014 - *Hospitality and Ceremonies*, may we have some more details about this item and how much money has been spent in the Rs21 m.?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 22900.014 - *Hospitality and Ceremonies*.

The Prime Minister: So, there is payment to Airports of Mauritius Ltd for –

- use of State and VIP lounges;
- the State visit, President of the Republic of Ghana;
- launching ceremony of Metro Express;
- VVIP air tickets paid to Air Mauritius Ltd for period 15 March 2007 to 24 February 2013;
- diplomatic corps dinner, and
- organisation of functions, ceremonies and others.

The Chairperson: Page 38, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The first item on page 38, *Principal Co-ordinator, Security Matters*, it looks like the post has not been filled. May I know whether we are abolishing that post because no provision has been made for this for the next financial year?

The Chairperson: *Principal Co-ordinator, Security Matters.*

The Prime Minister: Following the retirement of the Principal Co-ordinator for Security Matters, a co-ordinator has been appointed since June 2016. There are no provisions for the Principal Co-ordinator for Security Matters for financial year 2017/18 as the incumbent should reckon 4 years' experience as co-ordinator for him to be eligible for promotion as Principal Co-ordinator.

The Chairperson: Page 39, hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 26313.020 - *Gambling Regulatory Authority*, may I know why there has been an increase from the Estimates of 2016/2017?

The Prime Minister: Well, post advertised by the Authority in November 2016 -

- | | |
|---|----|
| • Chief Gambling Regulator and Investigator - | 1 |
| • Gambling Regulator and Investigator - | 12 |
| • Legal Officer - | 1 |
| • Public Relations Officer - | 1 |
| • Accountant - | 1 |
| • Administrative Manager - | 1 |

Shortlisting of eligible candidates has been completed. The candidates will be called for interview in July 2017. Funds for recruitment were not available in 2016/17 Budget and provisions for funds have been made in 2017/18.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 39, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, there is an amount of Rs16 m. earmarked for 2017/18. Can we have a breakdown of this amount, please?

The Prime Minister: Yes, provision made for consultancy services for electrical system, fire alarm, plumbing and generator at Old Government House and New Government Centre Rs10 m. and to conduct an overall survey for the restoration of Clarisse House Rs6 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci, Madame. Sous l'item 22900.928 - *Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal*, est-ce que je peux savoir de l'honorable Premier ministre - le budget passe de R 19,700,000 à R 6,500,000 - la raison derrière cette diminution sensible ?

The Prime Minister: Well, the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal, the decrease in provision is due to -

- (i) completion of partitioning works for Rs12 m., and
- (ii) acquisition of digital recording system.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 39, last item 26313.020 - *Gambling Regulatory Authority* Rs37 m., can we be provided with a list of the Chairperson and members of this Gambling Regulatory Authority, what are their salaries and allowances and whether Mr Dev Beekharry is still a member of the Board of the GRA despite the negative report received against him?

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson is Mr Raouf Gulbul. I can circulate the list of the other members and Mr Dev Beekharry is a member of the Board.

Mr Bhagwan: Their salaries and allowances?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Thierry Henry!

Mr Henry: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22030 - *Rent*, there is an increase for the next financial year. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: Additional provision is required for the renting of additional office space of 250 m² for the Procurement Division for storage of unserviceable goods and items.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Item 22060 - *Maintenance*, there is a considerable increase from Rs14.5 m. to Rs36.5 m. so, any justification?

The Prime Minister: The increase in provision is due to -

- (i) the restoration of Sir Harilall Vaghjee Memorial Hall for Rs14 m.;
- (ii) the renovation of toilets at the New Government Centre for Rs9 m.;
- (iii) energy audit of New Government Centre and Treasury Building for Rs2 m.;
- (iv) the embellishment for Rs2 m., and
- (v) other maintenance for Rs3.976 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Item 22900.968 - *Expenses icw Social Development Board*, may we know who are the Chairperson and Members of that Board and what are the objectives of that Board?

The Prime Minister: Which Board?

Mr Baboo: Item 22900.968.

The Prime Minister: Expenses for the Social Development Board, the amount represents the cost for a study to ensure that there is greater coherence in the various social programmes ...

Mr Baboo: Sorry, I want to know the Chairperson and the members of that Board and what are the objectives of that Board.

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson is Mrs V. Phoolchund-Bhadain, Magistrate. I have the list of the members and I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval, last question!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the top of the page with regard to item 21110.010 – *Service to Mauritius Programme*, we see on all the pages *Service to Mauritius Programme* is ending for this financial year. Is it that the Prime Minister has now put an end to the *Service to Mauritius Programme*?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

The Chairperson: Which item is that?

Mr A. Duval: Item 21110.010

The Prime Minister: So, as from Financial Year 2017/2018, the allowance payable to interns recruited under the *Service to Mauritius Programme* has been made under *Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government*. I have replied earlier.

The Chairperson: Page 40! Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Concerning item 31122.999 - *National Security Services*, equipment from Rs1.5 m. to Rs5.5 m., there has been *un* loss *considérable concernant les équipements*. Can I know which equipment, which plant and machinery?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have already answered to a question in Parliament before on that issue. So, I will refer the hon. Member to that answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes! On item 31121.801 - *Acquisition of Vehicles*, there is a sub-total of Rs29.5 m. and then it increases to next year to Rs43 m. May we have some details on this amount, a breakdown on which vehicle, for what purposes these vehicles were bought?

The Prime Minister: First of all, there is provision for purchase of motorcar, van for Security Division, acquisition of vehicles for Home Affairs and provision of purchase of 5 motorcycles of 1300cc, the amount is Rs10 m. and for VVIP replacement car it is Rs50m and provision for replacement of motorcycles again which are no longer suitable for security operations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh! Page 40!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 31112.435 - *Upgrading at Clarisse House*, may I know the details of this item? Where and what has been upgraded and if the amount Rs2.5 m. has been spent?

The Chairperson: Which item you said? 31112.

The Prime Minister: Provision made for major maintenance works to be carried out at Clarisse House. A survey will be carried out for the restoration of Clarisse House.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhadain!

Mr Bhadain: Madam Chairperson, item 31122.805 - *Acquisition of Security Equipment* which was Rs168 m. last year and another Rs32 m. this year. May we know what type of security and what type of equipment we are talking about?

The Prime Minister: I have just referred the hon. Member earlier to an answer which I have given to a PQ and I will refer the hon. Member to the same answer.

Mr Bhadain: Madam Chairperson, the answer which was given did not explain the security and did not explain the equipment. May we know what type of security, at least, we are talking about, and also what type of equipment?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member should refer to my answer, which I have given to an earlier PQ, in reply to a question that was given.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, next question!

Mr Bhagwan: I will come to the same question, although the Prime Minister gave a reply, I think so, at the Extra Supplementary Estimates. Can the Prime Minister, at least, for the additional Rs32 m., again, give a guarantee to the House with regard to the liberty of our MPs, all MPs, whether the Prime Minister can give a commitment so that the telephones of all MPs are not being tapped? Guarantee was given before, can the Prime Minister – because he is a new Prime Minister - at least, give guarantee to the House, the nation and to us that our telephones are not being tapped for political reasons?

The Prime Minister: I reiterate the guarantee that was given by Sir Anerood Jugnauth as former Prime Minister.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armanche! Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Item 22090, we are asked here to vote a sum of Rs12 m. for the NSS, but without any details whatsoever. So, can we have some details for what purpose...

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Barbier: NSS! 22090! Page 40!

The Chairperson: Page 40!

Mr Barbier: Page 40, item 22090 - NSS, we are asked to vote a sum of Rs12 m. on that item without any details. So, can the Prime Minister provide us with some details?

The Prime Minister: I am informed that this information is classified and cannot be diverted.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My question pertains to item 31122.814 - *Replacement of Chillers and Associated works at New Government House*. Now, there used to be a chiller there which was donated by a friendly country, which was environmentally friendly as well. Now, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the investment of Rs100 m. will entail us having chillers, that is, ozone and environmental friendly in line with Kigali Amendments of the Protocol Montréal, which we ratified some time ago, on ozone layer?

The Prime Minister: Well, the information that I have is that the provision is made for the installation of chillers that will be suitable for the DOWA project at the New Government Centre.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: With regard to the *Equal Opportunities Commission*, item 21110, for the post of Investigator, the post has not been filled. Do I take it that the Investigation Section is not functioning?

(Interruptions)

Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Prime Minister: Regarding Investigator, the post has been advertised by PSC in May 2017. A provision has been made for 9 months only.

The Chairperson: Page 41! Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, again, there is an amount of Rs7.8m. Can we have some details and some names, if ever?

The Prime Minister: Which one?

The Chairperson: *Extra Assistance*!

The Prime Minister: 005! Yes! Provision for payment of salaries, special judicial allowance of 15% of basic salary to the Chairperson, bonus, refund of leave, contributions to National Savings Fund at the rate of 2.5% of basic salary for Chairperson and three members of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Chairperson: Page 42! Page 43! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery - Public Notices* - we are being asked to vote Rs15.9 m. Can the Prime Minister give us a breakdown for the year 2016/2017?

(Interruptions)

Public Notices.

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Bhagwan: 22100.005 - Rs15.9m. Can we be provided with a breakdown of the amount paid to each daily and weekly newspapers, even electronic papers - there so many - and also, any projection for this coming year? And another item *Media Trust Fund - item .048*.

The Chairperson: No! Hon. Bhagwan, allow him to reply! On page 43, 22100.005 - *Public Notices*.

The Prime Minister: Well, I am informed that the information cannot be tabled at this stage as there is a Court case still pending before the Supreme Court on the issue of Government paid publicity; the case of *La Sentinelle* against Government of Mauritius.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Grant to *Capital Expenditure*, item 31122 *Other Machinery and Equipment*, Rs1.5 m. Can we have details on the Other Machinery and Equipment?

The Prime Minister: There is no provision for this financial year for acquisition of IT equipment.

Mr A. Duval: For Estimates 2016/2017, we want to know how much has been spent and for what.

The Prime Minister: I need to get the information.

The Chairperson: Can we come back to this, hon. Prime Minister? We will ask hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 26313.048 *Media Trust Fund* – I would like to know why there has been no increase for the Media Trust Fund.

The Prime Minister: Well, this is provision for the running cost of the Media Trust Fund.

The Chairperson: Have you got the replies for the other questions or we can move on? Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 22040, *Office Equipment and Furniture* – in the Estimates of 2016/2017, there is a sum of Rs175,000 being earmarked and then it increases to Rs675,000. May we have some clarification and then it goes down again for 2018 to Rs175,000 and same thing for 2020?

The Prime Minister: This is provision for the purchase of office equipment and furniture to replace the old ones. The increase is also due to provision for purchase of audio visual equipment, fax machine and scanner.

The Chairperson: Page 44, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 44, item 21110.001 *Civil Status Officer* – in post we have 52 for March 2017 and for next year it increases by 20 to 72 that will be funded. But when you look at the sum that has been budgeted, it was Rs16.8 m. in 2017, but for 2018 it

decreases by more than Rs100,000. So, the number in post have increased by 20, but the sum budgeted has decreased. May we know the reason why?

The Prime Minister: The newly recruited Civil Status Officers will draw initial salary of the post which explains the decrease in the provision for the financial year 2017/2018.

Mr Ameer Meea: It has decreased.

The Prime Minister: It is due to officers with lower salary in the grade joining the department.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Under item 22120, we want to know what are these fees and why this increase of Rs100,000 to Rs500,000.

The Prime Minister: Provision has been made to provide for training for both locally and abroad to technical staff of the bureau.

The Chairperson: Hon. Thierry Henry!

Mr Henry: L'item 22120 Fees – on voit qu'il y a une augmentation qui passe de R 100,000 en 2016/2017 à R 500,000 en 2017/2018. Est-ce qu'on peut avoir les détails?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered. It is provision for training of staff both locally and abroad.

The Chairperson: Page 45! Yes, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regards to publications and stationery, we see from the Estimates 2016/2017 Rs13 m. and 2017...

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr A. Duval: 22100. In 2017/2018, Rs40 m. and then 2018/2019 Rs3 m. and then back to Rs40 m. in 2019. May we know exactly what kind of publications these are? Who are supplying these services?

The Prime Minister: The increase in provision is to cater for about 85,000 cards which will be used as follows –

- 50,000 cards for replacement of loss, damage and change of name;
- 20,000 cards for 18 years old, and
- 15,000 cards for senior citizens.

So, 170,000 cards are purchased every two years and last purchase was made in financial year 2015/2016.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 22060.005, *Maintenance of IT Equipment* – there is a huge amount of Rs120 m. budgeted and we have noted that last year there was Rs124 m. again and this goes on for the next year again. Can we have some details of this maintenance? Why there is such a huge cost?

The Prime Minister: Maintenance agreements are as follows –

- maintenance charges for MNIS system as per the schedule contract with Singapore Corporate Enterprise for Rs100 m.;
- maintenance agreement for Central Population Database payable to SCE annually Rs18 m.;
- scanning system and hardware/software for State Informatics Ltd - Rs342,000;
- the Civil Status Division System - Rs1,018,265;
- the Civil Status Hardware - Rs510,000;
- the Server Anti-Virus Licence Anglo-African - Rs35,000, and
- there are other maintenance and repairs on IT Equipment amounting to Rs194,735.

I am informed that the decrease in provision as there is going to be less maintenance agreement fee that will have to be paid.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22030 *Rent* – there is an amount of Rs7.3 m. for 2016/2017 and Rs7,890,000 for 2017/2018. Can we have a breakdown for both financial years?

The Prime Minister: There is a list. Can I circulate that list? It is quite long.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 45, item 21110.004 *Allowances* – there is an amount of Rs6.3 m. May we have some details on these allowances?

The Prime Minister: Payment of on-call, *ad hoc*, fixed cost, acting responsibility, camera, marriages, servant, internet, duty remission, incentives and cashier allowances to staff of the Civil Status Division.

The Chairperson: Page 46, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is a very interesting item, *Setting up of a Marriage Hall*. Can we have some details about this?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31112.401, *Setting up of a Marriage Hall* – Rs5 m. has been budgeted. May we know who are the lucky guys who will go there? Can we have some details of this very interesting project?

The Prime Minister: Non-citizen Marriages are also being celebrated at the Central Office Division of Emmanuel Anquetil Building and in line with Government vision of promoting Mauritius as a wedding and honeymoon destination; provision has been made to set up a new and modern Marriage Hall at the ground floor of the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. It is going to be a sweet building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci Madame la présidente. Sous l’item 22900.099 - *Digitalisation of Civil Status Records*, est-ce que je peux connaître le nom de la compagnie qui est responsable pour ce contrat?

The Prime Minister: Digitalisation of Civil Status Records – there is an increase in provision to start with the project of conservation and preservation of CSD records, and for the archiving of all registers. Which company – No. They are not done by any company but by the Civil Status officers themselves.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhadain! Page 46.

Mr Bhadain: Yes. Under the same item, Madam Chairperson, there is an increase of Rs2 m. - from Rs10 m. to Rs12.100 m., can we know why the increase?

The Prime Minister: I have said this is the increase for the provision to start with the project of conservation and preservation of Civil Status Department records, that is, archiving of the old registers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Under the same item 22900.099 - *Operation and Support-Managed Services* –Rs16 m., may we know firstly how much has been spent and by whom? Who has undertaken the services? Secondly I still have not got my reply to the question I asked earlier.

The Prime Minister: *Operation and Support-Managed Services* – the above services will move to the Central Informatics Bureau under the item of Info Highway hence there is a decrease in the provision but I will get the information of how much have been spent. Well, the Singapore Corporation Enterprise through Crimson Logic Private Ltd has continued to provide managed services since October 2013 to support daily IT operations of the MNIS, but I don't have the information on how much has been spent. I will circulate the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Under item 31122.802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment* – may we have some details about this item as we can see that for the estimates 2016/17 it is Rs2.5 m. then it increases to Rs5 m.

The Prime Minister: I have the answer for the earlier question asked by hon. Duval – Rs16 m., in fact, it has been spent. It is the whole amount.

Now the *Acquisition of IT Equipment* – this provision is made for payment of agency system development kit for the reading of card data and to meet the cost of training awareness operation and management of card usage.

Vote 2-1 Prime Minister's Office (Rs1,211,500) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-2 National Development Unit was called.

The Chairperson: Hon Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Item 21110.001 - *Project Manager* – the 5th item, it is from 4 to 10. The increase in salary is only around Rs200,000. When, in fact, we are increasing from 4 to 10 officers. May I have some more details about this item, please?

The Prime Minister: Well, the funded position for the grade of Project Manager stands at 9 for the financial year 2016/17, only one additional post has been created for financial year 2017/18 to cater for the increasing number of projects being implemented around the island and each Project Manager will be allocated two Constituencies.

The Chairperson: Page 48. Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry : Merci, Madame la présidente, item 22030 – *Rent* : Je vois qu'il y a une augmentation pour la prochaine année financière, j'aimerais savoir si le déplacement du bureau CAB de Mahebourg est prévu?

The Prime Minister: I can inform the hon. Member that the increase here is due to the renting of additional office space of 6000 sq. feet to house the Land Drainage Authority and for additional staff. There is provision for the renting of office space for the Head Office and for CAB at Mahebourg.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meeah!

Mr Ameer Meea: Under the same item – Rent, does this sum, that is, Rs29.409 m., also include the building which is rented at Citadel Mall for the offices of the PPS, if yes, how much sq. feet are rented and at what cost per sq. feet? To which company, to which owner are we paying this sum?

The Prime Minister: No, but, the amount for rental building has increased from Rs23,800 m. to Rs26,259 m. but the other information I need to get it because I don't have it here. I can circulate maybe?

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Under item 21110.001 *General Worker*, we see that there are in post 24 General Workers and funded 30 General Workers. It is the same for Office Auxiliary. May we know the recruitment mode and whether the powers of the Service Commission are being delegated to the PMO?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

The Chairperson: It is page 48.

The Prime Minister: Item 21110, yes, the services are being delegated, that I will have to find out. With regard to the former question that was put for the Head Office of the National Development Unit, they are occupying at Orland Ltd an area of 31,204 square feet on levels 10, 11 and 12 and paying a monthly rental of Rs1,830,114.60 inclusive of VAT. Recruitment is done under delegated powers.

The Chairperson: Page 49, hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame le présidente, l'item 31 *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*. Je vois qu'il y a un budget de R 1,083,000,000. J'aimerais savoir de l'honorable Premier ministre si la liste des projets approuvée en 2016 par le PMO, c'est cette liste-là qui va être appliquée?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have a list of all those projects which I can circulate and the hon. Member will see whether it has been approved before or not.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Concerning item 27210 - *Social Assistance Benefits in Cash*, we are asked to vote for Rs20,000. Can we know who are the beneficiaries?

The Prime Minister: It is provision for payment of funeral grant of Rs10,000 to the heirs of a deceased officer to cater for funeral expenses in accordance with the recommendation of PRB Report. We can let you know later on.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31113.015 *Construction and Upgrading of drains*, we are being requested to vote Rs720 m., twice the amount that was voted for last year, in a year that we have set up the Land Drainage Authority. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether as remit the Land Drainage Authority will have as supervision all the constructions of drains that are going to be implemented because time and again, in the House, I had drawn the attention on so many problems we have with drains that are being constructed, taking my Constituency and elsewhere as example?

The Prime Minister: In fact, during the debate on the Land Drainage Authority Bill, I said that there is going to be a Board which is going to monitor, supervise and look after all the projects as far as drains are concerned.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31113.006 *Other Structure Construction & Upgrading of Sports Facilities*, Rs70 m. is earmarked for 2017-2018. As usual, can we have a breakdown?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Chairperson. I have a list of those projects. It is quite a long list, so I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci, Madame la présidente. Toujours en ce qui concerne la *Land Drainage Authority*, vue la somme qui est consacrée R 2 million, est- ce que cela signifie qu'il n'y a aucun membre du personnel qui est attaché à la *Land Drainage Authority* pour l'année qui vient?

The Prime Minister: We have just voted the Bill. Now, is it an Act of Parliament and the board is being reconstituted, it is being set.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Item 31113.019 – *Bus Shelters and Stands*, can the hon. Prime Minister explain why last year there was a sum of Rs4.1 m. allocated and this year there is no sum being allocated?

The Prime Minister: That is because the construction for the bus shelters and stands will be undertaken by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 31112.001- *Construction & Upgrading of Office Buildings*, may we have some details about this item and the breakdown of the Rs14,350,000, please?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made for the construction of a new CAB at Rose Hill amounting to about Rs9.5 m. and for maintenance work in other CABs for about Rs2.5

m. In fact, I am also informed that the CAB office building at Rose Hill which is a wooden building has been condemned and will have to be pulled down and reconstructed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to the Land Drainage Authority, may we know when it will be operational, the composition of the board and if the high-ranking members of the Board and employees have already been appointed?

The Prime Minister: Well, I said it will be constituted, hopefully and most probably, by end of July or beginning of August at latest.

(Interruptions)

No, not yet!

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Regarding item 31113 - I understand it is a very long list - *Other Structures*, is the hon. Prime Minister willing to table the list of all the projects to all the MPs, including the Opposition MPs?

The Prime Minister: The list of all the projects will be tabled in the National Assembly whereby, obviously, hon. Members can consult the whole list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On Construction of Market Fairs...

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Ameer Meea: Item 31112.022 - *Construction of Market Fairs*, there is an amount of Rs700,000 which is budgeted. What type of market fair can we construct in Rs700,000?

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Prime Minister give details of what type of market fair is it? Is it in wood? Is it in carton box?

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Member knows it well. It is not that we are going to construct a market fair for Rs700,000. It is provision with respect to the final payment for the construction of a tarmac at Triolet Market fair.

Vote 2-2 National Development Unit (Rs1,268,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: I suspend the Committee for one hour.

At 8.48 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.06 p.m. with the Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Vote 2-3 External Communications was called.

The Chairperson: Page 51, hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la president. *Item 32145.521-Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL)*, je voudrais savoir du Premier ministre dans le budget alloué pour 2017/18, est-ce qu'une somme a été allouée pour la distribution des molletons ?

The Prime Minister: Which Item is it?

Mr Henry: *Item 32145.521 - Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL).*

The Chairperson: Page 51!

The Prime Minister: So, what is the question about?

Mr Henry: Pour la distribution des molletons ?

The Prime Minister: *Distribution des molletons ? ki ete ca?*

(Interruptions)

No, it is not in the Budget.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 32145.520 - Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd*, may the hon. Prime Minister give us details about this item, as we can see for the Estimates 2016/17, Rs250 m. has been earmarked and we can see that there will be an increase in 2017/18 for Rs300 m.?

The Prime Minister: So, it is for the purchase of state-of-art cranes. Yes, this is the same thing, yard equipment, IT and security systems that is ongoing and it is funded by Government through a loan of Rs1.08 billion from *Agence Française de Développement*. The loan which would be transferred to Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd as equity of Rs565 m. and a loan of Rs515 m. and for financial year 2016/17, out of a loan provision of Rs250 m., Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd has spent about Rs215 m., the remaining loan balance of Rs300 m. has been provided for the next financial year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: In relation to the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is the status of the strategic investor who is supposed to come in to Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd?

The Prime Minister: Strategic investor. No, so far, there is no strategic investor. Are you talking about the DP world?

(Interruptions)

No. Well, I am informed that the proposal of DP World has been turned down but Government has opted to conduct a study on improving performance and productivity. But, anyway, I believe that in the event that Government would go for a strategic partner then, of course, we will carry out an expression of interest or we will go according to appropriate procedure.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you. Under item 22130.010 *Feasibility Study for China-Africa Civil Aviation Academy Project*, Rs4 m., may we have some details about that project?

The Prime Minister: Following discussions, the Chinese Government has agreed to launch a feasibility study for the setting up of a China-Africa Civil Aviation Academy for Africa and Mauritius before giving its approval for the project.

The Chinese authority will be financing the study to a grant of Rs4 m. that will be disbursed as stipulated in the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Chinese and Mauritian Governments signed on 07 January 2011.

In fact, a team of experts from China is expected in Mauritius by the end of June 2017.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam. My question pertains to item 32145.521 for which a loan of Rs525,000,000 is being advanced by the Government of Mauritius to ATOL. In the Budget Speech, mention was made for the construction of a second passenger terminal plus renovation and refurbishment of the old passenger terminal and, if we add these two to the existing terminal it makes a very big building.

Is this loan related to that Budget announcement and, if so, may we know whether it is based on a conclusive feasibility study and, if so again, can we have a copy of that feasibility study?

The Prime Minister: Well, what I can recall is for the new passenger terminal, a new feasibility study will have to be carried out. But, in the meantime, because it is going to take quite some time doing the feasibility and eventually coming up with choosing a contractor and carrying out the works, Government has decided that we should upgrade the existing former passenger terminal so that we can accommodate more passengers in the meantime.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regards to *Fees*, may we know the fees to consultants and a breakdown of...

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr A. Duval: Sorry, it is item 22120.008.

The Prime Minister: *Fees to Consultants*, there are two fees, in fact. One, provision is made to cater for training needs for staff and the other one is for consultants, that is, European Union, *Agence Française de Développement* which has made available a grant of 500,000 Euros, about Rs20 m. to Government of Mauritius for conducting a study on improving efficiency and productivity at Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd.

The grant will be used over two consecutive financial years to the tune of Rs12 m. and Rs8 m. respectively and the project was kept on hold during the last financial year in fact,

in view of the negotiation with DP World which, I am sure the hon. Member is aware, did not materialise.

So, it is now proposed to use part of the funds of Rs12 m. in this financial year and the remaining Rs8 m. the next financial year. The terms of reference for conducting a study has been finalised and we are awaiting the go-ahead from AFD to launch the tender.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam. I will come again to the item 32145.520 – *Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd.* Can we know who is chairing the Board of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. following the resignation of the previous Chairperson and also whether Government is in the process of renewing or terminating the contract of the Director-General of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. We have had lots of controversies recently and, can the hon. Prime Minister circulate the actual status of the Board?

The Prime Minister: Well, there is no Chairperson actually, it is vacant and I am informed that Mr Dabidin who is the Permanent Secretary representing the Prime Minister's Office is acting as Chairperson.

Mr Bhagwan: The Director...

The Prime Minister: The Director was Mr Dorsamy but his contract has come to an end in May 2017. So, he is not there anymore.

Mr Bhagwan: Are we to understand that the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd. has an Acting Chairperson and also very soon, if not, an acting Director-General?

The Prime Minister: I don't know what decision they have taken but I would think that the proper course would be to advertise for the post and then recruit a Director. Mr Paddia has been appointed Officer-in-Charge but I believe it is Officer-in-Charge temporarily.

Vote 2-3 External Communications (Rs860,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-4 Civil Aviation was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam. *Air Traffic Control Supervisor* on page 53, we are moving from 11 to 13 and yet the Budget Estimates have been reduced from Rs9 m. to Rs8 m. So, can we have some details about that reduction?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, the procedures are being initiated to report the vacancy to the PSC and only 6 months provision has therefore been made for the two vacancies.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to the same item but *Aviation Security Officer*, 12 are due to be recruited. May we know the mode of recruitment whether it is delegated and if ever there has already been advertisement for the vacancies?

The Prime Minister: Well, out of the 30 funded posts in the Budget, 29 have already been filled and the request has been made to PSC to fill the one funded post, request will be made to fill the additional 6 posts in July. The 6 additional Aviation Security Officers will enable the Department to relieve itself of contractual agreement at Bigara outstation which is to the tune of Rs1 m. yearly and further, security of outstations will be enforced by DCA personnel itself.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, page 54!

Mr Uteem: Yes, page 54 item 22120.020 *Inspection and Audit Fees*, the one but last line on page 54. I would like to know to whom those inspection and audit fees are paid and how many inspections and audits were carried out last year?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, there is a long list and I propose to circulate that list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Under item 22120 – *Fees to Consultants*, with regard to the Transformation of the Department of Civil Aviation to Civil Aviation Authority, can I know if the consultant has been appointed, and if so, can we have the name of the consultant?

The Prime Minister: So a provision of Rs9.2 m. is being made for payment of consultancy fee to Bureau Veritas France following a tender exercise for the conversion for the department into an autonomous Civil Aviation Authority. The contract has been awarded on 09 June 2017.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci Madame la Présidente. Sous l’item 22070 – *Cleaning Services*, on voit qu’il y a une augmentation dans le Budget, j’aimerais savoir qui est le prestataire de service, et quels sont les services qu’ils offrent?

The Prime Minister: Well, this is a provision to contractor, but I do not have the name of the contractor here. It is for rodent control and anti-termites treatment which is effected by Greenline Pest Control Ltd, and it will be a new contract for cleaning of office premises for a period of one year starting in February 2017. The contract value is Rs1.8 m. and Alpha Cleaning Ltd, the contractor, has been selected after a tender exercise.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 22120 – Fees to Consultants - Advance Passenger Information System*, Rs20 m. has been budgeted for 2017/2018. Can we have some details regarding this project?

The Prime Minister: It is being made for the implementation of Advance Passenger Information System. It provides advanced information on passengers arriving at the airport; the contract was awarded on 16 June 2017 to PricewaterhouseCoopers for a contract value of Rs30 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to item 22060-*Maintenance, .002 – Other Structures*, we see that Rs57,375 m. has been voted for this year, and for last year it was Rs47 m., may we have a breakdown where these funds are being used?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Madam Chairperson. There is again a long list which I can circulate if the hon. Member will agree.

The Chairperson: Page 55! Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson! Item 31122 - (a) *Replacement of Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT)/VHF Amplitude Modulation equipment*, the project value is Rs110 m., and in that there has been Rs11 m. earmarked. May I know how much money has been spent in the Rs11 m., and for what please?

The Prime Minister: Provision made to replace the VSAT and VHF AM radio equipment for providing voice communication between air traffic controllers and pilots, and

voice and data with adjacent air traffic controls centre. The VSAT are ground-based satellite communication equipment that are installed in Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agaléga and St Brandon. And which are used for VHF AM radio equipment to extend the radio range of the VHF AM for the provision of air traffic services. The estimated cost of the project is Rs110 m. of which Rs55 m. has been earmarked for 2017/2018 and Rs55 m. for 2018/2019, and of which Rs11 m. for 2016/2017 which could be carried forward. No disbursement will be made in 2016/2017 under this item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 31122.99 (i) *Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Air Traffic Service Message Handling System for SSR International Airport*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why no amount is being budgeted for this year, but the bulk is to be disbursed in 2019/2020.

The Prime Minister: I do not have this information. Can I have the information please? I am informed that the project will start as from next year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam. My question pertains to item 31122.999(d) - *Replacement of batteries for solar power system for Agalega and St Brandon*, for the sum of Rs6 m. Batteries normally fail after a number of years. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister when was that system installed for which we are replacing the batteries?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am informed that the provision is made to replace batteries for solar power systems as they will reach their useful lifetime in 2017/2018. So, I do not know when it was installed, but it is going to expire next year. This is therefore a new project to replace the batteries for the backup of the solar power system of the repeated stations of St Brandon and Agaléga. In fact, the sum of Rs5.4 m. represents an estimated value of contract minus the retention fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 31112.001 – *Construction of Office Buildings*, the project value is Rs40 m; out of which Rs10 m. has been budgeted last year. Can I know how was this money spent?

The Prime Minister: Well, this is for the construction of a new building following the decision to release the DCA premises to enable the relocation of the Special Mobile Force in line with the Airport Master Plan. Regarding the construction of the Cargo Village, the project consists of the construction of a one-storey building with garage for 25 vehicles, complete with all mechanical and electrical services, yard works and boundary wall. The project was initially estimated to about Rs36.4 m. The design was scheduled for completion in January 2017 and the project implementation in 2017/2018. However, there has been a delay in the design. The cost of the project has now been revised to Rs40 m. The project is scheduled for implementation as from Oct 2017 and is expected to be completed by September 2018. With regard to the batteries, they were installed in 2000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to item 31122.999(h) - *Replacement of Distance Measuring Equipment (Plaisance)*, the project value is Rs11 m. and we are only budgeting for 2019, when we know what will happen in 2019, if ever, not before! Why is it that we are projecting finance only for 2019?

The Prime Minister: I do not have it here. Retention money, the project is over!

Vote 2-4 Civil Aviation (Rs452,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.30 p.m.)

Vote 2-5 Government Printing was called.

The Chairperson: Page 57, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 21110 - *Printing Assistant/Senior*, we had 17 and we budgeted for Rs4.3 m. Now, we have 23 funded and it is almost the same budget of Rs4.4 m. This is carried forward over the other years, can we know why?

The Prime Minister: Action will be initiated in due course to fill in the six existing vacancies. In the meantime, the decrease in provision is due to officers with lower salary in the grade joining the department.

The Chairperson: Page 58, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31112.001 - *Construction of New Building*, with a project value of Rs412,500,000, we are being asked to vote Rs25 m. Can we have an indication of the site of the proposed building and where works have reached?

The Prime Minister: It is for consultancy services and preliminary expenses for construction of a new building at La Tour Koenig to replace the existing building which is in a very poor condition and no more suitable for an evolving printing environment. So, the first expression of interest has been cancelled and the actual expenditure is nil. A request for an expression of interest for Global Consultancy Services for the new building was launched by the Prime Minister's Office in January 2016. After evaluation of bids, contract for Global Consultancy Services has been awarded to Design Forum Ltd.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22100.001 - *Paper and Materials*, I note that there is the same amount of roughly Rs24.5 m. for last year, this year and the years to come. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there has been any impact with the e-Government on printing because it seems that despite going online, we are still budgeting a lot of money for printing?

The Prime Minister: This provision is made for the purchase of items of paper, white bond paper 70, 80 grams which is, I am told, essential for various works such as printing of school textbooks, ballot papers, annual reports, Bristol paper for file covers, manifold green paper used for lottery tickets and a reasonable stock level should also always be maintained and materials such as plates, ink, printing solutions and other minor consumables for digital Press machines. So, the e-services will not have so much impact on this yet.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31112.802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister if the contract has been awarded, the name of the contractor and if the contract is inclusive of maintenance cost?

The Prime Minister: Well, it is for the implementation of e-Procurement. It is also for the acquisition of one heavy duty printer, Black and White A3 and three Mac Pro to replace those purchased in 2009. The implementation of management information system has not yet been awarded.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Under *Capital Expenditure*, item 31122.813 - *Acquisition of Printing Equipment*, an amount of Rs15 m. was budgeted for last financial year, can I know if there

has been any bidding exercise before the purchase of these equipment, the name of the bidders including, of course, the successful bidder?

The Prime Minister: I am told that this has not yet been done.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page 58, item 22120 - *Fees*, we see that for the next financial year, there will be an increase of Rs1 m. May we know the fees are for what purpose and who are the beneficiaries of these fees?

The Prime Minister: First of all, fees are paid for tender and Bid Evaluation Committee in connection with construction of new building, procurement of printing materials and equipment and the increase in provision is due to the revision of fees payable to members of the Departmental Bid Committees and Bid Evaluation Committees.

Now, there are also fees for training. With the purchase of new machines, there will be more in-house training for technical staff by appointed consultants, namely suppliers of IT and printing equipment on new trend in IT and printing, design, binding, technologies will be required and for training of staff given by the Civil Service College for administrative, financial, human resource and team building. So, the increase in the provision is due also to in-house training for technical staff and team building.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Just a last question. While the new building for the Government Printing Services is being constructed at the same site where the old building is, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister where the operation of the Government Printing Services be held? Is the old building still going to be there?

The Prime Minister: The old building is there, but in the meantime, the new building is going to be constructed next to it and then it will move to that new building. Not the same site, but the adjacent site.

Vote 2-5 Government Printing (Rs186,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(10.39 p.m.)

Vote 2-6 Finance and Economic Development was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 61, eighth line, under item 21110.001 - *Analyst/Senior Analyst*, there is a substantial increase in the number of Analysts from 70 to 105, but I see a reduction in the budgeted amount from Rs39 m. to Rs36 m. despite one third increase in the number. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there is a reduction in the budget?

The Prime Minister: Nine permanent vacancies exist in the grade following the resignation, retirement or permanent transfer of officers in the grade. Furthermore, 26 temporary vacancies have occurred following the appointment of 26 officers as Lead Analysts. The nine vacancies are being reported to the Commission whereas the 26 vacancies cannot be reported for the time being in view of an appeal lodged by aggrieved officers at the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal.

The Chairperson: Page 62, hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente, l'item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, est-ce qu'on peut avoir des détails pour l'année 2017/18 ?

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is provision made for payment of travel grant, travelling allowance, commuted travelling and refund of the bus fares to staff. The decrease in provision is due to the decentralisation of the post of Principal Financial Operations Officer and Principal Internal Control Officer to various Ministries and Departments. There is also provision made for payment of overtime to office auxiliaries, drivers and other staff. There is also provision made to meet expenses in relation to activities for the welfare of staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: At page 62, last item 22900.969 - *Expenses icw Economic Development Board*, I can see that a provision of Rs10 m. has been made. Can we have some details about these expenses?

The Prime Minister: Which item!

Mr Ramful: Last item - *Economic Development Board*.

The Chairperson: .969

Mr Ramful: 22900.969

The Prime Minister: So, *Expenses in connection with the Economic Development Board* to meet the expenses for the setting up of the three main directorates, the first

directorate that will be responsible for National and Sectoral Economic Development Planning, the second directorate that will be in charge of investment and export promotion and the third directorate that will manage the e-Licensing Business Platform. So, you wanted to know that.

Mr Ramful: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur! Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 22060 – *Maintenance*, may we have some clarifications, as we can see that the estimate for 2016/17 is Rs14,480 m. and then it increases to Rs15,250 m.?

The Prime Minister: There is a list of a number of items. I can circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22120 – *Fees*, from Rs18 m. to Rs22 m., may we know why that huge increase of Rs3 m. and the beneficiaries, of course?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson and members of Boards and Committees -

1. The Public Pension Advisory and Technical Committees;
2. The Sub-Committee on Borrowing Requirements of Government held at the Bank of Mauritius, and
3. Departmental Bid and Bid Evaluation Committees.

But for the constitution of those committees, I undertake to circulate the composition.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item .005 - Extra Assistance* of Rs11 m. Can we have some details please?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for payment of salaries to seven advisers, one officer on contract and two Chief Information Officers. The name of the advisers –

1. Mr Gerard Sanspeur;
2. Mr K. Guptar;
3. Dr. Sen Narrainen;
4. Mr M. Oozeer;
5. Mr V. Malloo;
6. Mr A. K. Nilamber, and
7. Mr A. P Sadul.

Officer on contract, Mrs Sonah Oree, Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers and also there is a note, two Chief Information Officers will be recruited shortly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: Page 62, item 22010 - *Cost of Utilities*, there is a reduction. Is there any reason behind it?

The Prime Minister: Well, it concerns electricity charges in respect of the following buildings: the old Government House, Baroda Building where there is the *Conseil des Religions* and Country Coordinating Mechanisms Secretariat and then the St. James Court, Commissioner for the Protection of Borrowers' Office.

The Chairperson: Page 63, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 26313.004 - *Board of Investment*. We are being asked to vote a grant of Rs259 m. Can we know who is sharing that famous Board? What is the allowance? And also, the number of Overseas Officers where we have representatives of the BOI outside Mauritius. Can we be provided with such a list and the allowances or remuneration and where they are situated exactly? And another question, the Financial Services Promotion Authority...

The Chairperson: No, hon. Bhagwan, one by one.

Mr Bhagwan: One by one, okay, I would come next time.

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson is Mr Gérard Sanspeur. I can circulate the list of the members.

(Interruptions)

How much? Rs70,000 monthly, Rs840,000 yearly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes. *Merci, Madame la présidente*. We are asked to vote for item 26323.043 – *Mauritius Revenue Authority*. There has been an increase from Rs295 m. to Rs377 m. Can the hon. Prime Minister elaborate?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Abbas Mamode: MRA.

The Chairperson: MRS - item 26323.043.

The Prime Minister: Yes, provision to meet the recurrent expenses of the MRA, so there is a list, very long list. I will circulate that list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci, Madame la présidente. Dans le budget il est mentionné que la *Financial Services Promotion Agency* passe sous l'ombrelle de l'*Economic Development Board*, et là, je vois que R100 m. est prévu, R 70 m., R 73 m. R 75 m. alors qu'une somme additionnelle de R 303 m. est prévue pour l'année 2018/19. Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas un *mismatch* du fait que la *Financial Services Promotion Agency* est supposé de passer sous l'ombrelle du *Economic Development Board*?

The Prime Minister: Not really because then that budgeted amount will be transferred to the Economic Development Board.

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

Mr Armance: Under *Capital Expenditure*, item 31132.105, *E-Projects- e-budget System*, the project value was Rs60 m. and now there is only a sum of Rs5.9 m. left over. Can we know why? Is the project over?

The Chairperson: Item 31132.105, *E-Projects*.

The Prime Minister: Well, there is a long explanation. If you want I can circulate it. I am informed that the project has been completed. So, it is good that I can circulate this information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Item 31122.802 – Acquisition of IT Equipment, may we have some clarifications, as we can see that for 2016/17, the sum is Rs9,300 m. and it increases to Rs18 m., then it goes down to Rs8 m. and same for 2019/20?

The Prime Minister: This is because provision is being made for the purchase of two heavy duty photocopiers, PCs, laptops, heavy duty printers and two servers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Under items 31132.401 *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure and 31132.801 Acquisition of Software*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, these investments in IT equipment, the amounts that have been earmarked Rs14 m. and then

Rs10,500,000, can he confirm that these investments, these amounts are inclusive of maintenance charges, that is, not only the equipment, but charges for maintenance in there?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have to find out. I have the breakdown of a list of equivalent expenditure, but I don't know whether the maintenance is included. Maintenance will be under maintenance item, I am told.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 26313.043 *Mauritius Revenue Authority*, the MRA. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether it is under this item, and if it is not, under what item has any provision been made for the negative income tax?

The Chairperson: Item 26313.043 *Mauritius Revenue Authority*.

The Prime Minister: I am told no. It will be under revenue items.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: On page 63, item 31112.401 *Non-Residential Buildings Upgrading of Office buildings*, any reasons behind it.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

The Prime Minister: The reason! Well, the reason is because provisions are being made for the following -

- the upgrading and renewal of electrical installation costing about Rs8 m.;
- the flooring of the 9th floor of the EAB about Rs3 m. ;
- renovation of toilets of the EAB, Rs2 m.;
- upgrading of mess room, Old Government House Levels 3 and 5, Rs0.5 m., and
- replacement of blinds Level 5, Old Government House at Rs0.5 m.

The Chairperson: Page 64, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22120.008 *Fees to Consultants*, Rs18 m. for 2016/2017 and Rs9 for 2017/2018. Can we know the names of the consultants, and how their fees are being calculated?

The Prime Minister: For 2016/2017, provision of Rs18 m. was made for the Head of the BOT Unit and other consultants to support the proper setting up of the unit. However, due to some constraints in the recruitment process, this has not been implemented. Instead the Lead Analyst in post at the Procurement Policy Office was given the responsibility to supervise the setting up of the BOT unit against payment of an allowance. So, for year 2017/2018, a provision of Rs9 m. only has been made for the following recruitment, one consultant to head the BOT unit, and one consultant for the evaluation of e-Procurement system, and one consultant for project management, and then one consultant for three workshops for the BOT, and also for Capacity Building Programme. Well, that is another item.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Item 22030 *Rent*. Je vois que le chiffre passe de R 2,050,000 à R 650,000. Est-ce qu'il y un site alternative qui a été identifié pour cela?

The Prime Minister: Well, I see that it is provision made for payment of parking slots for the Director and two members of PPO, and provision made for rental of venue of three workshops. This is all I have.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Yes. Item 22120.007 *Fees for Training*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister in which field these trainings were imparted and if we can get the name of the training centre or whether it was in-house?

The Prime Minister: I have just mentioned that payment for ...

The Chairperson: He just mentioned. You should listen!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is a different one then! This is provision made for training for the BOT awareness campaign, Rs1 m.; for online IP3 training, Rs2 m. and for scaling up of e-Procurement project. 210 public bodies are involved and the change management including training at the Civil Service College, Rs3m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under the *Independent Review Panel, Sub-Head 2-603*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister...

The Prime Minister: Which item?

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Uteem: I take it from the *Personal Emoluments*, item 21110. It is a more general question. I wanted to know the number of cases that have been lodged and heard by the Independent Review Panel last year?

The Prime Minister: The number of cases heard by the IRP for the year 2015/2016 – 38; for 2016/2017, that is, up to date – 32. Pending cases: for the year 2015/2016 – 4 and for this year up to date – 4. Frequency of sitting per case: 3 to 4 for the year 2015/2016, and for the year 2016/2017 – 3. And I am told to settle one case it takes at most three sittings within a period of one month.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: Page 64, item 21210 *Social Contributions*. It is a very laudable initiative. Can we have some details about it?

The Prime Minister: Yes. This is provision made for staff and members as required under the National Savings Fund Act of 1995.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente, item 21110.010 *Service to Mauritius Programme*. On voit que pour l'année 2016/2017, il y a eu R 468,000 et pour l'année 2017/2018, il y a que R 43,000. Peut-on savoir pourquoi?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I think I have replied earlier. So, this vote, in fact, will come from the Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government.

The Chairperson: Page 65, hon. Ramful !

Mr Ramful: With regard to the Independent Review Panel, item 22120 Fees...

The Chairperson: We are on page 65.

Mr Ramful: *Oui, c'est bon page 65.* Item 22120-Fees - Rs4,8 m., can I know what these fees are for?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson and members of the Board and Committees. I can circulate the list of members. The Chairperson is Mr Lalloo, the Vice-Chairperson is Mr Kalee. The members are Mr Ragnuth, Mrs Sohun, Mr Mulloo, Mr Rajanah. Fees - for the Chairperson Rs70,000, Vice-Chairperson Rs35,000 and for members Rs25,000 each.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 22030 - *Rent*, can the hon. Prime Minister explain why rent would be doubled within one year?

The Prime Minister: The rental of building of floor area of around 500 to 550 square metres for a period of six months.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Sub-Head 2-604 *Assessment Review Committee* under the item *Personal Emoluments*, I am going to ask the same question. With respect to the Assessment Review Committee, how many cases were held last year and how many are pending for this year?

The Prime Minister: There is a list of all the cases. Maybe I can just mention that the total number of cases for customs - 200 cases are pending as at 01 June 2016 and 203 cases are pending as at 31 May 2017. The total number of cases settled is 41 and I have a list which I can circulate for VAT, Income Tax, Large Tax Payer Department.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody.

Mr Baloomoody: Same page, with regard to the *Vice-Chairperson* of the *Assessment Review Committee*, there were three in 2017. We are projecting four for the next financial year, but the amount allocated for their fees, for their remuneration remains the same Rs5,280,000, may we know why?

The Prime Minister: One vacancy has occurred on 06 of June 2016, as one Vice-Chairperson has taken up employment at the COMESA Court of Justice, the post is filled by a selection of barristers of not less than 5 years standing and the vacancy is being reported to the Commission. So we have to fill again.

The Chairperson: Page 66. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 22030-Rent, around Rs8 m. earmarked for each financial year, can we have a breakdown of this amount please?

The Prime Minister: Well the ARC will be relocated to the second and sixth floors of the Pope Hennessy Building owned MauBank Ltd as from 03 July 2017. Payment of rental charges will take effect as from July 2017. So I can give you the extent of the space. Second floor 507.57 square metres, sixth floor 507.57 square metres at a rate of Rs720,124.99 per month including renovation costs and seven parking base.

Vote 2-6 Finance and Economic Development (Rs3,839,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-7 Central Procurement Board was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 68, under item 21110.001 Basic Salary, Chief Executive, Central Procurement Board. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this position has been filled or, at least, advertised and if it has been filled, who is the person who is the CEO?

The Prime Minister: The post of the Chief Executive for CBP which is promotional from the grade of Deputy Chief Executive has been reported to the PSC on the 08 of May 2017.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Under item 21110 - I do not see in the list the allowances that we are paying to the Board members of the CPB. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is the amount that is being paid to the Board members and the frequency that the Board is meeting every week? Is it one, two or three times?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate, but just to let know, for the Chairperson and the two Vice-Chairperson, Rs8820. No, I see they have drivers allowance *ad hoc*. I can circulate the list. Frequency?

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, can I answer? The frequency is three times per week.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, under item 21110 - *Chief Executive*, who is the Chief Executive and the names of the members of the Central Procurement Board?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered that the post has been reported to PSC on 08 May, so, the process has to be *enclenché pour recruter*.

(Interruptions)

For the Deputy, the post has already been filled on 28 March 2017 and the deputy is Mr Dosieah.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, there is the post of Principle Central Procurement Officer, it's a new post, but no provision has been made, do we intend to fill that post? May we know where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: Following the recommendation made by the Chief Executive of the Central Procurement Board, the new grade of Principle Central Procurement Officer, which was recommended in the PRB report 2016, is being created. So it is being created now.

The Chairperson: Page 69. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 22120-*Fees* around Rs9.5 m. is earmarked for each financial year. Can we know to whom these fees are being paid?

The Prime Minister: Well, the fees are for the assessors who make the evaluation of bids. I have a long list of people who have acted as assessors, which I can circulate.

Vote 2-7 Central Procurement Board (Rs63,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.10 p.m.)

Vote 2-8 Treasury (Rs127,000,000) was called and agreed to.

(11.11 p.m.)

Vote 2-9 Statistics Mauritius was called.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 74, item 22120 – *Fees*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister what the Rs25 m. of fees relate to?

The Prime Minister: Provision has been made for payment of fees to Chairperson and members of Statistics Board and Departmental Bid and Bid Evaluation Committees.

There is also a list of fees for training, that is, to meet expenses in relation to seminars, workshops and training of staff. I will circulate the list also.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, the amount earmarked has been increased from Rs38 m. to Rs55m. May we know the reason of this huge increase?

The Prime Minister: I also asked the same question because it is interesting, provision is made for -

- Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey Rs21 m.;
- the Household Budget Survey Rs25.7 m.;
- the Survey of Inbound and Outbound Tourists Rs1.6 m.;
- Census of Economic Activities Rs4.4 m.;
- Construction Price Index Rs0.9 m.;
- Living Condition Survey Rs0.7 m., and
- Cartography mission to Rodrigues Rs1 m.

The increase is mainly due to the conduct of the Household Budget Survey and the Census of Economic Activities.

Vote 2-9 Statistics Mauritius (Rs236,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.13 p.m.)

Vote 2-10 Valuation Department was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam. The Director, Valuation Department, can the hon. Prime Minister inform us who is that person? Is he the same person who lost his memory at one time...

(Interruptions)

...is he still around? Has he regained his memory?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The post has become vacant on 15 June 2017 following the retirement, in the public interest, of the Director.

(Interruptions)

The Senior Most Deputy Director was assigned the duties of Director as from 18 August 2016 up to June 2017. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has been designated Responsible Officer of the Valuation Department as from 14 June 2017, well, of course, pending the required procedures to be done so that the post can be filled.

The Chairperson: Page 76, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Item 21111.002 - *Travelling and Transport*, there is a sharp increase from last year's budget, double the amount and the same applies to *Overtime* as well. Can we have some explanations as to that sharp increase?

The Prime Minister: There is a long list of explanation, I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 22030 - *Rent*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister where the office is located, in which building?

The Prime Minister: Rental of office spaces at Nexteracom Tower 2 at Ebène, levels 3 to 5. The lessor is Nexteracom Ltd. the renting of space area is 3000 m² at the rate of Rs433.09 per square foot. So, the monthly rate payable is Rs1,299,270. The lease agreement took effect as from 1 May 2015 and will expire on 30 April 2018.

There is also rental of parking slots, provision for payment of 12 parking slots for the eligible staff.

Vote 2-10 Valuation Department (Rs135,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.17 p.m.)

Vote 2-11 Corporate and Business Registration Department was called.

Mr Rughoobur: Item 22060 - *Maintenance*, I note that there is a substantial increase from Rs11,700,000 to Rs20,400,000. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the reason for this substantial increase during the forthcoming financial year?

The Prime Minister: There is an increase in provision due to the enhancement of the eXtensible Business Reporting Language System (XBRL), whatever that is.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. Item 22030 – *Rent*, on voit que pour l'année 2016/2017 il y a un montant de R 15,235,000 alors que pour le budget 2017/18 il y a une augmentation de R 17,835,000.

The Prime Minister: Renting of office space of 17,007 square feet, that is, lower ground, ground floor and third floor at One Cathedral Square, Port Louis. The lessor is *Société One Cathedral Square*. I have a detailed list of the different items and the equivalent amount which I can circulate because it is a long list.

The Chairperson: Page 79, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Under item 31132.401 - *Extensible Business Reporting Language*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the contract for the Rs68 m. has already been awarded and to whom it has been awarded?

The Prime Minister: Electronic Document Management System, provision is made for the payment of retention money payable to Leal Communications and Informatics Ltd. The contract amount was for Rs4,070,310 and the retention money Rs200,000 that is still outstanding.

(Interruptions)

So, provision was made to Mauritius Network Services for electronic filing of the financial statements in XBRL format for some 2,200 large companies so as to create a standardised format for financial reporting. So, some amount has been approved up to financial year 2019/20. The contract has been awarded to IRIS Business Services through the Mauritius Network Services Ltd.

Vote 2-11 Corporate and Business Registration Department (Rs129,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(23:20)

Vote 2-12 Registrar-General's Department was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Under Item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, there were talks about the Registrar-General moving under the Mauritius Revenue Authority, but here we are budgeting separately for MRA and the Registrar-General, so may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether for this year, there is no plan of moving the Registrar-General's Office under the MRA?

The Prime Minister: I have, in fact, replied to say that there is one more that we have given because there have been extensive arrears from the Registrar-General's Department. I have had meetings with the trade unions, and we have agreed that they are going to recruit few more officers so that the arrears, the backlog can be recovered and let us see what happens in the one year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody !

Mr Baloomoody: Madam Chairperson, page 80, under item - *Assistant Registrar-General*, there were three in post and now we are budgeting, but yet the allowance has increased only by Rs100,000, from Rs2.7 m. to Rs2.8 m.

The Prime Minister: Two temporary vacancies have occurred following the appointment of two Assistant Registrar-General as Temporary Deputy Registrar-General. So, provision has been made for one additional post of Assistant Registrar-General to process applications for erasures and certificates burdening inscriptions. This is the explanation I have.

The Chairperson: Page 81! Hon. Rughoobur !

Mr Rughoobur: Item 31122.806 – *Acquisition of Generators*, I see that there has been a sum of a bit less than Rs3 m. that has been spent already, remaining some were Rs135,000 that has to be paid. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister the mode of procurement and the name of the contractor?

The Prime Minister: Well, I need to get the information. Well, I am told, open tender plus the process...

(Interruptions)

...under process. So, we will know afterwards.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The last Item 31132.401 - *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, this is an item that has been going on for years we voted. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the implementation is on schedule and would be completed in this financial year, there is a last Rs10 m. that is budgeted for this year?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am told that there is on-going enhancement and these will include the enhancement already identified, posted on the Redmine Logging System and approved by the RGD Technical Committee. There is also enhancement of the *Casier Hypothécaire*. These relate to synchronisation and fine-tuning of the transferred data from the previous *Casier Hypothécaire* to an MERP system and also enhancement as a result of the Business Facilitation Act. So, this will necessitate additional features on the system for online search which are as follows -

- (i) The creation of a module to implement the reception of summary forms;
- (ii) The provision for search online payment;
- (iii) The creation of a module to monitor and manage search duty;
- (iv) Implementation of direct debit, and,
- (v) Modification for securing payment online.

Mr Uteem: Sorry, my question was whether we are on target to complete the project in this financial year?

The Prime Minister: Well, I believe so. Yes!

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 31122.806 - Acquisition of Generators*. The project values Rs3 m. Last year, we budgeted Rs135,000, and there is no sum allocated for this specific project, Acquisition of Generators at the Registrar General's Department.

The Prime Minister: So, I am told that the process is on right now. The tender is being looked into. This is about retention money.

Vote 2-12 Registrar-General's Department (Rs111,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: We will take Minister Mentor now!

(11.27 p.m.)

Vote 4-1 Minister Mentor's Office, Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues was called.

The Chairperson: Page 94! No! Page 95! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under Item 26, page 95, 26313, *Grants to Chagosian Welfare Fund*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there is a reduction in the amount of grant to the *Chagosian Welfare Fund* going forward as from next year, from Rs9 m. to Rs7 m.?

The Prime Minister: The provision made for the running expenses of the Chagosian Welfare Fund was increased by 50%, from Rs6 m. to Rs9 m.

(Interruptions)

Why does it go down to Rs7 m.? Let us see. The item previously shown under the Ministry of Social Security National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development that we know...

(Interruptions)

Non, but it does not say why. Yes, we know the decrease is for that year. So why?

(Interruptions)

They give the answer that we already know. The decrease is for 2018/2019, we already know, but why is it? That is what we need to know. Maybe we can have another question in the meantime they send me this information.

(Interruptions)

So, part of it is concerned with the project and I am told that that project will be completed in 2017. That is why.

Vote 4-1 Minister Mentor's Office, Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues (Rs50,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.29 p.m.)

Vote 4-2 Continental Shelf and Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration was called.

The Chairperson: Page 96! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under Personal Emoluments - 21110, 3rd line - Research Development Officer, eight posts are being created. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what would these Research Development Officers actually do?

The Prime Minister: I have a list with regard to their duties. It is a long list, so I will circulate it. They will have to be involved in strategic and operation plans of the office which includes exploration, exploitation of ocean resources, delimitation of maritime boundary, management of joint zone in the *Mascareignes Plateau* region, marine zones and boundaries, administration, marine special planning, ocean observation and indicators, management of data, production of map and carrying out relevant research activities amongst others.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: On page 97, under Item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. May we know to what it is in relation specifically?

The Prime Minister: I have a list of all those projects which I will circulate.

Mr Ganoo: I am intervening on page 96 under item 21110.

The Chairperson: We are already on page 97!

Mr Ganoo: It is the same vote.

The Chairperson: No, we are already on page 97. We are proceeding page by page. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 97, under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. We see that we spent Rs7.9 m. last year and we are budgeting Rs8.1 m. for this year. May we know what studies and surveys have been made in the region?

The Prime Minister: Provision was made for the hiring of consultants for drafting of the Petroleum Bill, the Sea Bed Mineral Bill and a study for something to do with fiscal regime. However, the Commonwealth provided these services free of charge, constituting thus a saving. Hence, a saving of the order of Rs5 m. was made under this item.

Mr Baloomoody: Were there any studies or surveys, and if so, can the hon. Prime Minister let us have a copy thereof or if there is any legislation?

The Prime Minister: I will request for the information and have it circulated.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under *Capital Expenditure, item 31121.801, Acquisition of Vehicles*, can we have some details?

The Prime Minister: It is provision for the purchase of one car for despatch and movement of staff and one 4X4 for coastal field work.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: At page 97, under item 22060 - *Maintenance*. Can the hon. Prime Minister explain the important and considerable increase in the amount of Estimates for the years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, that is, from Rs175,000 to Rs1,250,000. It is maintenance of what?

The Prime Minister: The increase in provision is to meet the cost for the partitioning works for the proposed new office, servicing of two vehicles and maintenance of the IT equipment for additional staff.

Vote 4-2 Continental Shelf and Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration (Rs32,100,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 4-3 Forensic Science Laboratory was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Madam Chairperson, at page 98, under Item 21110.001 - *Forensic Scientist/Senior Forensic Scientist*. I see 14 were in posts for the year 2017 and we funded for 22, and yet, there is only Rs1 m. increase in the sum allocated for same. So, can we know why from 14 to 22, yet only Rs1 m. for a year?

The Prime Minister: In fact, they need to be filled in view of the increasing tests to be done regarding synthetic drugs and others, but the scheme of service has been prescribed only on 14 June 2017 and the post would, therefore, be advertised shortly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: On page 99, item 31122.804.

The Chairperson: We are on page 98, hon. Dayal! You are being too quick. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 21110.001- *Confidential Secretary*. There was one in post and we funded for one more, but yet the budget is decreasing by almost 50%. Can we know why?

The Prime Minister: In the financial year 2016/2017, provision was made for two funded posts of Confidential Secretary. As there is only one Confidential Secretary in post, provision has been made for only one post. One funded position has been transferred to Vote 4-2 under the Continental Shelf and Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration to serve the two Directors in post.

The Chairperson: Page 99! Hon. Uteem!

Hon. Uteem: At page 99, under item 22140 - *Medical Supplies, Drugs and Equipment*. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the FSL can now carry out DNA test?

The Prime Minister: I see that they had purchased consumables, that is, renewal items and chemicals and reagents; special kits and reagents required for DNA Profiling in case work, special reagents and reference materials for chemicals instrumental analysis and helium gas for chromatography mass spectrometry analysis. So, this leads me to believe that the DNA samples are being actually analysed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: Page 99, under item 31122.802 – *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, has it any connection with the DNA sequencing - the latest generation?

The Prime Minister: This is for upgrading of the IT facilities with the Laboratory Management System being operational, additional equipment is required for the smooth running of the service.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you Madam Chairperson, *Capital Expenditure* under item 31112.019 - *Construction of the Forensic Science Laboratory*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister the name of the contractor and where is it being constructed?

The Prime Minister: The total value of the project is Rs235 m. which has been approved by the PPC, Rs25 m. for the appointment of consultant for design and an expression of interest has been floated for the first time last year. However, the Evaluation Committee retained none of the seven companies, so a new exercise is being carried out with closing date on the 14 June 2017 and I am informed that same has been extended to the 05 July 2017 at the request of potential bidders.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am intervening on the last item on page 99 *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. I can see the sum which has been budgeted for this financial year and the next financial year.

Now in the recent past, very often in our courts of law we have heard that Forensic Science Laboratory reports are not ready because equipment have broken down and were not functioning properly. Therefore, the question I put to the hon. Prime Minister is what are the equipment which have been acquired this year and whether the Forensic Science Laboratory intends to buy new sophisticated equipment in order to determine, in fact, the elements, the constituents of synthetic drugs to establish offences against suspects or accused parties.

The Prime Minister: In fact, there is a list of new sophisticated equipment that are being bought, I can circulate the list, but I will not know which equipment will be used for analysing. This is a more comprehensive list which I can circulate. It has been detailed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item – 31112.019 - *Construction of the Forensic Science Laboratory* at the same time we are buying up to date equipment, I take it, to examine the synthetic drugs and then we are also constructing a new Forensic Science Laboratory budgeted Rs235 m. May we know for the last year, how much has been spent of the Rs25 m. and when do we expect that new laboratory to be functional?

The Prime Minister: Only Rs219,000 have been spent.

Vote 4-3 Forensic Science Laboratory (Rs146,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 4-4 Rodrigues was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance! Page 100

Mr Armance: Item 21111.001 - *Wages*, There was a provision of Rs179,000 last year and no more provision for the coming years, can we know why?

The Prime Minister: Wages were meant for payment of salaries to two resident caretakers who are employed on a casual basis. However, the two resident caretakers have been appointed on a permanent and pensionable basis as from the 01 March 2017 and are, therefore, being paid under item 'basic salary' hence no provision is made for 2017/18.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan! Page 101.

Mr Bhagwan: Under item 25110.011- *Special Rodrigues Holiday Package*, from Rs31 m. in 2016/17 it goes to Rs60 m. then there is a drop from Rs60 m. to Rs56 m. and then Rs52 m. Is there any specific reason why the drop is going down from year to year as from the next year financial year from Rs60 m. to Rs56 m. and Rs56 m. to Rs52 m?

The Prime Minister: I know that this is being reviewed and, therefore, there is going to be a new mechanism that will apply not to say that we are getting rid of the subsidy but it is being reviewed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jahangeer! Yes.

Mr Jahangeer: Capital Expenditure under item 26321.002 - *Water sector development projects in Rodrigues*, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why there is no provision for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the European Union has granted an amount of Rs120 m. to Rodrigues Regional Assembly to improve and increase water production and the distribution capacity in Rodrigues over a period of two years as from the year 2014, then I have a list of these projects which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Under item 26321.001 - *Rodrigues Regional Assembly*, I can see that there is an amount of Rs775 m. that has been earmarked on the capital projects, can the Prime Minister enlighten the House? Maybe there are a series of projects, so if he can circulate if the list of projects is too long.

The Prime Minister: Again, I have a long list which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 101 under item 25 – *subsidies*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister collectively, out of the Rs51 m. that was budgeted for last year, how much subsidy was actually given under these three items.

The Prime Minister: As at to date, Rs30.8 m. would have been disbursed under the above scheme; this is what I have here. I hope, they have got the right information - as at to date Rs46 m., so nearly that amount.

Vote 4-4 Rodrigues (Rs3,550,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 4-5 Reform Institutions and Rehabilitation was called.

The Chairperson: Page 102, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 21110.001 - *Personal Emoluments - Psychologist (Clinical and Social)*, there is provision for two positions. As the hon. Prime Minister receive representations as to whether two psychiatrists will be sufficient for all these rehabilitation centres.

The Prime Minister: First of all, the post is going to be filled by selection from candidates holding a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology or Psychotherapy or Counselling psychology. An offer of appointment has been made to one candidate who will report for duty on 15 June 2017. I believe that the process will be on to recruit the next one.

The Chairperson: Page 103, hon Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Concerning item 22330- *Rent*, can we have some more information?

The Prime Minister: There is a long list which I can circulate, but I can tell the hon. Member, that may be it is with regard to Probation Officers in Flacq, Bambous, Moka, Souillac, Curepipe, Piton, Pamplemousses, Mahebourg and Rose Hill. I will circulate all the details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: At page 103, under *Chief Officer, Rehabilitation Youth Centre*, may we know whether provision is being made to have a Rehabilitation Youth Centre in Rodrigues? We know recently that a juvenile was sent to jail in Rodrigues as there is no Rehabilitation Youth Centre in Rodrigues. So, may we know if provision is being made to have a Rehabilitation Youth Centre for Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: At page 103, under item *Rehabilitation Youth Centre*, especially with regard to item *Chief Woman Officer, Principal Woman Officer, Senior Woman Officer*, the number in post of all woman officers has remained the same, except for one Woman Officer where the figure has increased from 12 to 13. In view of information that has come out regularly concerning problems in the Youth Rehabilitation Centre for girls, may we know if all the posts with regard to woman officers have remained the same and whether no provision has been made to recruit new officers to look after girls in the Rehabilitation Youth Centres? Can the hon. Prime Minister give an explanation?

The Prime Minister: Well, this is what after discussion with the relevant Ministries we have agreed to because there are limits, I believe. I am told that there is no justification because there are few inmates only.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dayal!

Mr Dayal: At page 103, item 22090 - *Security*. May we know which aspect of security it is? We know that there is a big problem of security in our prisons' infrastructure.

The Prime Minister: Well, this is for the rental of security alarm system for Probation Headquarters at Beau Bassin which is payable to Brinks.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: At page 103, under Item 22120 - *Fees*. Peut-on avoir les détails sur les *fees* qu'on va payer?

The Prime Minister: Fees payable to Chairperson - Rs1,995; member - Rs890; Secretary - Rs1,225 per sitting, as per PRB Report 2016. This will include also the Central Probation Committees which are held once yearly. The Chairperson is a Master and Registrar

of the Supreme Court. And members are Magistrates of the Intermediate and District Courts, Commissioner of Police, Commissioner of Prisons and representatives of Ministries. The Secretary is the Commissioner of Probation and Aftercare Service. There are also the District Probation Committees which are held twice yearly. The Chairperson is a Magistrate and the Secretary is a Probation Officer. Then, there is also the Rehabilitation Youth Centre Board of Visitors. The Chairperson is Mrs Premila Balgobin. The members are Mr S. Surat, representative of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training; Mr Dabydoyal, representative of Ministry of Youth and Sports, Mr Moideen, representative of the Probation and Aftercare Service, Mrs Touvent, Mrs Nahaboo, Mrs Mootoosamy, Mrs Rajiah and Mr Ramdoss.

Vote 4-5 Reform Institutions and Rehabilitation (Rs109,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

(11.56 p.m.)

Vote 4-6 Police Service was called.

The Chairperson: Page 106! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In fact, on this page I have a few questions, but I take it that we will go one by one. Under Item 21110.001 - *Principal Police Medical Officer*. In 2017, there was one. Provision is made for 2, and yet, the estimate amount allocated remains more or less the same, Rs1.2 m. No provision is made for the Deputy Bandmaster. Have we abandoned the post? For the post of Woman Assistant Commissioner of Police, we are funding one for the year 2017/2018? The salary was Rs380,000 and now it comes to Rs916,000. May we know why this increase for one Woman Assistant Commissioner?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member has put a few questions. With regard to the post of Woman Assistant Commissioner of Police, I am informed that the vacancy will be filled by December 2017. For the Deputy Bandmaster, there are no eligible candidates for the time being.

(Interruptions)

There are two posts on the establishment, one funded and one unfunded. Fund has now been provided in the 2017/2018 Budget for the second unfunded post.

The Chairperson: Hon Uteem!

Mr Uteem: I have two questions. I will take one by one. Under Item 21110.001 - *Police Constable*, the number was 969 for last year and for this year it is 969. Same thing for Woman Police Constable; it is 89 last year and 89 this year. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister where has provision been made to recruit 583 additional Police Constables as have been announced at paragraph 247 of his Budget Speech?

The Prime Minister: I don't have it here. They are in other programmes. We will have to find out which programmes. It is not here.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we take a question from hon. Ganoo.

Mr Ganoo: At page 106, under the same item, Madam Chairperson, could the hon. Prime Minister clarify matters with regard to the Deputy Director General, National Security Service? There is no one in post this year. But I see the figure 1 in the column funded for 2017/2018. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the Deputy Director General has already been chosen or appointed?

The Prime Minister: Not yet, but it will be filled in due course.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 106, under item *Assistant Commissioner of Police*, may we know since when are these positions vacant?

The Prime Minister: Since when, I will have to find out. But I have here that two vacancies will be filled by December 2017.

The Chairperson: Page 107! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110.001-*Assistant Manager (Procurement and Supply)*, from four in 2017 to seven in 2018, and yet, the amount budgeted for, has reduced by nearly one million or five hundred thousand probably. We know that there is a big problem of uniform in the Police. We have increased the number of tailors from two to ten. The allocated sum has remained the same. Rs1.2 m., two tailors to ten tailors.

The Prime Minister: A selection exercise is being carried out for those tailors, whereas for Assistant Manager Procurement and Supply, the vacancies will be filled from officers with lower initial salary of the grade. The amount provided in 2016/17 was already for 10 posts of tailor.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I note that there will be recruitment under item 21110.001 - *Assistant Manager Procurement and Supply Officer* of 15 additional posts. This Procurement Department being a very important department, may we know whether provision has been made to include also training for these new employees?

The Prime Minister: In fact, those number officers to be posted to respective Ministries/Departments in respect of the Finance Cadre; the procurement and supply cadre and internal control cadre rest with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. So, they would already be trained officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 21110.001 - *Manager, Internal Control*, there was one in post in 2017, but since there is no more budget for this post. There is a budget estimates for Assistance Manager Internal Control. Can we have some clarification, please?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the posts for the number of officers will be filled and they rest under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Chairperson: Hon. Barbier!

Mr Barbier: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 107, item 21110.001, we have 6 *Head Cook*, 8 *Senior Cook*, 88 *Cook (Roster)*. My friends in the Police are very lucky, they have more cooks than a 5-Star hotel! May I know what they cook there?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Why do we need those cooks?

The Chairperson: No, what do they cook?

The Prime Minister: What I can say is that the offers of appointment have already been made to fill the vacancies in the grade of cook on roster. All the 88 cooks do not work at the same time. So, they will assume duty on 21 June 2017.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, item 21110.001 - *Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer*. There are 23 posts for next year, and yet the amount budgeted has reduced by Rs2.5 m., that is from Rs12.5 m. to Rs10 m. I take it that this is a very important post in the Police. It has increased, but the amount budgeted has reduced.

The Prime Minister: I will need to get the information. The filling of the vacancies is made from officers with lower salary.

The Chairperson: Page 108! Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Item 22030 - *Rent, .007 Rental of Lines for CCTV and other Security Network*, from Rs68 m. to Rs98 m. Can the hon. Prime Minister elaborate?

The Prime Minister: The Rental of Lines for CCTV and other Security Network system from Mauritius Telecom, MCML, CEB in connection with Close Circuit Television and Digital Communication System, Rs98 m. With regard to details of rental in connection with the CCTV and digital radios, I can circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Madam Chairperson, on the same item 22030.007 - *Rental of Lines for CCTV and other Security Network*. How does the hon. Prime Minister reconcile the fact that we are increasing the amount by almost half and in his Budget he announced a reduction in the price of lease line? Is that going to be extended to the Police Force as well?

The Prime Minister: Reduction in the price?

Mr Uteem: In the price of lease line for internet.

The Prime Minister: Well, that is for the companies that are going to buy in bulk. The Police are different, I suppose. If they are able to enjoy the same facilities, so much the better!

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 21110.004 - *Allowances*, there is an increase of about 50%, can we have some clarification?

The Prime Minister: It is provision for payment of acting special allowance to VIPSU staff, personnel, special medical service allowance, bodyguard, clothing, commuted

allowance to VIPSU and police headquarters staff, detective, extra duty, public holiday, rent, responsibility on call allowance to police medical officers, risk, trade pay, technician pay, responsibility and disturbance, drivers allowance and night duty allowance. The increase is due to an increase in night duty allowance as per PRB recommendation.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The question of allowance, we find it on all the items in the Police Force. You will see it is on the Crime Control and Investigation, on the Road and Public Safety. So, may I know how are these allowances paid, because we have been informed that allowances are paid after six or seven months, on a discriminatory basis sometimes. How does this function in the Police Force? We make allocation allowance for each department of the Police, but is it paid to the one who needs it, *celui qui le mérite*?

The Prime Minister: I can get the information upon which criteria is being used to pay allowances in the different Units of the Police and I can circulate.

(Interruptions)

Payment after the return from each Unit and Branches. That does not answer the question. We will circulate the criteria.

The Chairperson: Page 109, hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: With regard to item 22900.973 – *Expenses i.c.w. Safe City Project*, can we have some details about this project?

The Prime Minister: Expenses in connection with Safe City, so, the provision is made for the installation of smart cameras on major public areas, main roads, motorways, pedestrian walkways and main traffic centres.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. Item 31122.805 - *Acquisition of Security Equipment*, je vois que dans le budget 2017/18 il y a une somme de R 30 m. qui a été allouée, je voudrai savoir si c'est pour équiper les policiers qui sont en poste pour protéger mieux les citoyens ?

The Prime Minister: (a) it is for communication equipment that is, purchase of additional digital radios terminals for the Digital Radio Communication System and, (b)...

(Interruptions)

805! Yes, that is for that, and (b) other security equipment that is, provision for purchase of weapons, rifles and pistols for the Central Armory SSU and NGC.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On page 109, item 31132.401 – *e-Government Projects (b) Crime Occurrence Tracking System (COTS)*, the project was Rs191 m. may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this project has been completed, is it operational and who is manning this project now?

The Prime Minister: COTS has been completed but for who is managing it, I don't have this detail. I will have to get the information and circulate but it has been completed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam. On the same item but at paragraph (c) *Upgrading of Passport Personalisation System...*

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: 31132.401 paragraph (c), *Upgrading of Passport Personalisation System* Rs108 m. May we know exactly what are we thinking about, how personalised the passport will be, what data there will be on that passport and what use of the data on the passport will be made and whether tender has been launched for the contract of allocating the passport because provision is made for Rs5 m. although not for next year but for the year after? So, what does the Government have in its mind with regard to this passport?

The Prime Minister: With a view to enhancing security at our borders and to meet the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation, it has been decided to introduce the use of biometric passports.

The Passport and Immigration Office has sought a quotation for a biometric passport issuance system from the firm Global Enterprise Technologies Corporation, a US based company which is the present supplier of passports for Mauritius.

The Mauritius biometric NIC case is still under legal review and as such, the biometric passport project is still on hold.

(Interruptions)

It is on hold.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31122 on capital expenditure, *Standard Equipment for Police*, can the hon. Prime Minister elaborate what are the standard equipment?

The Prime Minister: Expandable batons, handcuffs, torches, light, federal streamers, tactical belts, ballistic goggles, night vision goggles, first aid kits, Alcometers, scene of crime toolkits, anti-riots kits.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry, page 110!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. L'item 22030 – *Rent, .001, Rental of Building*, il y a une somme de R8 m. qui a été allouée est ce qu'on pourrait avoir des détails sur quelles sont les *buildings* ?

The Prime Minister: Rental of buildings, payment of rent for premises occupied by Police Department at Bain des Dames, Camp Diable, Vallée Pitot, Pamplemousses, Cent Gaulettes, l'Escalier, Trou Fanfaron, Pope Hennessy, Petit Gabriel and Grande Montagne.

Then there is also rental of equipment, payment to Mauritius Telecom for the rental of fibre optic and HDSL lines in connection with Crime Occurrence Tracking System, the Eastern and Central Division, Southern Division, Northern Division and Port Louis Division.

The Chairperson: Page 111, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900.001 - *Uniforms*, Rs15 m. was budgeted for the last financial year, can we know if the total amount has been spent for the purchase of uniforms and can we also have the name/s of the supplier/s?

The Prime Minister: I am waiting for the information. Can I have another question?

The Chairperson: Yes, we can take the question, hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31112, can the hon. Prime Minister inform us where matters stand with regard to Camp Diable Police Station and L'Escalier Police Station?

The Prime Minister: I see Camp Diable Police Station is on the list but I have to find out also.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: May we take another question? Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: I have two questions but I will start by one. Under item 22060.014, *Maintenance of CCTV Cameras in Police Stations*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister as at today how many CCTV cameras in Police Stations are not working and in particular whether the cameras which were not working in the Moka Police Station where there was a Policeman who was found dead in his cell, have been repaired?

The Prime Minister: Well, I will need to get that information but, in the meantime, for the Camp Diable Police Station the contract has already been awarded and for L'Escalier procurement of land is in progress.

For the CCTV, not yet installed, there is a new project which is at tender stage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Regarding the Construction of Police Stations, item 31112, the Bain des Dames Police Station, there is a project value of Rs20 m. but there is no budget for the next two years and it is only starting in 2018. Can we know why because this is a priority project for the constituency?

The Prime Minister: For Bain des Dames, we are waiting the vesting of land.

Mr Baloomoody: Following the question of my learned friend, hon. Uteem, with regard to CCTV Cameras in Police Station, the hon. Prime Minister just answered that they have not been installed yet. But we are talking about maintenance! How can we have in our Budget an item under Maintenance, when the cameras have not been installed? Either it is for new installation, but it cannot be for maintenance under item 22060.014 *Maintenance of CCTV Cameras in Police Station*. So, can we have some clarification on this issue? In the meantime, I will put another question on page 111, under item 31112.014 – *Construction of*

Regional Detention Centres, where one is supposed to be in Piton and one in Rose Belle. May we know where matters stand with regard to these two detention centres?

The Prime Minister: For the construction of regional detention centre at Piton, the project value of Rs75 m. - well, I will have to find out. For upgrading of CCTV, provision made for payment for initial works at Moka detention centre and Line Barracks detention centre. The maintenance is for Moka detention centre and the Line Barracks.

Mr Baloomoody: Not for detention centres! The CCTV cameras were mentioned for Police Stations. There is a difference between a detention centre and a Police Station. I have been to both, I know the difference.

The Prime Minister: Well, this is the information I have been supplied with. Piton detention centre, the designed is being finalised. Rose Belle, it is being considered at a later stage.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Quirin: Madam Chairperson, at page 111, under item 31121.801 - *Transport Equipment, Acquisition of Vehicles*, Rs44.3 m. for the last financial year. May we have a breakdown of this amount?

The Prime Minister: Here, I have items centralised under the Sub-Head 4-601. It is a long list of items which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Page 112! Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: I am on item 22060 – *Maintenance - Vehicles and Motorcycles*. Since there is no in-house maintenance for the Police Department now, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there is quotation, procurement, and which is the service provider for these facilities now?

The Prime Minister: Maybe, we can have another question in the meantime.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody! Page 112!

Mr Baloomoody: On the issue of Road and Public Safety, I am looking at the list.

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Let me take it on Personal Emolument. I understand we have a gentleman from an island, where they drive on the opposite side of the road where we drive, and he is supposed to consult us, to advise us how to drive on our road. He is supposed to advise the Police to advise us how to drive. I do not see his emoluments on this Budget for Road and Public Safety.

Now, if he is not in that Budget, is there a sort of collaboration between the Road and Public Safety Unit and that gentleman who is a foreigner, who will come to tell us how to drive on our road? Well, he is an expert in driving on the opposite side of the road when we drive on the left! So, may we have some clarification on this issue?

The Prime Minister: Well, if the hon. Member does not find the item on the estimates, then it is not on the estimate.

(Interruptions)

What collaboration? The question must be related to an item on the estimate. The hon. Member is talking about collaboration! He cannot just come and talk about general collaboration.

The Chairperson: It is not on this item. It is on another item in another Ministry. Pages 113 to 129! No Questions!

Vote 4-6 Police Service (Rs8,627,400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 4-7 Prison Service was called.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: The hon. Member had a question? Yes, but I am looking at all the requests; you do not have any. You have not given your name. You need to give your name. Anyway, I will allow you one question for Prison Service. I am sorry, hon. Baloomoody! Let me tell you that you have been giving your name. Since we have started for each page, we have the names. Over here, we do not have any names for any page. That is why I have gone through. So, I will allow you a question for the Prison Service.

Mr Baloomoody: So I will ask questions on pages 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126 and 127. I am giving advance notice.

The Chairperson: You had an arrangement; you were working on that arrangement now you change the arrangement.

Mr Baloomoody: You are going too fast, Madam Chairperson. I was discussing with the hon. Prime Minister. You have turned four pages under the item Police. Now, coming to the Prison Service, I will take it on Personal Emoluments.

The Chairperson: Prison Service, which page you are going?

Mr Baloomoody: Page 121! I will ask a general question on the Personal emoluments of the Commissioner. It will be a general question. Can we know from the Commissioner of Prisons, the number of complaints he has received from inmates in the Police with regard to prison brutalities?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I believe questions must be asked in relation to item on the estimate.

The Chairperson: We are on page 121. Hon. Member, you asked a question on 21110. So, what is your question?

Mr Baloomoody: My question is about the Assistant Commissioner of Prisons (Trades). May we know why these posts have not been filled?

The Chairperson: That is better.

The Prime Minister: There is no qualified candidate in the post as at date.

Mr Baloomoody: May we know when the post was advertised and what are the qualifications required for this post? That is interesting! I might even apply!

The Prime Minister: But you might not be qualified, you know! It is two years' service as Superintendent of Prisons So, you see, you are not qualified!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: At page 121, under *Compensation of Employees, Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer*, there is an increase ...

The Prime Minister: Under which item?

Mr Uteem: On the same page 121, towards the bottom, *Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer* - four before the last line – there is an increase from 3 to 4. However, there is a decrease in the budgeted amount from Rs2,286,000 to Rs1,848,000. So, may we know why we are increasing the number, but decreasing the budget?

The Prime Minister: The decrease in provision is due to the decrease in a number of posts.

Mr Uteem: It cannot be. It is an increased from 3 to 4. How can we have an increase from 3 to 4 and the hon. Prime Minister is saying that there is a decrease in the number.

(Interruptions)

It is the same item 21110.001 - *Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer* in post three, funded four. The Estimates for last year is Rs2.2 m. and next year it is Rs1.8 m.

The Prime Minister: The decrease in provision is due to officers with lower salary in the grade joining the department.

The Chairperson: Page 122!

Mr Baloomoody: Under item *Management Support Officer*, 21 for this year, projecting 21 for next year and yet we have reduced the sum allocated to that item. Same for Security Guard, 3 this year and 4 next year and, yet again, we have reduced the sum allocated to that item from Rs892,000 to Rs778,000. Can we know why?

The Prime Minister: I believe it is new officers joining the service. So, I believe it is again because of lower salary in the grade.

Mr Armance: Madam Chairperson, on page 123, under item *Prison Officer/Senior Prison Officer*, where we are funding 902, but the budget estimates is less than Rs1 m. Can we have some clarification?

The Prime Minister: It is for vacancies reported to DFSC on 25 April 2017. They are not filled.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 123, under *Prisons Pharmacy Technician (New)*. It is a new post, but no provision has been made.

The Prime Minister: The scheme of service is being worked out.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: On page 124, under item 22060.003, *Maintenance of which Plant and Equipment*. I want to know which type of plant and equipment are we maintaining.

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I have a long list of Plant and Equipment which I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 31112.411 - *Upgrading of Prisons (c) Other Prisons*. May I have a list from the hon. Prime Minister about which other prisons are being upgraded?

The Prime Minister: Other prisons do not mean that there is construction of prison. It means lightings at different institutions, ventilation system at the Eastern High Security Prison (EHSP), slaughtering house for chicken at EHSP, canopy system at EHSP, association yard for the boys at CYC, upgrading of kitchen at Richelieu Open Prison and Petit Verger Prison, absorption pits at Richelieu Open Prison, security fencing at Richelieu Open Prison, renovation of four dormitories for detainees of Richelieu Open Prison, poultry shed at Richelieu Open Prison and dog compound and inlying room for dog handler at Grand Rivière North West Prison.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item, *Upgrading of Prisons, (b) Correctional Youth Centre for Girls*. It was in the headlines recently. At the Correctional Youth Centre no provision has been made for the upgrading of that prison. The Ombudsperson for Children has made a report and it even went public to say about the situation in that prison with regard to the girls. May we know why no sum has been allocated for upgrading of that prison?

The Prime Minister: In the first instance, it is a renovated building in the compound of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre (RYC) at Barkly, Beau Bassin and it was used for that purpose. The Correctional Youth Centre for girls was launched on 27 April 2016. The Centre is operational since 11 May 2016.

(Interruptions)

This is what I am being told. Because of repeated incidents which occurred at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre, a policy decision was taken to relocate some of the difficult RYC girls, so as to bring a peaceful and conducive environment for both staff and inmates of good behaviour.

I am also informed that a sum of Rs1 m. is provided under reforms of RYC following that incident.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I wish to intervene on item 31122 ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo, do you have a question?

Mr Ganoo: Yes. I am waiting for some order in the House for me to ask my question. In the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister, when dealing with the issue of combatting scourge, he mentioned the scanners which were to be bought and placed in the prison. Can we know whether this proposal falls within item 31122.805 - *Purchase of Security Equipment* and, if not, under which item are these scanners which the hon. Minister suggested should be purchased for the prisons?

The Prime Minister: It is planned to procure the undermentioned equipment for 2017/2018. I am told that because the acquisition will be for arms and ammunitions, handcuffs, leg chains, body scanners for the Eastern High Security Prisons, Melrose and Beau Bassin Prisons.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Merci, Madame la présidente. Sous l'*item 31122.805 – Purchase of Security Equipment*. C'est à peu près les mêmes questions posées par l'honorable Ganoo en ce qui concerne les équipements, tels que les détecteurs de drogue et toutes sortes d'objets qui entrent dans les prisons. Est-ce que provision a été faite dans ce budget pour attaquer tous ces problèmes ?

The Chairperson: This is the same previous question.

The Prime Minister: I have just replied to this question.

Vote 4-7 Prison Service (Rs799,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that you do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Madam Speaker in the Chair, Madam Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – CREOLE LANGUAGE

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Madame la présidente, j'avais inscrit en mon nom une question parlementaire le 18 avril de cette année-ci, où je demandais au Premier ministre si le gouvernement envisageait d'amender la Constitution et les *Standing Orders* de l'Assemblée nationale afin de permettre l'utilisation de la langue créole mauricien au sein de l'hémicycle.

Faute de temps, l'honorable Premier ministre ne répondit pas à cette question ce jour-là. Malheureusement la réponse n'a jamais été déposée à la bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale depuis le jour où j'avais posé la question. Cette demande, Madame la présidente, d'introduire la langue créole au sein de l'hémicycle ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. Une telle proposition a été faite déjà dans le passé et j'y reviendrai.

Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui cette revendication devient plus que pertinente après que la décision a été prise, comme nous le savons tous, pour que les débats parlementaires soient télévisés et diffusés en direct. Madame la présidente, la raison d'être de

mon intervention aujourd'hui réside dans le fait qu'une quasi-totalité des mauriciens parlent le créole et que, d'autre part, la majorité de nos parlementaires interviennent en anglais au Parlement. Il y a donc un *mismatch*, un décalage au niveau linguistique dans la communication entre nos élus et le peuple.

Comme nous le savons tous, Madame la présidente, il y avait malheureusement un blocage vis-à-vis l'utilisation de la langue créole, voir un préjugé basé sur une *misconception* que la langue créole peut être écrite de plusieurs façons ou des préjugés basés sur d'autres raisons sur lesquelles je ne m'attarderai pas. Madame la présidente, la situation a évolué et la langue créole est aujourd'hui pourvue de son lexique, avec le résultat que nous pouvons aujourd'hui distinguer entre des mots, des expressions qui, d'après moi, peuvent être classifiés comme *Parliamentary* ou *Non-Parliamentary*. La langue créole est aujourd'hui enseignée au *MIE*, à l'université de Maurice. Nous avons même un dictionnaire *Kreol Morisien*.

Madame la présidente, les universitaires et les chercheurs de l'université de Maurice ont même développé un logiciel d'*Auto correct* pour corriger le créole sur le *Microsoft Word*. Le créole mauricien s'affiche aussi sur le moteur de recherche *google.mu*. Donc, je fais ce pressant appel au Premier ministre de prendre en considération l'opinion, le vœu de la nation qui souhaiterait l'introduction de notre langue maternelle au sein de notre hémicycle. Je suis convaincu que ce même consensus est présent parmi la majorité des membres élus au sein de cet hémicycle.

Madame la présidente, vous seriez peut-être surprise d'apprendre, tout comme les membres de la Chambre, qu'en 1977, le *leader* de l'Opposition d'alors, Sir Anerood Jugnauth avait déposé un *Private Member's Motion* dans le même sens. C'est pourquoi, aujourd'hui, presque 40 ans après, je fais un appel à l'honorable Premier ministre pour lui demander de réfléchir sérieusement sur cette question. *Nou ti bizin kapav koz Kreol dans sa parlement-la, Madame la présidente, pour ki tou bann morisien kapav kompren...*

Madam Speaker: Not yet!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: ...*pou ki tou bann mauriciens kapav kompren se ki bann representan lepep p debatt, p diskite. Le kreol morisien est une belle langue, Madame la présidente. Cette question n'est aucunement dictée par des considérations politiques, elle est l'expression*

sincère de mon désir, du désir de mon ami, ici, à mes côtés, et je suis sûr du désir de tout le monde dans cette Chambre, pour permettre l'accès des débats à tous les Mauriciens. Cette démarche, Madame la présidente, pour montrer le respect *ki nou ena envers nou population*. *Sa demarche la pou favorise la transparence et pou montrer ki nou croire dan le concept de freedom of expression.*

Madam Speaker: Not as yet, hon. Ganoo. You cannot express yourself in creole now.

Mr Ganoo: C'est pourquoi, Madame la présidente, je fais un appel pressant à notre Premier ministre aujourd'hui. Je suis sûr qu'il a déjà ses idées propres à lui et je lui demanderai donc de réfléchir sur l'opportunité d'introduire la langue créole, d'amender les *Standing Orders*, d'amender la Constitution pour que tous les élus de cette Chambre puissent utiliser le créole à leur guise.

Je vous remercie.

The Prime Minister: As the House is aware, the proposal for the introduction of the Creole Language in the National Assembly has been the subject of several Parliamentary Questions in the past and, each time, emphasis was laid on the fact that there are a number of issues that would have to be addressed before introducing the Mauritian Creole language in the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker, in a statement made in the House in April 2008 in the context of Parliamentary Question B/76, the hon. Member himself stated that we must consider introducing the Creole language in the National Assembly in a gradual manner and that we should start by envisaging using it in schools in the first instance.

Likewise, in his reply made to Parliamentary Question B/169 on 23 April 2013, the then Prime Minister also emphasised the fact that there are a number of implications that will need to be addressed before one can contemplate the formal use of Kreol language in the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, the Mauritian Kreol language has been introduced as an optional subject in primary schools since 2012. The language has also been given due recognition as a subject in the context of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Programme.

The teaching of *Kreol Morisien* has been made possible following the elaboration of its orthography, grammar and dictionary and the following documents have been produced accordingly -

- (i) *Lortograf Kreol Morisien;*
- (ii) *Gramer Kreol Morisien; et*
- (iii) *Diksioner Morisien.*

In 2017, the teaching of Mauritian Kreol language has been rolled out in the primary cycle and is being offered as an optional subject across Grades 1 to 6. A formal assessment will be carried out in October 2017.

I am informed that some 2,960 pupils of Grade 6 will be sitting for *Kreol Morisien* at Primary School Achievement Certificate Assessment in 2017. *Kreol Morisien* will also be offered as an optional subject at Grade 7 (that is formerly Form I) in 2018 and will be covered during the full Nine Year Continuous Basic Education Programme. Students taking *Kreol Morisien* will be assessed at the level of the National Certificate of Education (NCE) Assessment in 2020 at the end of Grade 9.

It is considered that at this stage, the Mauritian Kreol literacy among the youth, taking into account the proper use of orthography, grammar and vocabulary, has been developed at the level of pupils of primary schools up to Grade 6. The University of Mauritius has also offered a degree programme covering kreol studies.

This process is being sustained and my Government is providing the necessary resources for the teaching and promotion of *Kreol Morisien* in schools.

Madam Speaker, in the event that the language is used for official purposes, it has to be spoken and written and recorded while respecting its orthography, grammar and vocabulary in line with the published documents.

It is therefore imperative that, at all levels, we adopt the standardised written system and acquire proper communicative as well as social linguistic and cognitive competencies. The teaching and learning process and training should be pursued and facilitated incrementally and over a period of time so that people can develop a mastery of the language.

This process will also ensure use of a harmonised version of written Kreol among the population at large.

Madam Speaker, apart from the language issue, other arrangements, both administrative and logistics, especially in terms of appropriate IT hardware and software will have to be put in place before contemplating the introduction of Mauritian Kreol language in the National Assembly.

Madam Speaker, the Mauritian Kreol language being a unifying factor in our rainbow nation, Government will consider its introduction in the National Assembly once all the issues are carefully examined and thrashed out and all the necessary pre-conditions are met.

Thank you.

At 00.55 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 10.00 a.m.