



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 10 APRIL 2015

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

Institutions

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Hon. Jayeshwur Raj Dayal, CSK, PDSM, QPM	Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 20 of 2015

Sitting of 10 April 2015

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 2.30 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Housing and Lands -

- (a) The Cadastral Survey (Land Surveys) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 44 of 2015).
- (b) The Cadastral Survey (Land Surveys in Rodrigues) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 45 of 2015).
- (c) The Cadastral Land Survey (Registration of Memorandum of Survey and Survey Report in Rodrigues) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 46 Of 2015).

B. Ministry of Local Government -

- (a) The District Council of Savanne (Fees for Classified Trade) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 47 of 2015).
- (b) The Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes (Markets) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (Government Notice No. 48 of 2015).

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION
ROCHES NOIRES MEGA PROJECT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Roches Noires Mega Project referred to in the 2015-16 Budget Speech, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain and give details thereof, indicating –

- (a) if an Environment Impact Assessment Licence and an Integrated Resort Scheme certificate have been delivered therefor;
- (b) the name of the owner and promoter thereof, indicating if he has been delivered with –
 - (i) an authorisation to purchase the land concerned therewith; and
 - (ii) registration as an investor, and
- (c) if the Department of Civil Aviation and the Prime Minister's Office have objected thereto.

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr S. Lutchmeenaraidoo):

Madam Speaker, on 15 September 2005, the Board of Investment received an application from Roches Noires Resorts and Residence Ltd for an IRS Certificate for an integrated development, comprising of two hotels, a golf course, chalets, marina and golf villas, and a business park on freehold land of an extent of 352 Hectares at Roches Noires.

The application was submitted on behalf of the Élan Group, a South African enterprise which had developed several integrated property development projects in South Africa.

The promoter proposed to acquire the plot of land from the local owners, Grand Lake Ltd, represented by the Fon Sing Group.

After all Ministries concerned had examined the project, a Letter of Comfort was issued on 06 December 2005 to the promoter, in line with the then established procedures at the Board of Investment (BOI). The purpose of the Letter of Comfort was to enable the promoters to commit funds to finalise the detailed Master Plan of the project and submit technical details to enable BOI to issue an Investment Certificate under the Integrated Resort Scheme.

On 09 October 2006, BOI was informed by Élan Group that Élan Group had withdrawn from the proposed IRS project and that the new promoters were a consortium led by Jean Marie Bain.

On 30 April 2007, BOI issued a Letter of Intent to Roches Noires Resorts and Residence Ltd based on a new Master Plan which included a marina.

Concerning part (a) of the question, the Ministry of Environment issued, on 30 May 2007, an EIA License for the project. An IRS certificate was issued on 13 November 2007.

As regards part (b) of the question, the land of 352 Hectares was originally owned by Grand Lake Ltd, whose main shareholder was the Fon Sing Group. Two other small adjoining plots of 4.22 Hectares belonging to Société Yajna and 0.7 Hectare belonging to Mr S. Ghurburrun, were subsequently purchased and integrated in the project. So, the total extent of land for the project amounted to 358 Hectares.

The main promoters consist of a consortium led by Mr Jean Marie Bain with Cassiopee (Ile Maurice) Ltée as main shareholder.

Concerning part (b) (i) of the question, on 30 October 2007, under the Non-Citizens (Property Restriction) Act, the BOI issued an authorisation to the IRS Company allowing it to acquire the 358 Hectares of land at Roches Noires.

As regards part (b) (ii) of the question, the BOI had issued to Roches Noires Resorts and Residence Ltd, a Registration Certificate as investor on 30 October 2007.

Madam Speaker, the IRS Company informed the BOI on 11 February 2010 - three years later - that it could not raise finance and service its loans due to financial difficulties and asked permission to sell 90 Hectares, from the 358 Hectares acquired in 2007, to local investors who want to carry out a residential *morcellement*. The Board of Investment rejected the request.

On 03 May 2010, Barclays Bank, holder of various fixed/floating charges on the assets of the IRS Company appointed Pricewaterhouse Coopers Ltd as Administrator of the IRS Company.

Messrs Bonieux and Lutchumun were appointed in March and April 2011, as ‘Receivers and Managers’ of Roches Noires Resort and Residence Ltd.

On 05 April 2012, the Board of Investment revoked the IRS certificate it had issued to the Company.

Following a bid exercise the receiver-manager received a pre-sale agreement of the property with the YIHE Group from China on 04 September 2012.

The YIHE Group, established in 1992, has been involved in the development and operation of large scale master planned communities, luxury residential projects, hotels and property management and education industry in China. The company had invested in some 40 projects in seven major cities across China.

It has also property development projects in Sydney in Australia, and Boston and Los Angeles in the USA.

The YIHE Group incorporated the Island Summer Palace Ltd in Mauritius and submitted a business plan in respect of an IRS Certificate on 01 March 2013.

The project is planned to be implemented in three phases.

Phase 1 includes: A hotel and leisure zone, a commercial zone, a business zone, a convention centre and a waterfront residential area.

Phase 2 includes: a golf course, golf villas and a club house.

Phase 3 includes: low-rise residential units, a retirement village and an education hub.

The project will require investments of some MUR 44 billion.

I must inform the House that a delegation of the YIHE Group led by its Chairman, Mr He Jianliang arrived in Mauritius this morning to finalise discussions. We have proposed to the YIHE to go for a Smart City Concept rather than an IRS because we want to avoid the “Rich Ghetto” concept linked to IRS and RES.

Concerning the environment aspects, of the 358 Hectares involved in the project, the wetlands and the barachois will be kept in their current state of natural habitat. Those account for some 100 Hectares of land. There will be no construction on those land areas and all the

endemic trees and plants will be preserved and new endemic plants will be grown. I have explained this issue of environment because there are objections and, rightly so, as to the non-protection of the environment there. Therefore, we have seen to it that the whole ecology and environment of this place be preserved totally.

As regards part (c) of the question, on 29 May 2013, *les choses se gâtent* the Department of Civil Aviation informed the Board of Investment, that the proposed site falls within the area for the second runway and as such construction should not be allowed in the event of implementation of the northern airport project.

This was clearly a pretext found by the former Government to stop this huge project, *et les mauvaises langues prétendent que le campement de l'ancien Premier ministre qui est juste en face et c'est la raison réelle qui avait motivé, donc*, the interdiction to go ahead with the project.

So, quite recently, this year, following – following a Cabinet Paper, we went to Cabinet – Cabinet discussions, the Department has reviewed its decision as no second runway is envisaged on this plot of land.

So, Madam Speaker, this project dates back to 2005 and met with a lot of obstacles on its way. So, we are pleased to inform the House that we are on the point of finally kicking off the project with the delegation presently in Mauritius

Mr Bérenger: This was presented as something new, one of the Smart Cities and so on, and what we learn now is that it is an IRS project, known project, going back to 2007, but marketed as a new Smart City and so on, in the Budget Speech. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development, am I right in saying that an EIA certificate was granted to the owners at that point in time in May 2007 and an IRS certificate in November 2007? Am I right in saying that, in fact, the EIA certificate has lapsed and whether a new request has been put in and now, we have learned today that the IRS certificate has been revoked? So, can we know where matters stand as far as both are concerned, the EIA certificate and the IRS certificate?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: As far as I know, both have lapsed. In fact, the question of IRS, Madam Speaker, we are not playing on words. Experience with IRS, up to now, has shown us that we have turned the country into areas, what I call real rich men's ghetto - ghetto for the rich - in the sense that those areas are fenced and reserved for a small class of

people. We feel, in Government, that this type of approach to development is the wrong one because we are isolating from the country, large groups of people who are buying inside those IRS, and this explains the decision why we have decided to review the whole IRS concept and RIA concept also and come forward with new proposals which will make those projects more integrated in the social environment whereby if there is an IRS or RIA or anything, that people who are inside are not in boxes, first condition, and second, that the whole population should be in a position to buy, reside and live in those areas also. I think it is a beautiful concept, but we are coming out with it in one month - less than one month. The BOI presently is working on a new version of IRS which will be more integrated in the *paysage*, in the social environment and more integrated for a country that is multiracial and willing to live with others freely. That's the IRS and RES.

On the question of Smart Cities, this is a concept which is different. The concept is much bigger, much larger and we are here dealing with the development on 800 acres of land which is huge. So, we have not yet convinced the investors. I have met them this morning, the hon. Prime Minister met them this afternoon, we have not yet convinced them that the project should be converted into a Smart City, but they have agreed, in principle, to go for it. In which case, I would be very happy because then we are going to have a major development in Roches Noires which, accidentally, is my Constituency also and that of the hon. Prime Minister.

So, as far as I know, the EIA licence has lapsed, I asked my officer at the back to confirm and, as far as I know also, the IRS certificate also issued in 2007 has lapsed also.

Mr Bérenger: Yesterday, we learnt that discussions are still ongoing with Jin Fei to get that thing going. In principle, agreement has been obtained and today, we hear that, in principle, agreement has been obtained from the YIHE Group of companies. So, these two projects, amongst others, were announced when nothing is finalised yet.

In this case, can the hon. Minister also confirm that - we are talking about a project that goes back to 2005 and 2007; an IRS project, in fact, the whole thing went into receivership, as he has said, as from 2011 and the Chinese promoter, the YIHE Group, has come in for an IRS project? Now, he is being asked to change to a Smart City Project. Will the hon. Minister confirm that, in fact, more than Rs1.5 billion are owned by the owners in bankruptcy, to two banks in Mauritius and what is going to happen as far as this new YIHE Group investor is concerned?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Yes. Well, I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would love to know that I received a letter this morning that following the reception and

dinner of last night, that the Jin Fei group has agreed to our request and the hon. Prime Minister made it through. In fact, Jin Fei has agreed that the 75 acres of land that they will keep will be under the lease agreement and will not be sold. This is very important. So, the plot of land will not be sold. Second, the 425 acres of land will be returned to the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

I just want the House to note that those 425 acres are fully equipped land with roads, electricity, phone and I would value them at a minimum of Rs5 billion. So, I must say that we have made an incredible - re-established justice where there was injustice for the small planters - and second, we restituted back to the country, 425 acres of fully equipped land worth at least Rs5 billion. So, this is good news for the country and I am happy that it went through.

As for the second aspect of the question, if we can, naturally approve a new IRS for the group but, as I say, then we run the risk of having 800 acres of closed development reserved for the favoured few. I don't want this. We don't want this. We want a development where the whole nation will participate and where people can also buy - Mauritians and non-resident Mauritians also. So, it is in the interest, I think, of one nation country that we go for development which is more integrated.

I appreciate that this might take some time. It will take some time, but I have already this morning, the agreement, in principle, from the YIHE Group that they are agreeable to change their IRS to a full-fledged small Smart City. This is what they agreed to this morning. We are still under discussions and third, the hon. Leader of the Opposition put the question of the bankruptcy. PricewaterhouseCoopers, therefore, is the company that has taken over the lead. I need to say also that the one who went bankrupt, Mr Bain, has gone to Court three times objecting to the fact that this plot of land be taken over by the Chinese group. We put a condition this morning with the group that they will have to bear the full cost of any indemnity that might come out of a Court judgement established by Mr Bain in the process. So, we are now at a stage where Mr Bain might go to Court again, but where the promoter has accepted to take the full responsibility of whatever the outcome. So, I am covered at this level. We are covered also for the approval, in principle, of the Smart City to replace the IRS Project, and I think that things will move quite fast. That's my feeling today.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, discussions are still on to change the requests from Government to change from an IRS project to a Smart City project and now we hear that there are plenty of trouble in Court. Can I know from the hon. Minister - this is a thing that

goes back to 2005-2007 - when does he expect the project in one form or the other to start and to be completed?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, I am no magician. This project has been delayed since the Labour Government came to power in 2005. They have taken nine years and have done nothing, and I am being asked to give a date when the project will be completed. It will be completed as soon as possible.

Mr Bérenger: Even start, the hon. Minister can't say! Can I ask the hon. Minister not to get me wrong! I am not pushing for an IRS project, I am just pointing out that in the Budget Speech this was presented as a Smart City project, new project, whereas it goes back to 2005-2007, bankrupt as an IRS project. I am not pushing for an IRS project or whatever. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he understands that I don't hold a brief on behalf of those people?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: I fully understand the *soucis* of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. It is just that we are pushing through projects which have been sleeping in the drawers of the former Prime Minister. This is what has been happening. We are not inventing, reinventing nothing and we have promised no miracle. We are just saying that those files have been kept in drawers in the PM's office against the development of the country. You know, this project was going through in 2013. There was nothing to stop it. Then, suddenly the PMO said, "No, we have to stop the project because there is going to be – what - an airport there". We all know that there will be no airport in the North. Then they said: "No, there will be a second airstrip that will be completed further down once the airport is constructed". Then, as I told the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the information leaking out - *les mauvaises langues peut-être* - is that the only reason why the project was rejected was because the *campement* of the former Prime Minister was just opposite. We stopped the project, a development of 800 acres on the *caprices d'un Premier ministre*. This is what we have been doing. The number of projects which have been stopped like this is incredible. Yesterday, Jin Fei - people now take it for granted that we have worked through and retrieved 425 acres. That's easy to say. Who did it? We did it! We worked it through. We negotiated. We pinched them. There was arm-twisting also, and we did it because we had to decide. Yesterday, we had two meetings because there are two major projects now: one is at Médine which has been stopped because of secondary reasons - no real big reasons. First, is the education hub and the hon. Minister of Education yesterday took the decision personally to remove any obstruction at that level. Second, there was *un rail*, the old railway system that went through the project and the project was stopped because of this. The Médine project

which is a multi-billion project was stopped because one silly officer thought that this road track is *le patrimoine national*. Would you believe it? It is incredible what we have been doing in this country for the past years. Yesterday, my colleague, the hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands, had to intervene personally to ensure that Médine compensates the Government for this railway track, but does not stop development because there is a railway track there. We have been proceeding like this since we have taken over in December. People might think this is easy. We are implementing projects which have been kept in drawers for long. There are also other new projects which are developing and we are working on them, but I need to reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we are leaving no stone unturned to tell civil servants that they are not there to say no. Civil servants are there because they have to find solutions to problems. I told them yesterday and the day before also that I am not chairing a committee to listen to civil servants coming to the committee saying: ‘we can’t do this because of that’. I said: “No. My question is this: you are paid from public funds to find solutions, not to come to me and say there are problems”. This is our approach presently. This is the approach which is paying because those same officers now are returning back to their desk, are taking the same files and are okaying those files. I don’t want to make any imputation or any insinuation, but a lot of money has been stopping those projects in the past. Lot of bad money! Whether it concerns Jin Fei or whether projects are blocked – I come and say: why have they blocked those projects? - waiting for money before implementing or approving! I put the question because we are here trying to practise transparency. We are here for that. Sorry, I have taken some more time, Madam Speaker. I wish to apologise. I think that this need to be taken within the global approach that we are having now, that we are just opening up old files and getting them new again.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has made a very serious allegation that, in fact, the Civil Aviation, which, in those days, was under the Prime Minister’s Office, has objected because the previous Government used that as a pretext to stop the project whereas we know, right or wrong, that long-term the Civil Aviation has been arguing for years that we should keep that site in case there is need in five, ten, 20, 25 years for a second airport. Now, the hon. Minister is saying that this was a pretext. I repeat the Civil Aviation was under the Prime Minister’s Office. Can I know who was the Director of Civil Aviation when supposedly he came with that kind of pretext? Who is the Director of Civil Aviation now?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: That’s a good question to which I don’t have the answer. I will just ask my officers.

(Interruptions)

No, I don't have the answer. But for the airport, maybe the hon. Leader of the Opposition would wish to know whether this development will stop a new airport project. No! It is only a projected second airstrip further down the road, once the airport is constructed, that goes on this plot of land. So, even by approving that probably the second airstrip is being sacrificed, the plot reserved for the main airport has been kept.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know, therefore, if there is disagreement on that, there is a very serious allegation that it was a pretext from the previous Government and that now the Director of the Civil Aviation has revoked that decision taken by I don't know whom. If taken, can I put in a request that the correspondence between the Civil Aviation and whoever – Board of Investment or what have you - be laid on the Table of the Assembly as to when the objection was raised and when the objection has been lifted?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: That's a question to which I can't reply as Minister of Finance, but if the hon. Leader of Opposition comes with a formal question, I am sure that the hon. Minister concerned with the Civil Aviation will give the reply. Let me just add one thing. I must say one thing that the same officers who have been resisting those former files from those major projects are the same ones approving them today. I have to admit it, whether it be the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Housing, the officers have not changed. We have changed them. This is the difference. We have changed them into being more proactive and taking decisions. Therefore, I would not impute motives on the former Director of Civil Aviation. I don't know who he is or who is the new one, but if the question needs to be answered, I would ask.

(Interruptions)

Yes, but I don't have the reply. The hon. Leader of the Opposition can ask a substantive question.

(Interruptions)

It is secondary at the same time. I would say that, in all the Departments we are working with, our civil servants have been traumatised under intense pressure and that we are now using the same officers, speaking to the same officers and we are encouraging them to change their views on life and they are changing. I am happy with it.

Mr Bérenger: That is certainly a pretext, telling me that I need to put a formal question. When the question is put now, first, to give us a copy of the correspondence and secondly, to tell us who was Director of Civil Aviation when the objection was put and who is now that the objection has been raised supposedly?

My last question, Madam Speaker, will be - I do not think there are others – can we have any kind of time frame; can we know when we will have an answer from the YIHE Group from Guangzhou; do we have any indication when they will provide with an answer to the request from Government that we drop the IRS Project and that they should come forward with the so-called Smart City Project?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, it might take some time, but then, for a project of this magnitude, we are speaking of Rs44 billion of investment, I would not mind waiting for two or three weeks or even more. The issue is that, do we want Roches Noires to become an IRS or do we want Roches Noires to become a Smart City? I am convinced that Roches Noires is much better equipped to become, for the north of the island, a Smart City.

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2015) BILL

(NO. III OF 2015)

&

THE APPROPRIATION (2015-2016) BILL

(NO. IV OF 2015)

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

Question again proposed.

(3.04 p.m.)

Mr S. Rugoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or): Madam Speaker, let me, first of all, congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance and his whole team for the preparation and presentation of the Budget 2015-2016.

Madam Speaker, the Budget contains a list of measures. For sure, I am not an economist, but I have listened to the hon. Members, almost all of them. What I can conclude today is that there is unanimity that there are not thousands of options before us. But then, Madam Speaker, for sure, for us to be able to achieve the objectives enumerated in the Budget, there are a series of factors, I believe, which will have to be addressed as a priority to be able to attain those same objectives in the coming year, in the coming years. One among them, Madam Speaker, I believe is leadership.

Let us go a bit down memory lane, Madam Speaker. Not too far away in history, couple of months back, only last year, when there was that split in the alliance between the MMM and the MSM. I think it is important that the youth of this country get inspired by the action of our hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. What he did when there was that split, when everybody in the country was saying - MSM 3%? The perception was that MSM was nil. But Madam Speaker, the lesson we learnt, the signal that the population sent, I think the youth of this country should get inspired by it. And, Madam Speaker, me personally, there are, at least, five important lessons that I have learnt and I would like to convey it to this House and to the youth of this country. Madam Speaker, a leader cannot compromise on its principles and values. This is one.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, as somebody put it so clearly and I quote that “in a battle when you lose wealth, you lose a lot; when you lose a dear friend, you lose still more, but when you lose courage, you lose everything.”

Third, Madam Speaker, that humility is the best policy. *Pas d'arrogance!*

Fourth, Madam Speaker, reading and listening to theories of self-proclaimed gurus like Robin Sharma is not enough to understand the true qualities of a leader. And, Madam Speaker, that everything is not possible in politics when we see what we witnessed during these last few months, Madam Speaker. I have been reading a bit on Lee Kuan Yew and, I think, there is a very interesting citation that I would like to share with the House. Listen to what he said, Madam Speaker, maybe this can be a birthday gift to our Prime Minister today

“Even from my sick bed, even if you are going to lower me into the grave and I feel something is going wrong, I will get up.”

Madam Speaker, during the last electoral campaign, *l’Alliance Lepèp* made a pledge to the population that never again the Parliament in this country is going to remain closed for almost a year! We made a pledge to the population that never again institutions in this country would come to such a stage that the world would be about to call us a ‘banana republic’! Madam Speaker, we made a pledge to the population that we will bring back hope on our citizens and the youth of this country. We also made a pledge to the population, Madam Speaker, that we will bring back leadership in this country. We have been walking the talk, Madam Speaker. Parliament is meeting regularly, almost every day. Leadership is back in this country, Madam Speaker, we have promised transparency and good governance. This is what is happening. The cleaning campaign is on.

Madam Speaker, there has been a series of measures after the election: revision in pensions, revision in wages and exemptions in examinations of HSC and SC fees, but equally, Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, the clean-up campaign. All these measures, Madam Speaker, were not meant to win votes, because we should not forget that we are only at the beginning of our mandate. All these measures, Madam Speaker, are meant to win the heart of the people, because nobody knows it better than our hon. Prime Minister and even the hon. Minister of Finance that, Madam Speaker, for us to achieve this second economic miracle, it is important that the Government and the population of the country look in the same direction. That was not the case with the former Government, Madam Speaker. This explains the main reason why the former Prime Minister and his team were booted out of the Government.

Madam Speaker, let me come, now, a bit to the measures that have been announced in the Budget. But once again, I have been looking very briefly at the few ingredients that made Singapore come out from a third world to a first world country. I find, at least, four while doing some research works. There were, at least, these four factors that I would like to share with this House, and I believe that we are heading in the proper direction, Madam Speaker.

Among those factors, the first one, Madam Speaker, was upholding the rule of law. When we speak of this whole issue of transparency, good governance, I still remember I met the Minister of Finance in his office a couple of days back before the presentation of the Budget and he told me one thing: if we are to win the battle of this second economic miracle,

there is only one factor that is going to enable us to do it and that is transparency and I am totally in tune and agreeable with what he said on that day. We need to uphold the rule of law and this is what we are doing. We need to have meritocracy and transparency at all levels and ensure that separation of powers is effective.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, competitiveness of our people instead of only competitiveness of the nation - I think the priority is competitiveness of our people and I am extremely delighted to read in the Budget that the Minister of Finance has made, as proposed that young graduates - our youngsters - those who are today abroad have the possibility today after 10 years to come back to their country and build up that pool of experts that we badly need to face the challenges ahead. I will have to congratulate the Minister of Finance for this excellent measure which is far looking and very much in the interest of this country. So, competitiveness of our people is extremely important and I believe we also have to ensure that we keep the people, the qualified experts that we have here and prevent brain drain.

But, third, Madam Speaker, is also the question of image of our country. When we speak of branding of our country, we should not concentrate only on selling Mauritius as a tourist destination. Image is extremely important. I spoke of upholding the rule of law and competitiveness of our people. Third is the question of image, a full branding exercise of our country is extremely important and this is my proposal today - that we have to look at how we are going to sell our country. We cannot sell Mauritius only as a tourist destination. We need to sell it as a package and not only as a tourist destination. People can come here to invest, to stay, for stability reasons and for many other reasons, Madam Speaker. We need to concentrate on the image of our country and on how we are going to sell the country.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the fourth factor that has contributed in transforming Singapore into a first world country has been its emphasis on sustainability. As I was telling a friend the other day, if it would have been only for the former Minister of Public Infrastructure, he would have converted the Pamplemousses garden into a bus terminal, Madam Speaker!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I wish also to congratulate the Minister of Finance when we speak of sustainability for his measures relating to the CSR. But I am fully in tune with what my friend hon. Jhuboo yesterday stated that we have to be very careful on this issue of CSR. What is my proposal, Madam Speaker? I believe that we cannot leave it to the private sector to decide the way they are going to use their funds to finance projects through the NGOs. I think my friend hon. Jhuboo on the other side proposed yesterday that we need to target. I

believe that if we are to fight this battle against poverty, let us take two areas for example, housing and education, and all the funds be challenged through maybe the Ministry of Social Integration and those funds be diverted for specific projects to fight poverty. I believe we need to ensure that we optimise on those funds that are made available to the Government and to the country at large. I believe it would be an excellent tool to fight poverty if they are properly channelled and optimised.

Finally, Madame la présidente, let me come to ma vision pour mon pays. In my maiden speech, Madam Speaker, j'avais mentionné les trois axes de ma vision pour mon pays. J'avais mentionné l'importance d'une Ile Maurice libre et, aujourd'hui, avec ce gouvernement, Madam Speaker, on est fier et we can say that aujourd'hui ce pays respire la liberté. Je vais aussi parler de ma vision pour une Ile Maurice solidaire et avec toutes les mesures qui ont été annoncées dans le budget concernant la justice sociale, l'équité, Madam Speaker, je pense que le gouvernement et le pays vont dans la bonne direction et c'est en phase avec la vision que j'avais personnellement pour mon pays. Finalement, j'avais aussi mentionné l'importance de la durabilité qui est le troisième axe de ma vision.

Madam Speaker, a series of measures have been announced on sustainability as well, I am not going to come back to these measures. But, Madam Speaker, let me, before ending, make a humble appeal to all the Members of the House; our priority is Mauritius and we need to work together to ensure that we meet the four objectives together, whether it is Members on this side of the House or the other side. We need to work together hand-in-hand to ensure that the four objectives in this Budget are met.

Finally, Madam Speaker, God bless Mauritius. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

(3.20 p.m.)

Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of listening to many of the hon. Members who have intervened for this Budget of 2015. There are many new Members who have addressed this august Assembly. There are a lot of Members who have come back even as Prime Minister to hear us in this august Assembly and former Ministers.

I have had the pleasure of listening to a lot of you even though when I was not in Mauritius, reading the press, watching the debates online and I would like to take advantage of this opportunity I am given here today to say thank you to the many hundreds and thousands of civil servants who, each and every year, toil away until late into the night, help every single Government prepare not only the year's work in the background - that of

Government – but, specifically for every single Budget. I am of the view that there are some people who are the forgotten lot. There are some people who toil away and do the difficult jobs; officers of the Ministry of Finance, officers of every single Ministry and officers of a huge Ministry like the Prime Minister’s Office, who have such a difficult job and you, Madam Speaker, know it well. You have been there, you have toiled away in the past and you have shown that we have a civil service that we can count on and that do a fantastic job. Let me place that on record today! Let me also place on record the excellent job that not only you are doing, Madam Speaker, but that the officers, the Clerk of this august Assembly are also doing because those are things that seem to be forgotten. Those are things that seem to take another second seat, or even third, actually. Because at a time like this, at the Budget time, politicians of all regimes that come forward like to hear themselves talking. Basically, what they say, we have the impression that without a politician nothing can be done. But, in actual fact, my view is that the teamwork that exists between a politician and the Civil Service is what is of utmost importance. Without that, nothing works. So, it is, therefore, important and a honour that I pay homage to those thousands of civil servants.

I do not agree with what I heard the hon. Minister of Finance say today. For me, it was a lack of respect earlier on in today’s session when I heard him, at the PNQ, say that the civil servants, once upon a time, did not agree, and now they agree, and that it is them who make them do the job right. This is an attitude which I do not agree with because it shows a lack of respect for the integrity of the great majority of civil servants. I would humbly request that such remarks are not made against civil servants whom we owe - every single Mauritian; women, men and children - a lot to.

Madam Speaker, this message is for the youth; the young Members of Parliament who have come here. I consider myself as part of them, the same group, even though I have been here for slightly longer. It reminds me of time when we just won power in 2005, and I came here for the first Budget. Hon. Soodhun was on the opposite side. What did I say in my first speech? What a wonderful Budget! We have really made it! We have done everything that the people want! We have really done something amazing! My speech was so much critical about the previous regime between 2000 and 2005, saying that they have done nothing, whereas with this first Budget I congratulated the then hon. Rama Sithanen. And then, in 2010, I congratulated hon. Jugnauth for his excellent Budget, and later on, I congratulated hon. Xavier Duval for his excellent Budget.

(Interruptions)

I was congratulating everyone.

What I am trying to get at is a simple thing. Young Members, you have dynamism, you have energy, you have the wish to serve your country. Do not change. Keep that going. Be steadfast. Be strong and look forward. But what I would like to share with you - In my shortest experience, allow me in my most humble way, to share that with you. You see, any Budget for any regime, is but a declaration of intent. Whether it was Rama Sithanen presenting his Budget after the victory of 2005; whether it was hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo only this year; whether it was hon. Duval or hon. Ringadoo in the 70s or whether it was hon. Bérenger, it was a declaration of intent. And, yes, it is and was actually early days for me to congratulate everyone in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Now, with experience, I've stopped.

(Interruptions)

No. But let me just say that I congratulate this Government for having been bold enough to try to come up with things. Everyone's intention here is obviously not to do wrong, but to do good. Now, will the Government succeed, Madam Speaker? That is another set of questions.

As far as I am concerned, I remember the days when we used to live in a system, and my party, the Labour Party, from 2005 until 2010, where we heard a lot of what hon. Jhugroo just said: *capitaine bon!* In those days, when he was with us, he also said it for the former Prime Minister actually. He was the very one who said '*capitaine bon*' to the former Prime Minister. And, today, he is saying ...

(Interruptions)

I thank him for his honesty. He has just confessed, and he has made my task easier.

Now, what do the youth out there wonder when they listen to us? What do the youth out there think when they read our speeches, when they read Hansard; when they see hon. Jhugroo for a few months congratulating the former Prime Minister; when they see hon. Duval for a few years - let's say 90% of the mandate that he spent with us - congratulate the former Government and the former Prime Minister, and now say something else?

(Interruptions)

Oh, yes, we will get to that! I will leave that for the hon. Member. I will hear the hon. Member talking later on.

What I am trying to say here is that if only we could all stop toeing any line, and we just toe only one thing: our conscience and the interest of the nation. What I am trying to get at here is - I was reading a speech in the press, and that makes interesting reading - I am only looking at what we do as Members of Parliament. I was reading that, in 2005, at the time

when prior to the former Government coming to power, the unemployment rate - and the hon. Minister of Labour most probably would be happy to hear that - in 2005, prior to the elections of December, was of 9.6%. People in Mauritius say that people have a short memory. And we go on and on and say that today's unemployment rate is of such a figure that it makes it very dangerous for every single person in this country. That is true! It is a high unemployment rate of 8%. It is. But, then, what we seem to forget is what the unemployment rate was in 2005 at the time of the end of the mandate of an MSM/MMM government. It was 9.6%. Those are not my words. I am reading. That's not my research I am referring to. I am referring to a man who looks very smart in a photograph and who wears a beautiful tie, blue of colour: hon. Xavier Duval.

In that article that I read in *Le Défi*, he goes outright on 29 April 2012 to explain how his *bilan* is a positive one as Minister of Finance; having won prizes on the African continent, which I commend him for. Whatever he says here is a fact actually, but it is quite a pity that he is not here because I am sure he has got a lot of more things to do, as opposed to hon. Gayan who just seems to have vanished. But I am going to get that later on as long as my ipad keeps on having batteries. 9.6%!

Hon. Duval, in 2012, who sits next to the actual Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, today, only a few years back - not five, not six, not seven - only two and half years back and even less, goes on to say *que la croissance était à 2.7%, soit très légèrement supérieure à son taux de 2002 qui était de 1.6%*. So, he is very critical about the *bilan entre 2000 et 2005*. This is history.

What I am trying to get at here is because with a lot pride this young generation that we have in this august Assembly, with reason - and I said it: stay in the course, do not change, remain and be steadfast. Wish for the second economic miracle. Keep on fighting for it. With all our prayers, I hope we succeed - as well as those who are *moins jeunes* are basing themselves on the *précedent de* Sir Anerood Jugnauth as leader of the party. When he was Prime Minister, what did he leave behind? What is his record? And based on that – this is logical thinking – they are of the view that he has the ability to lead a new Government towards a new economic miracle. But though you guys, the youths, the new Members of Parliament are the only ones who believe that because Xavier-Luc Duval does not believe it.

(Interruptions)

I'll explain why he does not believe it and let me refer here ...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, please refrain from saying that.

Mr Mohamed: Sorry?

Madam Speaker: Please, refrain from saying that!

Mr Mohamed: Ok, sorry. I will not say that he does not believe it, I will just demonstrate it. Now ...

(*Interruptions*)

What did he say? He said, here –

« *Plus de 30,000 personnes avaient été licenciées dans la zone franche sous son leadership...*”

Referring here to Sir Anerood Jugnauth, *qui précise que le pays s'est remis économiquement sous Navinchandra Ramgoolam* ».

So, here, this new Deputy Prime Minister, whom I agree with, was of the view – a view which I share, a view which for a few months hon. Jhugroo shared, for a few months hon. Jugnauth shared; for many, many months hon. X.L. Duval shared – that, from 9.6% from the 90 or so thousands of people having lossed jobs, from 30,000 people having lossed jobs *dans le secteur du textile*, from 9.6% an economic growth of only 1.6 - *un taux de 1.6*. He is of the view that we have managed to overcome this hurdle, the difficulties that existed under *le régime de Sir Anerood Jugnauth*. Under which régime? Under Navinchandra Ramgoolam! Those are the words of the now Deputy Prime Minister; that is a fact. So, keep steadfast because there are not many people who share your views.

(*Interruptions*)

But then, again, when people concentrate too much on turning what they end up with is a headache and, right now, what we have seen here is the beginning of a headache because it is quite clear that the new Minister of Finance has opposing views to the former Minister of Finance, even when it comes to a simple issue as to whether or not there is a Ponzi Scheme in the British American Insurance *saga*. Simple thing! The hon. Prime Minister has been very clear, he's been steadfast, he has been consistent, he had said something from the beginning to the end, he has not changed - that is consistency. Whereas the former Minister of Finance of the previous Government, as opposed to the new Minister of Finance, and I don't mean hon. Jugnauth, I mean hon. Duval, he has been saying he cannot say there is a Ponzi Scheme. So, already itself not only is hon. X.L.Duval not in line with the thinking of the leader of this party, not in line with the thinking of the leader of the House, he is not in line with the thinking of the Minister of Finance of this Government! This is the mess in action. This is not democracy because if someone is not in line with the thinking of the leader of the alliance, if someone is not in line with the thinking of the Minister of

Finance who are the frontbenchers of a Government, there is only one thing he must do if dignity is still there, it is to leave...

(*Interruptions*)

When one has to decide on the issue of dignity, one has to stop and think. Instead what I hear when one refers to the very important question of believe or not believe, it is this desire to stick to one's seat, this desire to be steadfast and to hold on to the seat that one has, but not to think again about *les questions de principe*.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: I will go on ...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Mohamed: I can see that what I am saying is achieving its objective. What I am saying, Madam Speaker, is achieving its objective because I have hit a very sore point and the soreness I hear it now, in this august Assembly. How sore the point is and how I have managed to aim right! Now, with regard to '*Le Mauricien*' newspaper...

(*Interruptions*)

If you wish I'll put in that paper. I don't even have *to lire la fin* because *la fin* is just a simple thing, he was consistent in those days. Now with regard to hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Leader of the House, he, himself, in 2013, made statements to the press with regard to former Budgets. What I am trying to get at here is very simple. Once again, what do others out there think when they listen to us? Go from one direction to the other, from the other to another and then we just don't know where to go and then we keep on telling round and round and it gives us a spinning headache! That is what I am trying to get at and this is not a criticism against anyone in Government, but even against the Government I belong to. Let me make it clear – and in myself as well.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Mohamed: Is that clear? Myself as well!

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: But, at least, I manage and I have the courage to do that. Now, let me say something else. When I listened to the words and read the words of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister in a press article in 2013, he says –

“Il allègue que le grand argentier....”

And here, he refers to hon. X.L. Duval - I like the smile which I see on hon. Jugnauth and that is the attitude I like. This is a debate, we are just exchanging ideas and I love the smile that he comes up with because most probably he exactly knows what I am getting at and that I manage to do that. That's good - unless you are ickling him on the side there.

So, what I get is that he says –

« Il allègue que le grand argentier aurait annoncé des chiffres érronés lorsqu'il a abordé le dossier sur la pauvreté. Il n'y a pas 2% mais 10% de mauriciens vivant dans l'extrême pauvreté et cette situation ne cesse de se dégrader, a-t-il dit, sur le dossier du logement ... »

Sir Anerood Jugnauth goes on to criticise the former Government, consistently. We just hear the silence right now, we don't hear Members of the PMSD criticising at all Sir Anerood Jugnauth for having criticised their leader because, right now, *le silence est révélateur parce que, quand on dit que quelqu'un a avancé des chiffres érronés*, it is not a simple affair.

The Prime Minister of this country is a man of experience, he has occupied many positions, he has been someone who, prior to this, *était le garant de la Constitution* as President of the Republic; he was someone who was even at the independance talks. I remember he himself explained to me how he knew then my grandfather, Sir Abdul Razack Mohamed. So, he is a man of experience and when he uses words like '*le grand argentier vient de l'avant avec des chiffres érronés*', he measures the weight of every single letter and syllable of those words. He understands the importance of those words and this is not only a critical assessment, but it is a finding of guilt that he has passed here against *le former grand argentier*.

(Interruptions)

So, what I hear now, PPS hon. Abbas Mamode say, is precisely what I am getting at, that, out there, people will see that

(Interruptions)

Well, I am not putting anything of such a thing, '*tula*'. '*Tula*' would be in the singular. What I am trying to aim at is, '*tulæ*' which would be the plural. So, this is precisely what my reading showed us and what I must say is that, in those days, hon. Pravind Jugnauth and hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth spoke the same words. Even in an article, hon. Pravind Jugnauth said the same thing about the former Minister of Finance; he is the one who

followed up and said that *les chiffres, en ce qui concerne l'emploi étaient erronés* and the statistics that were being put forward by the former Minister of Finance *étaient erronés*.

Now, in my humble view, ...

(*Interruptions*)

If my hon. friend believes it is that, and if he takes it as a compliment so it was meant as a compliment. Good! There is consistency there but, unfortunately, there is a big 'but'.

(*Interruptions*)

There is! Just before I go into the main issues where I was going to try to as my hon. friend Jhuboo said yesterday, our aim - and all the other Members of the Labour Party have explained, here, in this august Assembly - here is not simply to come forward and to indicate to the Government where things are wrong and really make a big brouhaha, as they call it, make such a big mess out of it in order to show people what is wrong. What we will simply try to do, is to concentrate on certain issues which, in my view, have to be addressed and I'll only refer to those things as humble suggestions, and if in any way whatsoever, we manage to be able to help with those ideas and if you believe in your discretion as a Government, Madam Speaker, that they believe it is good enough to take on board, please feel free, because it is in the name of the people that we do it and no one else's.

But, it is important before we move forward that we are to realise truths, because we cannot move forward if the basis of our equation, the basis and the formula that we are going to use to move forward is based on erroneous facts. *Erroné*, as hon. Jugnauth, the Prime Minister rightly said whenever there is *élément erroné*, beware, even though I don't agree with him that the *chiffres* were *erronés*, because those are the very figures that are being used today by his Minister of Finance and Economic Development. So, it could not have been *erroné* at the time of - I was going to say Sir Gaëtan, but - hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, but it cannot now be *erroné* at the time of hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, it's the same figures. The unemployment figure truly was 9.6% in 2005, truly, and it is true that when I heard the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training when he last spoke, the quarterly figures for the last quarter of December 2014 show an unemployment rate of 7.8% and, when I came into office myself in 2010, we are talking about a figure of 8.5%.

So, the fact is we have to look at real statistics. We cannot try to pretend that we are going to find solutions to the problem of unemployment; we are going to try to bring new measures for training, when we try to look away from the truth and look at the real figures. The real figures dictate to us that there has been a drop in the unemployment rate. If we are to

talk about 2005 to 2010, we are going to say it was 9.6% in 2005 and it was almost 8% in 2014. As we speak today, it is not more than 8% and if that is the case, the unemployment rate ever since we have been in power between 2005 and 2010 has gone down, but there are two other issues that were worrisome. The unemployment rate for women did also go down and, here, I refer to statements made by the then Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Duval, who showed clearly that the unemployment rate of women went down when he was Minister of Finance, but the only unemployment rate that went up above the 25 points was the unemployment rate for those who are the youths, described in our legislation as the youths, the less than 25. Those are the real issues and those youths, they do not want to go to work in industries like textile industries.

Hon. Showkutally Soodhun was the former Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and he will recall between 2000 and 2005 when he himself tried a new scheme in order to tackle this issue of loss of employment in the textile industry, *le démantèlement* of the preferential agreements that we had, that caused such a loss of employment. He tried the re-training and re-skilling scheme. I remember those days and that re-skilling scheme, it was done with an intention of ensuring that our textile factories, our seafood hub, the new call centres going to come up, the IT sector, that people could re-train and go to the sectors. Unfortunately, the intention was good, but the reality is that it did not take on; people did not put in the effort that was required to use the facilities given for re-training in those days. That is the truth and I, when I was Minister of Labour, I remember the good advice of my friend, hon. Soodhun, who clearly told me he had tried that in the past and what the new Minister of Finance and Economic Development is trying to do is precisely that, re-skilling. But, I cannot see a medical doctor who has not got a job trying to be re-skilled to work as an IT technician. I cannot see pilots waiting to work for Air Mauritius who cannot find a job at Air Mauritius being re-skilled to be a dentist. I cannot see people who are graduates who have trained to work in languages, they have to be re-skilled in Science. If that is what is going to be the objective of this present Government, my humble view, it will not work.

(Interruptions)

It will not work. When one looks at all other countries, let's look at countries like Singapore, because, here, I am going to remember only yesterday - I believe it was yesterday - the speech, in this debate, of hon. Bashir Jahangeer and when he said that not only do we have to create jobs in our country, but we have to find ways and means of managing, giving jobs now, not tomorrow, now. I remember when I was Minister of Labour and I tried to go for bilateral agreements with regard to labour mobility, I remember I was helped on some of

those agreements by the then former Minister of Commerce, hon. Soodhun, I remember I was helped by many colleagues from the MSM who were in alliance with us in those days, to have bilateral agreements, be it with countries from the Middle East, countries from Canada, in Italy, and those are countries where Mauritians can go to earn a lot of foreign exchange, those are countries that Mauritians can go to, not to go for ever, but this is what is called labour mobility, circular migration for them to eventually come back to our country, but richer, with more experience, with foreign exchange and the country could have progressed in the process. This is precisely what hon. Jahangeer was referring to when he said that the Gulf countries is a place where we could look into to send people. I remember when I was trying to do that, people said I was trying to send all youngsters away and not get them jobs in Mauritius. But, this is precisely what this Government is doing with this new Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training who is himself continuing to send Mauritians on the same agreements to Italy, on the same agreements, through the NEF and other agencies, to Canada, the same agreements, these bilateral agreements are still working as we speak today and it is nothing new.

So, that's what I am trying to explain. We should not simply throw stones at a measure that works. Remember the days when Sir Anerood Jugnauth was Prime Minister in 1983. Prior to Sir Anerood Jugnauth being Prime Minister in 1983, remember those days when so many Mauritians went to work in Saudi Arabia, went to work in Kuwait, went to work in the Gulf countries and how many of those Mauritians managed to make fortune and come back to Mauritius and settle down and really invest in their homeland. This was the model that was used in the days when Sir Anerood Jugnauth became Prime Minister for the first time, may be Members from his Government, the youths, may be, do not recall that, but this was the model that was used and this was the model that worked.

So, that is why we are of the view that we have intelligent people, we have a lot of graduates, the fact remains, if we go on telling people we do not need foreign workers, the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training can very well come and tell us how many letters has he not received from the export authorities, MEXA, how many letters and representations has he not already received from - you are surprised - the NEF, how many letters has he not received and representations, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development from the Joint Economic Council, because they cannot meet export orders. Today, as we are speaking, hon. Soodhun knows it better than I do for having been that Minister of Labour and Employment, that if we do not have certain foreigners in certain sectors, we will not be able to achieve our export orders and our export-oriented industries

vont flancher. But, does it mean; if we remove them, Mauritians will get jobs? It does not mean that! This is not a simple equation. Some people may have thought, when they just took office that it was, but it is not that simple as an equation. Now, there is also an impression I get when I listen to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development; that he has an aversion for the number of foreigners that come to Mauritius. This is the impression I get when the hon. Minister says: "I am against gated communities". I believe that there are other ways of saying that because such few words could really damage the impression that people have of Mauritius; foreigners who want to come and invest here. People don't owe us a living. There are countries like Malta. There are countries like Cyprus. There are countries in South America, countries in the Bahamas islands where they offer residency to foreigners who come and inject foreign exchange, buy property, create employment. We are a country which is competing on a daily basis to attract those foreigners. When you look at reports such as the HSBC report to find out where are there the most expatriates in the world.

We also find from that report the issues that are taken into account, Madam Speaker, when deciding which country to move to: health service, the road network, water, education for children, law and order; whether they feel welcome are not; whether they are going to be able to live their own culture or not; whether they are going to be ostracised or not. Why is it that Mauritius is far behind when it comes to other countries? Why is it that when I read articles, I read one only from 'The Telegraph' dated February 2013: Singapore, the title says: "Expatriates set to drive population growth". In other words when you look at Singapore which I recently mentioned, it has so many expatriates that it is to the benefit of the country that those expatriates with such skills are there. Because let us not forget about one thing; when one talks about the first economic miracle under Sir Anerood Jugnauth, when one talks about free education under Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, when one adds those two together, what do you have? You have an intelligent, capable population and you have more university graduates, people who are trained and you have less people who want to go and do low skilled jobs. This is one of the consequences of economic progress. It has happened in Singapore and it is happening in Mauritius, but we cannot play politics with such facts and simply say: "We will put foreigners out and give Mauritians jobs". This creates a false impression of security. What I invite this Government to do, as hon. Ezra Jhuboo said yesterday: "Open up!" I fail to see why we are not opening up as we should. For instance, I hear the hon. Minister of Finance talk about Smart Cities and my question which I keep on asking my hon. friends around me here is: what exactly is smart about those cities? What is smart about it? The idea! Is it technology that will be put in there? We have not heard of it.

Is it that it is going to have solar energy, fibre network? I don't know what is smart about that! Basically, I hope so. But what I am trying to get at here is a little idea that I have seen which I would like to share with you, Madam Speaker. It is basically to have what in other countries they have, which is called an IP box regime; intellectual property regime. When one looks at – hon. Pravind Jugnauth most probably exactly knows what I am getting at – the research and development that is carried out in many countries in the world, it is one of the *piliers des économies de certains pays*; research and development. Mauritius is at the bottom end for any research and development. We do not invest what we should in research and development.

When we talk about Smart Cities, what I also would like to say: "Let us try to do something that is smart, to have a new legislation, a new tax regime with regard to research and development. A new tax regime to bring, to attract people to come to those Smart Cities, to have incubators within Mauritius, to get them to invest through their private equity funds or other funds into research and development and to ensure that all the money that they will make, all the profits that they will make when they are in Mauritius is tax free. When it is repatriated to double taxation avoidance agreement, be it royalties or other dividends are repatriated, that there also there is a tax advantage when it is repatriated to their home country." What I am trying to get at here is to do exactly what Singapore does because *c'est un pilier de leur économie*; to have an IP box scheme running in Mauritius which we don't have. Because it makes no sense to simply have a Smart City because it would simply be an IRS by a glorified name. It would simply be an 'I', 'R', 'S' without the gates. It would simply be an RES called by another name, but if we try to come with some novel ideas such as the IP box scheme where intellectual property as a regime in Mauritius, that is tax friendly, that is investor friendly, that has got a new tax regime to encourage people to come to Mauritius; with millions and millions of dollars of multinationals to come to Mauritius for research and development that would create not only employment, it would also bring in foreign direct investment. That is an idea that I humbly propose to this Government.

Another thing which I wanted to get at here and that is the crux of my intervention. Every single Government that has come with a budget, comes with good intent as I have said earlier on. Maybe it does not work, maybe part of it works, maybe everything works or maybe nothing works. To start out with, let us give the benefit of the doubt to anyone that we start with good intent every single regime be it prior to independence or even after. There is one thing that no Government has had the courage to achieve. There is one thing that no

Government has had the courage to attempt because some people believe, Madam Speaker, that if we try to attempt what I am about to say, it would mean political suicide.

I am of the view as in Georgia, recently I was in Geneva at the Africa CEO Forum where I was honoured to meet with the former Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr Nika Gilauri. I met with the former Prime Minister of Georgia and I listened to him very clearly and he presented a paper called ‘Radical Transformation of Public Administration’. Radical Transformation of Public Administration! I am happy that the hon. Minister of Civil Service is here listening. I am here happier that the hon. Rt. Prime Minister is always present listening because this is at the centre of every development. What you need in a country is a public administration that needs to be reformed *en profondeur*. No Government has attempted to do that. I am not saying here that this in any way shows disrespect to civil servants. On the contrary, what I see here from the presentation of the former Prime Minister of Georgia; Georgia in 2003 was a low-income country. Georgia had an ineffective public sector. Georgia had an unfavourable business environment. It was ranked 112th next to Mozambique. It had a high corruption index. It was 124th next to Côte Ivoire and Uganda.

After the President and Prime Minister, the new Government of Georgia, put in the one thing which is the fundamental radical change to public administration to the civil service. New Zealand has done it. London has done it. We are still stuck with the administration of the colonial days. We have not reformed because it is a situation that brings in political fear. Let us not do it because beware our country may progress, but we will not progress politically. It could be that all those, who are in the Civil Service, will no longer vote for us if ever we go for a fundamental change. But this is the key to progress. We cannot, Madam Speaker, have a country with one leg representing the private sector, the other leg represents the public sector. One runs on a performance-based agenda. One runs on a productivity-based agenda. The other one has security of ten years. The other one has guarantee of office. The other one is not productivity based. The other people are promoted on seniority.

People should be promoted on ability in the private sector and in the public sector. The day that Mauritius will do what Georgia does. What has happened after they have created a building where all Civil Service has been brought there? They have reformed in-depth the Civil Service which no Government - I say it out loud - has had the courage to do, together with the Opposition. If the Government embarks upon that, at least, on this side of the House,

we will support this endeavour, because we are of the view that Mauritius has reached a stage of its development that we need to push it forward and not pull it down to the bottom.

When we have two systems operating parallel, where you have one, as I explained, the private sector running on performance and ability and the public sector not running at all parallel to it, lagging behind, then is the recipe for slow economic growth in a single digit. If we want to achieve double digits, we can achieve it. And we here, solemnly, say: "we are not here, putting in danger anyone's jobs, we are not here, asking to put in danger anyone's acquired rights, but what we are here asking for is for people to sacrifice oneself for the good of the many.

We are asking people that we need to change, we need to *récompenser ceux qui sont productifs*. I know people from my former Ministry. The now Minister of Labour will know. There are excellent officers there, excellent people who perform there, young officers who perform there, but they will have to wait to be promoted, they will have to get lesser salary, even though they are more productive than those who have been there and they are the seniors. Hon. Soodhun knows that well.

How do we address this issue? *On a vraiment besoin d'une assise nationale* to address the issue of the fundamental radical change in Civil Service Reform. And look at what Georgia has managed to achieve when they were there. From a low economic growth GDP, they have come to 4.6%. Public sector tax collection rate was in the single digit. It has gone up to 23.5%. With regard to world class business environment, it climbed 103 places in terms of ranking. 103 places! From 112 in 2003, today Georgia is 9th. As far as low corruption is concerned, Georgia was 124th, after the Civil Service Reform, it is today 51st, it gained 73 places. Now, what I am trying to get out here is, today, when I look at Georgia, it is a model to be inspired by.

Georgia today, the average waiting time for the citizen to obtain service from a public service office is five minutes, the most that he has to wait, even for the application of a passport, is seven minutes. So, basically, what I am trying to say here, when one looks at those figures, Mauritius was doing better than what Georgia was doing in 2001. Mauritius is doing better today than Georgia was doing when things were really wrong. So, we can achieve what Georgia has achieved faster than Georgia has. It only takes us to put our minds together in order to achieve it. Imagine what this country could be when we start achieving double digit economic growth! Imagine what this country would be if it takes only five

minutes for someone who has a problem at the water service, CWA or CEB. That it is attended in five minutes! Imagine what this country would be when we start recognising *la compétence des gens qui sont des fonctionnaires du service civil au lieu de les promouvoir*, simply based, not on *compétence*, not on productivity, but on seniority!

So, Madam Speaker, what I say here, people may take offence to, but my intent is the country and nothing else. It is to the advantage of the civil servants that we go for such a reform, because those who perform will find themselves better off and the country will generate more *richesses*, the people will get more money and this country will be happier. So, is this, therefore, a time when we will start saying that this Government - following an idea that looks to be a dangerous idea to many, we could really take the risk and let us jump and take advantage of these things, there could be consensus where we will really change this country. Let us go forward with it!

Now, let me just say one last thing. I know I have taken a lot of time. Recently, I have talked about reform of the civil service. I believe that those are issues that can be attained *pour le bien de tout un chacun*. But, there are certain habits that we have to leave behind, there are certain habits that do not belong to 2015, there are certain habits that do not belong to this august Assembly, there are certain words that have to be condemned, there are certain practices that do not even belong to prehistoric Mauritius. I was very sad, Madam Speaker, when I was abroad and had to be shocked to read through my iPad - this is what Parliament has given us, a tool to being shocked. I was shocked, I was aghast, fell off my chair when I saw what hon. Gayan had stated about me recently in this august Assembly.

I totally agree with hon. Members of Government - if I continue to mention the name and the content of such a speech, it would spoil what I have said up to now. It shows their disdain for what was said. It shows their solidarity for a new method of doing politics and for that reason I had chosen, therefore, to just ignore him, because it is not something that I will try to dirty myself and soil myself with. Therefore, following what I have just heard, I shall drop it.

Let me, finally, say something which is of utmost importance also. Now, at the same forum I attended when I met with the former Prime Minister of Georgia, we had the opportunity of listening to *le président de la Banque Africaine de Développement*, we had managed to have lunch with him and we discussed on the way forward for Africa. Today, when I read some of the presentations that were made and I will gladly share it with friends

from all sides. We talked about Africa being the next Eldorado, we talked about the global democratic shift between *2013 et 2050*, l'Afrique c'est 115% – that will be the shift. The number of people will increase whereas other countries are in single digits or just double digits. The cities that are of utmost importance, and this is where I recommend that we should have some Ambassadors present, this is where we should have some work, our diplomatic representatives should be there to enhance our economic diplomacy.

We should be, without any doubt, the countries where, according to the Africa CEO Forum *et Jeune Afrique* where people are investing heavily nowadays, the first one is Cairo, the second is Tunis, Johannesburg, Casablanca, Algiers, Accra, Nairobi, Lagos, Addis Ababa, Kampala. So, those are countries where I am sad, I do not see Mauritius therein. I am happy that, at least, I see where investment is going to and now my concern is how we could use this information to ensure that we have people investing in those countries, use Mauritius as a platform for investment therein.

Thereby, we need to have more bilateral agreements, more agreements pertaining to taxation, more agreements pertaining to something which was dropped by the former Government. And what was it? Labour mobility! Imagine a new product altogether! Instead of having only a Double Taxation Agreement Convention, imagine that Mauritius has conventions with all those African countries on labour mobility! So much so that if someone wants to bring his Head Office in Mauritius from Europe and he wants from Mauritius to do business in any of those countries I just mentioned and we have labour mobility agreements with those countries I have just mentioned, he will not have to apply for a work permit in that country to move his staff to that country. Imagine how that would be an advantage! So, we could have another method of attracting investors to Mauritius, to have a plethora of labour mobility conventions with African States that would encourage people to come here, because it would facilitate labour mobility of their high qualified skilled staff to go to those countries without the need to get a work permit and they would enter, based on a convention that we could enter into with each of those African countries. This is something that I strongly recommend. Those are suggestions that I stand by and I am of the view that we can achieve progress and we will achieve progress.

As I started out by saying, every budget is a declaration of intent and we are not here to, in any way, stop any Government or any person to work in the interest of the country. On the contrary, as you have seen, we have all suggested, we have all proposed, we have all been here to contribute *pour le progrès du pays* because, as I have always said, in all my

interventions: what comes first is the country and what comes second, I am not concerned about.

So, let me therefore, once again, say that there are people with good intent on all sides of the House. I, in my last intervention on the issue of the Government Programme had asked that time has come for us to put the political campaign behind us. Time has come for us to unite as one people. Time has come for us to decide whether we are to take this new leap of faith for our economic success. Time has come for us where we are going to be tested. Let it not be the day, one day when it comes when our children will tell us: you were tried, you were tested, but you have failed. Let our children tell us: you were tried, you were tested and altogether you succeeded.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Jugnauth!

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr P. Jugnauth):

Madam Speaker, as I stand today, before this august Assembly to deliver my speech as Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation in the context of the 2015-2016 Budget, I have the deep conviction that we are definitely turning the page of one of the darkest moments of the history of our country. We are indeed turning the page of a reckless reign endured by our people, our institutions and businesses in the last nine years by a Government which had gone completely astray and had lamentably failed to live up to the aspirations of the people. Nine years! I must say nine years of shameful and immoral leadership, blatant injustice to the deserving, repressive actions against common people, trade unions and political opponents, dilapidation of public funds, incompetence at so many levels, cronies and alike predating on what legitimately belongs to the population. Without, of course, forgetting the Ponzi schemes masterminded to steal people's money. This is the picture of the type of public affairs management of the previous Government.

Madam Speaker, I am not saying that for everybody because obviously, there have been a handful of people who have been the fortunate ones. Most of our people have gone through very, very hard times. We have seen a whole country crippled and on the brink of social and economic collapse. We had almost reached a point of no return. But, on 10 December last year, the verdict of the people has resoundingly clearly chosen between arrogance and humility, between decadence and righteousness, between greed and selflessness. In the face of what was purported to be an unbeatable team, there stood a man having a deep sense of purpose and, above all, a true patriot who, with his team, swept out on

its way a rotten Government and gave hope to thousands of our people. This is why, Madam Speaker, I consider that above everything else, this Budget is about uplifting the very core values of what brings us together as a nation - a set of values that will give every one of us the dignity and pride to be a Mauritian.

Madam Speaker, as a responsible Government we could not accept that there is an economy where only a few of us do spectacularly well and the rest of the population is left at the mercy of a Government which has never been interested to listen to their plight.

Madame la présidente, permettez-moi, parce que j'ai eu l'occasion aujourd'hui de répliquer à certains membres de l'Opposition qui ont tenté de faire croire à travers leurs interventions que le budget ne répond pas aux attentes de la population. L'honorable Quirin a dit et je cite –

« (...) la montagne a finalement accouché d'une souris. »

Et que

« (...) le mot '*lepep*' n'est qu'un leurre. »

Et qu'il n'en fut rien en ce qui concerne le pouvoir d'achat.

L'honorable Ameer Meea a parlé de 'supercherie' et moi je n'hésiterai pas à dire que les deux honorables membres sont tombés dans la démagogie. Je vais à présent démontrer que contrairement à ce qu'ils ont dit et que certains autres membres de l'Opposition ont dit, la population a été le souci premier du premier budget de ce gouvernement. Nous avons soulagé le fardeau du peuple dès les premiers jours de l'installation de ce gouvernement suivant les dernières élections générales.

En augmentant la pension de vieillesse, la pension des veuves et des invalides à R 5,000 nous avons mis R 4,7 milliards additionnelles entre les mains des familles mauriciennes. Est-ce un leurre, Madame la présidente ? C'est une réalité. En accordant une compensation salariale de R 600 *across the board* à tous les travailleurs de ce pays, nous avons mis R 4.3 milliards additionnelles entre les mains des familles mauriciennes. Est-ce un leurre ? Non, honorable Quirin ! Vous êtes en train de faire un faux procès à ce gouvernement. Et le peuple saura comment sanctionner à l'avenir les démagogues. Sur ces deux items seulement, la pension et la compensation salariale, R 9 milliards ! Je dis bien R 9 milliards vont être encaissées par les familles en termes de revenus additionnels.

Madame la présidente, la décision annoncée dans le budget de donner gratuitement six mètres cubes d'eau à chaque foyer mauricien concerne 323 254 abonnés de la CWA et en termes d'économie pour ces familles, cela représente R 200 millions annuellement. Ça c'est du concret et ce n'est certainement pas un leurre, encore moins de la supercherie. Je prends

un autre exemple, la décision d'accorder des subsides à 100% sur les frais d'examens à tous les étudiants du SC et de la HSC coûtera R 310 millions à ce gouvernement. R 310 millions que les parents vont économiser! Vous allez me dire que c'est un leurre!

Les subsides de R 240 millions annuellement que l'État va accorder à 3,000 diplômés chômeurs pour des cours de recyclage à l'université de Maurice afin qu'ils puissent trouver un emploi plus facilement constituent un autre acte de foi en faveur de la jeunesse qui a tant souffert par le manque de considération et d'opportunités sous le gouvernement travailliste.

Encore une fois c'est du concret, et nous honorons les engagements que nous avons pris avec le peuple. Les petits planteurs de leur côté ont bénéficié d'une mesure de soulagement face à la baisse drastique de leurs revenus sucriers. Alors que l'ancien gouvernement avait fait une vague promesse de leur accorder R 2,000 de compensation sur chaque tonne de sucre, ce gouvernement est passé à l'action. Une compensation de R 3,400 sera accordée et cela représente R 140 millions de contribution directe du gouvernement, *over and above* les R 200 millions que paiera le *Sugar Insurance Fund Board*.

J'ai entendu l'honorable Uteem et l'honorable Quirin dire que les jeunes communiquent par texte gratuitement à travers les applications comme Viber, Tango and WhatsApp, et que, dans son opinion, la mesure budgétaire d'abolir la taxe de dix sous sur les SMS est un coup d'épée dans l'eau. Ils oublient de dire cependant que cette mesure va remettre R 85 millions dans les poches des consommateurs.

Je prends un dernier exemple pour démontrer que ce gouvernement est effectivement un gouvernement du peuple. Savez-vous, Madame la présidente, qu'en augmentant de R 65,000 à R 115,000 les dons de l'État sous le *Casting of Slabs Scheme* et en rehaussant les seuils d'éligibilité, le gouvernement va décaisser au moins R 140 millions en plus au profit des familles au bas de l'échelle pour porter le décaissement annuel à presque de R 250 millions ?

Allez-vous me dire donc que ce budget ne soulage point la souffrance du peuple ? Je crois que certains membres de l'opposition sont tellement abasourdis par l'action gouvernementale qu'ils ont perdu leur latin. Comme je vous ai cité, chiffres à l'appui - il faut répéter peut-être :

- R 9 milliards de revenus additionnels donc pour les familles sur la pension et la compensation salariale ;
- R 200 millions d'économie sur les factures d'eau ;
- R 310 millions de subsides - SC et HSC ;

- R 240 millions pour les jeunes diplômés chômeurs ;

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jugnauth:

- R 340 millions pour les petits planteurs ;
- R 250 millions de dons pour les familles à faible revenu pour couler la dalle ;
- R 85 millions d'économie sur les SMS, et
- sans oublier les économies que feront les ménages après la baisse du taux d'intérêt sur le *hire purchase*, de 19 % à 12 %.

Voilà, Madame la présidente, quelques exemples pour démontrer comment nous améliorons le pouvoir d'achat des familles de façon conséquente. C'est un effort colossal et nous en sommes fiers, parce que nous croyons dans un socialisme à visage humain, dans la justice sociale, et dans le partage équitable du gâteau national.

Nous sommes plus que jamais un gouvernement du peuple qui travaille pour le peuple. Les Mauriciens savent que nous tenons à cœur leurs intérêts, et c'est la raison pour laquelle ils continuent à nous soutenir massivement en dépit de la campagne de l'opposition. En parallèle, Madame la présidente, le travail de nettoyage que nous avons commencé se poursuit inexorablement. Nous sommes en train de nettoyer les écuries du régime travailliste.

Laissez-moi dire quelques mots sur le présent scandale - le scandale de la BAI - qui démontre à quel point certains amis du Dr. Navinchandra Ramgooolam ont utilisé leur proximité avec le pouvoir pour dévaliser des épargnants et des honnêtes citoyens.

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Jugnauth: Ces gens-là pensaient être des génies de la magouille à l'échelle planétaire. Ils sont aujourd'hui à genoux parce qu'enfin les institutions régulatrices font leur travail comme il se doit, sans crainte, et en toute indépendance. Je trouve cela honteux et irresponsable de la part de certains membres de l'opposition de venir vouloir attribuer un quelconque motif de vengeance aux actions promptes et vigoureuses prises par les autorités, dont la Banque de Maurice, la *Financial Services Commission* et le gouvernement, parce que le but c'est de protéger l'intégrité de notre système financier ainsi que les intérêts des déposants de la banque et des *policy holders* de la compagnie d'assurance.

Des accusations gratuites ont été faites à l'encontre de deux de mes collègues ministres. Certains ont parlé de menace, de terrorisme psychologique à l'encontre de la famille Rawat. Tout cela n'est que fausseté. Je peux affirmer dans cette Chambre que mes deux collègues n'ont jamais parlé à Monsieur Dawood Rawat dans la soirée où il a volontairement proposé de vendre ses intérêts dans la BAI pour la somme symbolique d'une roupie. Il est important de souligner, Madame la présidente, que la structure de la BAI - et je dirai pour le moins monstrueusement complexe - est une panoplie de *corporate vehicles* qui ont été utilisés pour servir ses desseins obscurs.

Lorsque d'autres vérités éclateront dans ce méga scandale, je n'ai aucun doute que la population comprendra mieux que les institutions et le gouvernement ont sauvégarde le pays d'un désastre financier d'une proportion inimaginable. Je peux dire aujourd'hui que l'élément catalyseur qui a déclenché l'engouement pour le *Super Cash Gold Scheme* de la BAI a été en fait la décision du gouvernement travailliste de taxer les intérêts sur les dépôts bancaires en 2007. Une situation avait été créée où les gens, surtout ceux qui touchaient leur *lump sum*, ne voulaient pas placer leur argent en banque. D'autres ont soutiré leur argent de la banque - pour ne pas dire retiré, je dis soutiré pour mieux comprendre. Ils ont été amenés à investir dans le plan de la BAI. Et la question que je me pose aujourd'hui : y a-t-il eu un acte prémedité pour attirer les gens vers ce plan à fort taux d'intérêt ?

J'allais moi-même dire un *Ponzi Scheme*. On est en train de faire grand cas si c'est un *Ponzi Scheme*, si ce n'est pas un *Ponzi Scheme*. Laissez-moi vous dire, Madame la présidente, à ma connaissance - et peut-être je vais être corrigé par le chef de l'opposition - celui qui a le premier parlé de *Ponzi Scheme* concernant la BAI c'est le leader de l'opposition lors de la *PNQ* du 21 novembre 2013. A une question qu'il posait au ministre des Finances d'alors, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval, et je cite –

“Can I ask whether the definition that will be provided of what is a Ponzi Pyramid Scheme will include insurance companies (...)”

Et il dit ceci -

“- the case we are talking about -”

The subject of this PNQ

“and whether the definition of Ponzi Scheme (...).”

Donc, je le dis comme un fait ce que le chef de l'opposition avait dit à l'époque. Il y a certains membres du MMM surtout qui sont en train de dire qu'on est en train de décrire ce système comme un *Ponzi* alors que ce n'en est pas un. Alors je leur dirais de se référer à la *PNQ* du *Leader* de l'Opposition d'alors. L'honorable Uteem a fait lui aussi une déclaration à

la presse pour dire que les autorités ont agi à une vitesse incroyable, que c'était orchestré de la part du gouvernement, qu'on aurait dû attendre et donner du temps à la *BAI* pour remédier à la situation. L'honorable Uteem a peut-être oublié que lors de cette PNQ il a lui-même posé une question supplémentaire, *and I quote* –

« May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister why it has taken six years for the Financial Services Commission to come up with that regulation, when he would agree with me that having more than 10% invested in any related party is a threat? ”

Six years ! En 2013, l'honorable Uteem trouvait qu'on a trop attendu - *six years !* – et qu'il fallait agir vite parce que c'est un *threat*. En 2015, après huit ans, il trouve qu'on a agi trop vite, qu'on a orchestré, *Which is which?* Et il trouve le moyen pour critiquer les autorités, la FSC dans sa déclaration à la presse, alors que le *leader* de l'Opposition avait dit à cette époque, et je cite -

« I wish to congratulate the FSC here. FSC took *les taureaux par les cornes* on 25 May 2013 and published regulations that say that no insurance company must hold more than 10% of its assets in all its related companies in aggregate”.

Madame la présidente, donc, je ne comprends pas les arguments de l'opposition MMM. Et, encore une fois, l'honorable Uteem qui a vu qu'on est allé trop vite en besogne, clairement le gouvernement travailliste a sa part de responsabilité dans ce qui s'est tramé dès le départ, sans oublier que les *wrongful doings* ont été cautionné d'en haut.

Ces gens là aussi ont le culot, aujourd'hui, de parler de vengeance politique. Ils ont déclenché le crime et, aujourd'hui, ils prétendent être les donneurs de leçons. Donc, le peuple a très vite compris ce jeu infect des politiciens de l'ancien régime. Madame la présidente, le *leader* de l'Opposition, ainsi que d'autres membres de l'Opposition n'en finissent pas d'évoquer la rencontre que mes deux collègues ministres et moi-même avons eue avec les représentants de Dufry. Mes collègues et moi nous avons été victimes d'une campagne orchestrée pour faire croire que nous avions des motivations obscures. Or, notre seul souci, notre seule motivation était d'obtenir autant d'informations que possible pour faire la lumière sur le scandale de l'allocation du contrat à la *Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd* et je dois dire que les informations que nous avions reçues nous ont permis de découvrir subséquemment ce qui s'est véritablement passé.

C'est un fait aujourd'hui que la maîtresse de l'ancien Premier ministre a touché des commissions de 100 millions de roupies à janvier 2015 sur le dos de la *Mauritius Duty Free Paradise Ltd*. Quant aux allégations faites par les deux représentants de Dufry, à travers un

affidavit, elles relèvent clairement d'une stratégie pour faire diversion pour essayer de détourner l'attention de la population et d'essayer de noyer le poisson. D'ailleurs, j'ai dit - je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus - que si les gens ont le courage de venir faire en public ces mêmes allégations, je prendrai les mesures nécessaires. Et là, puisque le *Leader* de l'Opposition m'a pointé du doigt sur ce dossier, à savoir pourquoi nous - les trois ministres - avons été là-bas, laissez-moi dire que, en tant que citoyen, en tant que politicien, lui-même un membre de l'Assemblée nationale, le chef de l'Opposition, il a été *Deputy Prime Minister*, Premier ministre de ce pays, je lui pose la question: Pendant sa carrière, est-ce qu'il n'a pas rencontré des gens qui sont venus pour lui donner des informations concernant des scandales? Ou même concernant des cas qui sont sujets à des enquêtes? Ou bien concernant des cas qui sont même en Cour? Moi-même je connais déjà plusieurs personnes. Alors, il ne faut pas faire de la démagogie. Je lui pose trois questions: A l'époque, pourquoi avait-il rencontré Monsieur Toorab Bissesur, qui, lui-même était impliqué dans le triple assassinat de la rue Gorah-Issac survenu en octobre 1996 ? Selon ses propres dires, lui-même il avait donné de l'argent à Monsieur Toorab Bissesur pour aller à Madagascar. Quelle était la motivation pour agir de la sorte?

(*Interruptions*)

Oui! What is good for the Leader of the Opposition is bad for others! C'est cela que je retiens, Madame la présidente !

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order, order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order !

Mr Jugnauth: I am putting the questions. Don't get excited!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Jugnauth: I am putting the questions! J'espère que le Chef de l'Opposition aura encore des réponses à donner à la nation dans cette affaire. Mais comme je dis, moi, je n'ai pas le droit de rencontrer des personnes pour obtenir des informations afin d'élucider des malversations, mais lui, il peut.

Madame la présidente, laissez-moi dire aussi, à l'époque où j'ai été arrêté par la *CID* concernant l'affaire de *MITD*, en janvier 2011, j'ai donné un *statement* à la Police. Parmi, j'avais dénoncé le scandale de la *MDFP*. Je ne veux pas aller dans les détails de ce que j'ai dit concernant mon propre témoignage dans l'affaire de *MDFP*. D'ailleurs, j'avais donné au

Leader de l'Opposition non seulement une copie de mon *statement*, mais tous les documents, toutes les preuves que j'avais donnés à la Police en janvier 2011.

(*Interruptions*)

2012, allons dire. 2012. Et avec une liste de témoins. Le *Leader* de l'opposition a fait une critique pour dire pourquoi la police n'est pas venue prendre un *statement* avec les trois ministres. Mais à ce que je sache, je n'ai jamais entendu dire depuis mon *statement* à la CID, pourquoi la police n'est pas allée prendre un *statement* avec tous les témoins que j'ai mentionnés dans cette affaire. Jamais! Et pourquoi l'enquête n'a pas progressé? Est-ce que le chef de l'opposition était toujours le chef de l'opposition? Pourquoi il n'a pas dit, à l'époque, il n'avait pas réclamé, pourquoi est-ce que l'enquête ne progresse pas? Et je vais plus loin, pourquoi il n'a pas posé une PNQ ici sur toutes les allégations que moi j'ai faites dans mon *statement* concernant l'affaire de MITD?

(*Interruptions*)

Qu'est-ce que je cause? Je cause que vous êtes en train de cause, causer.

(*Interruptions*)

'*Ti pé cause, causer!*'

Et je me souviens, lorsque l'honorable Uteem, l'honorable Lesjongard avaient osé critiquer '*Madame-là*', ils se sont fait taper sur les mains. Ils se sont fait taper sur les mains à une conférence de presse.

(*Interruptions*)

You will reply! You will have the chance to reply!

Madam Speaker: Please, order!

(*Interruptions*)

Order, please! No comments, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Jugnauth: Toujours est-il que '*ti l'esprit*' forme le gouvernement aujourd'hui et les grands esprits sont dans l'opposition!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Order !

Mr Jugnauth: Laissez-moi passer peut-être à l'honorable Mohamed. Tout à l'heure je l'ai écouté, il est en train de dire - c'est bien, il a fait un bon discours, et il avait dit: 'Xavier-Luc Duval, à ce moment-là, est resté dans le gouvernement, pourquoi n'est-il pas parti, etc. Il aurait dû démissionner'. But, you, yourself, hon. Mohamed, you have been having differences with the former Prime Minister on so many occasions.

Madam Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, I am addressing the Chair, but I am mentioning the case of hon. Mohamed because he just said that hon. Duval has made certain comments on whether it is a Ponzi scheme or not; there are differences in Government, and so on and so forth. Alright! But, he, himself, he was in the former Government with the former Prime Minister and there have been, not differences, this is what? I don't even call that a difference.

(*Interruptions*)

There have been...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No cross-talking!

Mr Jugnauth: There have been violent exchanges. I don't want to mention any.

(*Interruptions*)

But, there have been violent exchanges and yet, he is remaining in the Government of Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. Even the son of '*Madame-là*' has told him off.

(*Interruptions*)

And yet...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No comments! No provocative remarks!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Jugnauth: I better not carry on, because there are so many things that have been said which I thought, probably, required at least a reply, when I heard that there have been *viles attaques*, *l'honorable Ameer Meea, je l'ai écouté l'autre jour, il disait que les membres du gouvernement ont fait des viles attaques sur les membres de l'opposition.*

(*Interruptions*)

Enfin, you said *des viles attaques*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please allow the hon. Minister to talk!

Mr Jugnauth: Je ne voudrais pas donner des exemples où il y a eu des viles attaques sur moi-même, sur les membres de ma famille. Mais bon, passons!

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, let me say that the budget that has been presented by my colleague, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, in fact, gives a fresh orientation to the relationship between Government and the private sector. It is establishing a

collaborative approach to enable the construction of the nation based on justice, meritocracy and equity.

The budget is highly ambitious and it has to be so, because we cannot remain trapped in a middle income economy with low productivity and low level of technology. That is why we have set ourselves a target of 5.3% of growth and 5.7% for the year 2016/2017. And indeed, I agree that these are ambitious targets, but we are going to work hard. This is the aim. We are going to work hard towards achieving those targets and we are confident that they can be achieved as Government and the private sector intend to invest massively in a number of those projects that have been mentioned. It is high time to establish an entrepreneurial economy, *une nation d'entrepreneurs* that is self-reliant, outward-looking and driven by technology and innovation.

Madam Speaker, this Government believes that a nation should be fully developed in all its dimensions: economic, political, social, spiritual, psychological and cultural, and the budget provides the necessary impetus to transform the SME sector into major engine of growth and to transform Mauritius into an international city State. With the smart cities and technopoles endowed with world-class infrastructure for port, transport and communications. The ocean economy constitutes another pillar in our overall strategy and to boost all these new sectors, the budget has provided an attractive package of incentives for the Mauritian diaspora who have acquired the skills needed for our next phase of development and, here, we want to reverse the brain drain into brain gain.

Madam Speaker, I have no doubt at all that the budget paves the way towards a People's economy. It will give hope and confidence to thousands of small and medium enterprises which - let me remind those who did care to know - contribute more than 50% of the GDP of our economy and we are, through this budget, giving them the tools they need to go as far as their efforts will take them, and just imagine a Rs10 billion that will be made available over the next five years through a newly set up SME bank.

I have no doubt that we will bounce back and reverse the tide of such bleak and deceiving economic growth that has haunted us for several years and that against a backdrop of booming and more prosperous economic development of neighbouring countries of the African continent.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn to some of the measures that have been announced concerning my Ministry. But, before coming to those measures, I am however compelled to recall the precarious legacy that has been left in the field of information and communication technology during the past nine years although a double-digit growth had

been noted during that corresponding period in several African countries such as Tanzania, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

As a matter of fact, ICT indicators, such as, growth rate has sharply declined from 22.7% in 2004 to reach around 7% in 2013. GDP contribution of the ICT sector to the economy has started to decline by 2010 and job creation almost stalled and even dropped between 2011 and 2012. Unmindful of this situation, we are more than committed to rolling back this decline and we are presently working hard to come forward with a five-year strategic plan for the sector which we have coined the making of a smart Mauritius. The 2015-2016 Budget has given us not only the financial means to start the journey towards a smart Mauritius, but it has also given us the tools and the motivation to unleash the boundless potential creativity and inventiveness that need to be tapped. The making of the smart Mauritius revolves around five strategies, that is, the creation of a second cyber city and techno parks; revamping and upgrading our telecommunications infrastructure; the implementation of a National Innovation Programme; the creation of job opportunities and improving the employability of our youth, and, finally, the positioning of our country as a regional ICT hub to tap the growing opportunities in Africa in the ICT sector.

Madam Speaker, in our quest to reshape an ailing economy, to create sustainable jobs opportunities for our youth and to improve the quality of life of our citizens, the creation of Smart Cities and Technopoles as announced in the Budget is, in fact, a refreshing *projet de société*. As a matter of fact, a Smart City uses digital technologies to enhance performance and well-being; to reduce costs and resource consumption and to engage more effectively and actively with the citizens. In line with the policy of Government for the setting up of Smart Cities and Technopoles, the Government of India has kindly accepted to extend financial and technical assistance for the construction of a second cyber city as part of the line of credit which was secured during the recent visit of Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India to Mauritius in the context of the National Day celebrations. The second cyber city is, in fact, intended to host high value added ICT/BPO services such as data and disaster recovery centres; provision of cloud computing services, and finance and accounting BPO activities.

Madam Speaker, let me now turn to the budgetary measures on the area of innovation. In this digital world of the 21st century, our country's social economic success and prosperity will invariably rely on the innovative use of science, technology and communication network. Government wants its people particularly the youth to win the race for the kinds of innovative products, services and tools that will unleash new jobs and improve the quality of life of our population. In this context, the Budget makes provision for the very first time ever of Rs125

m. allocation to operate a National Innovation Programme and I am pleased to inform hon. Members of the setting up of a National Innovation Committee at the level of my Ministry and with stakeholders representing different sectors of our economy such as tourism, agriculture, industry amongst others.

My Ministry will soon come up with a National Innovation Framework which will provide innovators the right platform to tap the resources that they need to showcase their creativity and inventiveness in every sphere of our daily life. I must here pay tribute to the Rt. hon. Prime Minister for his vision and foresightedness to create, for the first time ever, a Ministry dedicated to the area of innovation besides that of technology and communication.

Madam Speaker, as announced in the Budget, Government has the firm intention to acquire an additional international gateway to Mauritius by the setting up of third submarine fibre-optic cable. This measure, I must say, has received very positive feedback from ICT/BPO operators and the population at large. An additional international gateway will substantially increase international bandwidth capacity; improve international network resiliency; enable route diversity for enhanced internet connectivity and induce competition in the telecommunication sector.

Additionally, existing local telecommunication operators will accelerate the overall of the existing inland telecommunication infrastructure which is primarily based on obsolete copper wire technology to state-of-the-art fibre optic technology and these measures will bring, in fact, a significant increase in internet speed ranging from 10 to 100 times to be offered at a more affordable cost in the months to come.

Furthermore, with a view to bridge the digital divide and create a conducive environment for innovation and information sharing, Government will, as announced in the Budget Speech, set up 350 Wi-Fi hotspots across the island with free broadband internet connectivity.

Madam Speaker the staggering rise of an employment is a deep concern to every one of us and it is hurting mostly women and the youth of the country. Although the ICT/BPO sector has tremendous potential for job creation, yet barely anything has been achieved and, as a matter of fact, the ICT Academy which was set up in 2011 with huge investment by the previous Government had, as main objective, to address skills mismatch and raise employability of our youth. However, it is with dismay that I have noted that this project has been an utter failure as, up to now, not a single person has been trained for the ICT/BPO sector.

I am extremely pleased to note that, as part of my Ministry strategy of making a smart Mauritius, the 2015-2016 Budget makes provision of no less than Rs50 m. as part of the ICT Skills Development Programme and this amount will serve to train hundreds of people to meet the demand for skilled manpower for the sustained development and expansion of the ICT/BPO sector.

Madam Speaker, as part of my Ministry's objective to position our country as an ICT hub and a gateway to Africa, I am pleased to note that the Board of Investment will be given a new impetus in terms of promotion with a view to tap new opportunities and mainly strategically positioning our country as a safe, secure and credible investment destination. The proposed posting of Trade and Investment Promotion Managers in strategic cities around the world including Pretoria will go a long way towards making of Mauritius the gateway to Africa particularly in the sectors of ICT.

Madam Speaker, it is now abundantly clear that, following the presentation of the Budget, we are at the dawn of a new era which sets the path for sustained, equitable and all-inclusive economic prosperity for our country. We shall, of course, leave no stone unturned in our resolve to ensure that we serve the people; not only those who have put their trust in this Government, but the whole nation and to create a truly smart Mauritius where the welfare of the nation will be at the very centre of every action we take.

Let me, therefore, congratulate and thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development who has, even after 25 years of absence from this august Assembly, displayed an *avant-garde* mindset and a very dedicated and innovative approach to give to our country a new hope for a better future. Indeed, Madam Speaker, the Budget has enunciated many bold measures that will lay the foundation for the second economic miracle that is cherished by our hon. Prime Minister.

Thank you.

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

At 5.01 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.38 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River): Madam Speaker, after an era marked by a period of low growth, high unemployment, low savings and unprecedented scandals, abuse, absence of good governance, ethical transgression and poor

implementation of several lumpy infrastructure projects, the nation looked with great expectation to the first Budget of this Government.

This expectation was heightened by the several electoral promises and pledges made during the electoral campaign before the victory of the new Government although I must concede that many of these pledges were made, especially by those who were standing as candidates for the first time, somewhat sincerely or naively. We have been discussing this Budget for nearly three weeks in this House and the proposals are being fully canvassed inside and outside the House. The different segments of our society have had a chance to probe further into the different proposals of the Budget; the experts, the economists, the trade unionists, the stakeholders, have all added their voice to the debates.

And therefore, for me, as I stand today to comment on this Budget, I must say it is with mixed feelings, Madam Speaker, that I welcome the Budget proposals. My approach will not be to criticise just for the sake of criticism, but to offer constructive criticisms in the interest of the nation. One first comment that I will make is that this Budget contains a good mix of seemingly development measures that could restore confidence and social justice through a series of measures to further better our welfare system. The effect of this approach is the feel-good factor, a necessary condition in creating a climate of social stability and an enabling environment for investment. Unfortunately, this feel-good factor has been short lived. As I said just now, when the stakeholders had at leisure probed further in the different measures contained in the Budget, in some cases the bluff was called, in others the naked truth came to light barring other external events which occurred and shook the political scene and marked the desired effect of the Budget.

I will, Madam Speaker, start with a few comments rapidly on the economic situation and the goals of sustained growth. I do not doubt the good intentions of the hon. Minister of Finance. I must say that this Government evidently benefits from a stroke of luck. Yet, I am not sure it has been able to take full advantage of all the converging factors to maximise benefits. Let me explain myself. Indeed, global economic growth is picking up. Let us make no mistake about it. The recent growth in the US is one of the most stable factors. The authorities in the US are lifting off previous quantitative easing to be replaced by a more flexible approach. The main reason is that the US is approaching full employment in a non-inflationary situation which is a rare economic phenomenon. But inflation would soon start to show its nasty nose and interest is likely to rise, if it has not risen.

In the euro zone, Madam Speaker, which was long hit by recession, the economy is recovering slowly with positive growth by the leading EU countries. Germany has exported more commodities outside the euro zone with massive inflows in US dollars. This is a positive sign in return for us with probably a rise in German tourist arrivals and textile exports from Mauritius. We know that when Germany picks up, the economic health of Europe strengthens.

This is why, Madam Speaker, we fail to understand how Government will increase growth and generate new jobs. The persistent low growth and the trendy high unemployment will continue if we do not take stronger remedial actions. Those proposed in the Budget are simply insufficient to achieve the goals set. Have we missed the boat? The Budget rightly says we are at the crossroad and face a bleak future. But it does little to brighten the future, and I fear we will be condemned for another five years to an anaemic growth if we persist in his direction. Indeed, Madam Speaker, do we have to wait for another year, for the next Budget? We know, in addition, the time it takes for the different reform measures to be deployed to fully translate the measures into employment gains.

With this new Government in place, priority should have been given to rapidly create jobs so that the unemployment rate declines by, at least, 1% in the short-term and by 1% each year. Nothing in this Budget permits us to be so optimistic. In the present circumstances, I strongly believe that strong Government intervention was the preferred option. While this was at one time a disputed approach, several economists today agree that Government intervention works if wisely done through proper planning and will bring the desired effect. The South Korean approach transformed Korea's famine-prone economy into a high-tech economy. Narendra Modi's strong intervention so much changed the economy structure of the State of Gujarat that economists around the world are starting to review their theory based exclusively on market forces. Have we, therefore, Madam Speaker, missed an opportunity to make the best when the sun is still shining?

If we delay, there are serious risks for the high level of inefficiency and high social costs. As a population becomes used to unemployment and underemployment settling in the range of 7.5% to 8.5%, loss of dignity, loss of confidence, loss of self-esteem will start haunting them, culminating in social frustration that could be dangerous to society. Not surprisingly, juvenile delinquency, sexual abuse, illicit activities, crimes, burglary and other

undesirable social behaviour typically associated with persistent high unemployment thrive in these circumstances.

The Government, freshly elected with such a clear mandate, has a moral duty to address this issue as a matter of urgency. Failing which, Madam Speaker, our harmonious social fabric or worse, our growth engines, like tourism, maybe seriously exposed.

Madam Speaker, the Budget exercise for this year has clearly shifted the percentage of which we normally invest in capital project to more current expenditure. Of course, we understand that Government had to deliver on pre-electoral promise, especially increase in pension. But, when the hon. Minister of Finance talks that this is a Budget for the next generation, unfortunately, less investment in capital projects does not point toward that direction. That's why to me this is not a transformational Budget. The Government had the opportunity, given the overwhelming mandate they got, to really have a few game changes to develop a new platform for growth, but unfortunately, this was not the case.

My belief is that the hon. Minister started thinking about the direction of travel of the Budget from first deciding that this will be a no new tax Budget, and he worked backwards by then deciding what will be the maximum budget deficit and then he allocated resources. But, I think, given it is the first Budget of the mandate, he could have been bolder and transformational. Budgetary proposal is a question of choice. And of course, funding new ideas is always an issue. My personal belief is that he could have asked the richer people of our society to make an additional contribution, even may for a couple of years, earmarking that money for special projects to build a more resilient Mauritius.

Taxing dividends, taxing high engine cars or taxing corporates to raise, for example, more than 1 billion revenue could have been areas where money could have been raised. Unfortunately, the Rambo Government feared to tread along the steps of Robin Hood.

Madam Speaker, the spectre of inflation. For many years, the economy achieved low inflation. Now this present Government has triggered an accelerated process of depreciation. I fear we may have opened another Pandora's Box. I ask myself if we have embarked on the right path. Madam Speaker, the rupee has been allowed to depreciate for around 17% since January of this year. Given the sustained level of deficit of our current account, maybe the rupee was kept artificially at a high level before, and a readjustment for the value of our currency was necessary to reflect the fundamentals of the economy to make sure the export industry is competitive.

However, the depreciation that took place came too quick and in a very short span of time. This will have a huge and a sudden impact on imported goods prices with the

consequences that it will have on especially the poor people. And the other consequence which we know of will be the windfall VAT that Government will collect as a result of this depreciation of the rupee.

Yet we talk about a no tax budget. This is why, Madam Speaker, I put the question just now if we have embarked on the right path. Have we studied enough the structure of our international trade? Are we sure that by encouraging the depreciation of the rupee, we will achieve the goals set? We are a mature middle-income country aspiring to enter the club of high-income countries. One of our former Ministers of Finance had the dream to transform this country into a high-wage economy. This was a laudable initiative. But this Budget will result in reversing this objective and condemn us to a low-wage, low-tech economy.

Who benefits from such depreciation? The export enterprises, representing some 6% of GDP; the tourism sector, which represents another 5% to 6% of the economy? But what happens to our fuel bill, the price of pharmaceutical products, imported commodities and processed food? What happens to the deficit in the current account contract? What will happen to the price of equipment in our various manufacturing plants and the imports of raw materials? What about the price of fertilisers which is already crushing our already despairing small planters' community? Will the accelerated depreciation encourage exports? Even if it does, taking into account the high proportion of foreign labour and the ageing workforce in our export-oriented enterprises, we may then ask ourselves if such depreciation will positively influence job creation. Will not such a depreciation of such magnitude discourage parents from sending their children to UK, to France or the US, thus impairing the quality of our human capital? Depreciation by its very nature can further impoverish the population.

Madam Speaker, trying to sharpen competitiveness is an excellent goal, but this should be achieved through timely delivery, high quality standards and durability, innovations, designs and research and, above all, enhanced productivity.

Finally, depreciation will unleash an inflationary spiral. It is hard to imagine that, under the present circumstances, inflation will remain only at 3%. I am convinced that Statistics Mauritius will soon revise its estimates and I will not be surprised if, by the end of this year, inflation will slightly rise and will reach about 5%. This Budget document states it is a no-tax budget. However, if inflation rises, it will mean defrauding savers through an inflation tax and negative interest rates. We will be moving inexorably towards higher impoverishment and higher public spending on social benefits while discouraging enterprises.

This is why it is vital Madam Speaker, to keep inflation at bay and, perhaps, this was the only positive economic legacy of the outgoing Government.

The spectre of inflation is on our threshold. We are dreaming of the policies which were effective in the 1980s when we had abundant cheap labour and preferential market for low value products. The structure of our economy, Madam Speaker, has altered significantly and global conditions have changed. Let us not forget that.

Having commented on a few aspects of the economic situation, Madam Speaker, I will now say a few words on a few other sectors and I will start by commenting on the situation in the utilities sector, firstly, on energy. The other day, the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Collendavelloo, in the course of one of his speeches, reminded us how energy is so pivotal to the economic development of a nation.

Indeed, this is why energy cannot be a partisan issue, although political parties have different policies on this crucial matter. Our energy policy rests on, firstly, security of supply and, secondly, on the lowest cost of production. Unfortunately, the Budget Speech hardly addresses this issue, except for a cursory reference in two paragraphs on renewable energy. But what we must know, Madam Speaker, is that many emerging economies such as South Africa, India, Egypt and Turkey are facing power shortages to fuel their economic development. We, in Mauritius, must draw the necessary lessons.

The current situation on supply/demand of our power sector was highlighted in the recent PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition. The reply of the Vice-Prime Minister was very sketchy and I will try to illustrate how.

Following the cancellation of the CT Power Project and the delay of the St Louis Project, our country is, indeed, on a knife edge margin on its supply part of the supply/demand equation. The Vice-Prime Minister himself confirmed that the total capacity of the country is 592 MW. If we deduct 37 MW for the breakdown of the largest unit and 30 MW for scheduled maintenance, the effective capacity would be 525 MW but, in fact, we all know, Madam Speaker, we should have deducted 60 MW for maintenance as it has been done during the past years. In fact, it has been the practice to deduct 60 MW especially as we are on an island. The real effective capacity would, therefore, have been 495 MW when we compare this to the peak load of 460 MW, plus the spinning reserve of 10%, requiring an operating capacity of 506 MW. We see that there is a shortfall of minus 11 MW. The country, therefore, cannot take this risk. And the CEB, to say the least, Madam Speaker, has shown an irresponsible posture. Therefore, we are in urgent need to address the problem of the medium-term prospects for base load capacity.

The choice is stark. In three years, we shall be needing, according to everyone, at least, hundred megawatt. It is good to remind the House that the last addition to our base load capacity was the 30 MW by CTDS and the 70 MW by Savannah and both of these two projects took place during the MSM/MMM Government between years 2000 and 2005. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister was then Prime Minister and after 2003 the hon. Leader of the Opposition became Prime Minister. I was then the Minister of Utilities. But the question we ask, therefore, is what will be our choice for the base load addition of 2018? We are now nearly mid-2015; the choice has to be made now as it takes three to four years to be operational. Unfortunately, I don't know. I have read the different answers of the Vice-Prime Minister - a good friend - and he has been more or less silent on this matter. Therefore, we have no clue whatsoever and, in addition, we have to be cautious with the cost element.

Regarding renewables, Madam Speaker, we know we speak a lot on renewables, but renewables are of intermittent use, even with a sophisticated and expensive smart grid system. Of course, we should encourage its development, but it will never supplement firm power with the currently available technology.

To say a few words on renewables, Madam Speaker, because the hon. Minister has devoted two or three paragraphs in his Budget Speech, we must know that it was from 1990 onwards that the extensive use of renewable energy by most countries started to gain ground. All of them know that the world started to be aware that the carbon footprint would be very costly and corrective measures had to be taken. We have to see what is happening around the world today and the bold decision taken by some countries to realise the seriousness of this issue. Germany will phase out its nuclear power station by 2025 and will reach 30% of its power from renewable sources by 2030.

Australia will phase out its coal power station by 2035. The United Arab Emirates will have 50% of its power from renewable resources by 2025. California will have zero carbon emission by 2030. South Africans are opting for renewable energy rather than coal power station. This is what is happening on the world front regarding renewables and for us, in Mauritius, we need to have an energy mix in our country with renewable energy coming preponderant within the next 20 years. It is only during the past 10 years on the global level that we have witnessed this big evolution in this sector. Technology has now evolved, resulting in the emergence of new technology which has brought down the price of renewables and, at the same time, diminished considerably the carbon footprint. The hon. Minister has referred in his Budget Speech, Madam Speaker, to the proposal of a Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency to be set up.

This is a good idea, but so many years have been wasted. I, myself, in 2008, when we were on the other side of the House, I have the PQs with me, Madam Speaker; I proposed, I remember, to the Labour Government to set up this Renewable Energy Authority and nothing was done. And, you know, what the hon. Minister answered when I proposed whether - the question is whether he will state if Government proposes to set up a Renewable Energy Authority, that was on 06 May 2008, the hon. Minister answers and says: 'Government does not want to opt for an institutional solution whereby there will be a multiplicity of entities which would burden the process.' Nothing has been done.

I even proposed in 2008, Madam Speaker, I remember that Government should come up with a Master Plan for renewable energy. This is the Budget Speech of 2008; years wasted! Although it has been years that we have pledged to shift our power generation options to renewable energy, we have seen but little progress in that sector, and when we were together in Government from 2000 to 2005, although the situation was completely different at that time, we started to install the first wind turbines in Rodrigues. We came up with a Utility Regulatory Act, it was the MSM-MMM Government, I was Minister then. We legislated and voted for the Utility Regulatory Authority Act. We changed the Electricity Act which was 75 years old, but this law has never been implemented, promulgated even, by the former Government. I remember we signed an MoU with the Indian Government for the promotion and development of renewable energy. In fact, it was hon. Gayan who - I forgot whether he was Minister of External Affairs in the MSM-MMM Government - went to India and signed this Memorandum of Understanding.

Years have gone by, Madam Speaker, and, in fact, although, as I said, we are aware of the limitations of renewable energy, but I think in line with what is happening in their world today, we have a duty to seriously consider the promotion of renewable energy in our country.

Madam Speaker, I will just say one word on water, just to express, and this would perhaps shock the House, can I call it like that *la mesure phare du budget* concerning water, was the 6 m³ free of charge to all families in this country. I would apologise to the House, but I do not agree with this measure. Why do you, hon. Prime Minister or myself or anybody, why do we need to pay water less? We, some categories of people, I am not saying the whole nation.

(Interruptions)

Yes. We know there are rich people. You know, Madam Speaker, Mauritius is one of the countries in the world where the price of water is relatively very cheap. Now, we are

making people who can afford, who are wasting water *en baignant leurs chiens, en lavant leur voiture, je ne sais pas quoi, piscine...*

(*Interruptions*)

I agree with you, we should give not 6 m³, more cubic metres of water to those who are really poor, at the bottom of the ladder. I think an exercise could have been done, there is a social register, we know who are the poor people who have registered, we know *qui sont ceux qui bénéficient des prestations sociales*. Of course, it would have been a difficult exercise, but it would have been fairer and hon. Pravind Jugnauth just said, he was right, you know this will cost the Exchequer *R 250 million à R 275 million par an*. This is my figures, I think you said Rs200 m, but, I have been told it is about Rs250 m., this measure of giving free 6 m³ to everybody in this country, to the richest, the magnates, the princes of this country. But, why should we have done that. I agree with that measure totally, but I think we should have done some targeting. We should have discriminated and given more than 6 m³ to those who really can't afford it. In fact, today, as you know, if you consume less than 10 m³ per month, there is a minimum charge of *R 55 qu'on paye*, if you consume less than 10 m³. So, therefore, I think, Madam Speaker, this proposal of 6 m³ indiscriminately free of charge to everybody should have been aimed at poor families, old couples, indigent families and those who, as I said, deserve, in fact, more than 6 m³, but I think we should not have been so generous with people who did not need those 6 m³, Madam Speaker.

I will make a second point now. We appreciate the announcement made by Government, during the campaign, I remember, and after campaigning even recently 'we will provide water *24 heures sur 24 à toute la population*'. I think it is in the budget.

(*Interruptions*)

It is, of course! I am not '*pressé*', I am happy if all our population can be provided with water *24 heures sur 24, mais il y a un problème dedans*, Madam Speaker, and I will come to that problem.

(*Interruptions*)

'*Ivan pour faire li*', of course. I am sorry, Ivan is not here because I am sure he would have appreciated the point I am trying to make. There is something - and the hon. Prime Minister knows that, the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that, I am sure all those who have been serving in Cabinet know - which is called unaccounted for water, non-revenue water. What is this, Madam Speaker? It is this the term generally used to denote the difference between the volume of water produced and the volume of water sold. If you produce so much, you must know when you sell so much how much money do you receive,

but the case for the CWA is that for many years they produced so much and they do not receive revenue for so much water. They receive revenue for that much water. This is called unaccounted for water; it is old pipes, commercial losses, theft, pilferage, for many reasons, but the point I am making, Madam Speaker, is that in 2000, I have, again, the figures with me, *en 2000 et 2005* when we asked questions about leakages, the figures at that time were 47%, 48%, 49%, in those days. In fact, I have even a PQ in 2010, that is, under the Labour Government, where the hon. Minister informed the House what percentage of water do we lose, is wasted; it was about 48% in 2010.

But, today, Madam Speaker, the figure is appalling. In 2005, when we left Government, it was 44.7%, *en 2005*, today it is 57% water that we are losing, unaccounted for water that we are producing in the reservoirs, but then we are collecting revenue for 100% minus 57%. *Donc*, we are losing 57% water today. Today, *donc*, the figures are 57%, Madam Speaker. So, this is indeed very, very alarming again. What need to have been done was not done; the pipes were not changed during the last 10 years, there was no investment, we heard of the Singaporeans coming to Mauritius, but they came and they are working here.

Madam Speaker, unfortunately, it would seem that the situation has not been reversed; on the contrary, the situation has deteriorated. I have a document with me to show, Madam Speaker. In fact, there are six zones in the CWA: the Port Louis zone, the North zone, Mare aux Vacoas Upper, Mare aux Vacoas Lower, the East and the South. The non-revenue water ignores these six zones which range from 68.8% to 56.5%. In one case, it is 59.4% and when we do the average; this is why I came with the figure of 57% today. This is the figure, the percentage for unaccounted water, and this is why, rightly so, I see that Rs20 m. has been budgeted for the next eight years in this Budget for the replacing of old pipes. As I said, Madam Speaker, in the case of only one zone, Mare aux Vacoas Upper only, it represents only 21% of water consumers in this country. The project will amount to Rs734 m. for only one zone out of the six zones. I am told, at the end of the works, the figure, which is at present 56%, will be reduced by only 10%, after having invested Rs734 m. It is a difficult complex task and I am sure the hon. Minister is conscious of the situation and he has announced that Rs20 m. will be budgeted for this difficult problem.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would like just to say one word on wastewater projects. Again, a few measures have been taken about the future projects. Unfortunately, the hon. Minister is not here, I would have suggested to him to revive a project which is an important wastewater project. I am personally concerned because it is a project concerning Constituency No. 14. It is called the West Coast Sewerage Project. Hon. Members of this

House will remember, like hon. Bodha, we did the Grand' Baie sewerage project en 2000-2005. We did many other projects in the wastewater sector. The Plaine Wilhems trunk sewer project was launched by us between 2000-2005.

As Grand' Baie is a resort area, *une station balnéaire*, a village by the sea, we know how importantly urgent it was to implement this Grand' Baie sewerage project and, at the end of our mandate, in 2005, came this proposal to have a West Coast Sewerage Project: Flic en Flac, even from Bambous. Hon. Roopun, I am sure, will remember. In fact, I launched the project a few months before election took place in 2005. After we were ousted from Government in 2005, this project was shelved and we have never seen and heard again of this project.

(Interruptions)

This is the truth! I am not going to come here to lie. I am just regretting and I even asked questions from 2005 to the past Ministers: why can't this project be revived? Madam Speaker, I am not saying it for me; I don't live in Flic en Flac. I have nothing to do with Flic en Flac personally, but it is an important village where there are many tourists. There are many buildings and we know why we do urgently need such projects. It is for the protection of our lagoons in Flic en Flac. It is one of the last beautiful lagoons that we have and I hope this Government will diligently come up and implement this project of the West Coast Sewerage Project.

Madam Speaker, I will now say a few words on the housing sector. There are two or three points which I wish to make. Madam Speaker, I wish to thank hon. Soodhun again for the answer he gave, for the details he gave to this House because I remember again - I don't want to harass the on-going Government, but this is a question also which has been asked many times in this House, but unfortunately the answer never came forward.

Two weeks ago, hon. Soodun replied and gave all the details about the situation in the housing sector, that is, between 2006 and 2014, how many units were built? How many household seekers are on the list of the NHDC today? *Presque 40,000 personnes, ménages où chefs de familles* have applied for a unit at the NHDC. Out of these roughly 40,000 household seekers - there are, in fact, 39,573 household seekers - Madam Speaker, 87% draw an income of less than Rs15,000. Therefore, there is an urgency to re-engineer the whole process of social housing so that we may see in the coming years, new housing estates, *logements sociaux un peu partout dans notre pays*. We have to clear the backlog and I know it is not very easy. The cost of construction offsite, onsite infrastructure and so on, but I make an appeal to the hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Housing to look urgently

into it so that we may start solving housing crisis in our country. I am happy also about the Slab Casting Scheme.

In fact, before the Budget I talked to the hon. Minister and I imparted to him my idea of coming up with a parliamentary question about the necessity to widen the net. Previously the limit was Rs8,500, but now it has been increased and so much the better. Now more families will be able to benefit from this scheme of slab casting.

Last point I wish to make was on the asbestos houses. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the Budget talks of public buildings only. There will be a scheme to get rid of asbestos in these public buildings, but I again appeal to the hon. Minister to come up with a scheme for those poor families who live in these asbestos houses in different housing estates.

The last point I will make on the housing sector concerns the sale of State land in the CHA estates. This was a proposal which the previous Government came up with, but it was a proposal which we made in the Opposition. All of us! Then Government implemented the idea and decided to allow residents of CHA estates to purchase their plots of CHA State land. Unfortunately, on many CHA estates this has not been implemented because either the land is *pas géométriques* or the land still belongs to the sugar estates.

When the houses were built after cyclones Alix and Carol in the 60s, the houses were built by the State without ever making the necessary transaction, that is, signing the deed of sale so that, theoretically, today, on paper, the land still belongs to the sugar estates. Of course, Government cannot sell a plot of land which does not belong to it. That is why the needful has to be done between Government and the different sugar estates.

I do not know why the previous Minister never succeeded in doing this, but I will appeal to the hon. Minister concerned. In my constituency, I know about four of the estates, namely, Case Noyale and Riambel, where these people still do not have their deed of sale. They are still not the owners of the land although the law has been changed to allow Government to sell the plots of land in CHA estates to the occupiers. I do not have the exact figures, but there are thousands of families who are still waiting for this sale to be effected between them and Government.

Madam Speaker, I have skipped two pages on tertiary education and CSR. I will say a few words on one pillar of our economy.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, there was a time when every five years we came with a new pillar of growth, nursed it and fortified it to grow. This is how we built the EPZ, the freeport, the offshore, the seafood hub, the financial sector and the ICT. For the last decade, we - when I say 'we', I mean the past Government and everybody in the the country - have dismally failed, and we must not repeat the same mistake.

For over a decade, Madam Speaker, we have been talking of the blue revolution - not the PMSD revolution - without any project of significance taking place. Unfortunately, this Budget devotes barely a sentence to the ocean economy. It only states the port will become a key contributor to the ocean economy. The hon. Minister had expressed himself forcefully on this issue in the press. I do not know. I ask the question: does he believe in ocean energy, in air conditioning projects or in seabed mining? The ocean is our future, Madam Speaker, and we cannot ignore its immense potential. Is there a change in policy or are we abandoning the ocean economy? To me, this economy is the salvation of Mauritius. We must not lose our faith in this potential pillar of growth. We know what the Seychelles have done. Yet, paradoxically, the impression has been given that this is a Government priority. This is why I take the liberty, Madam Speaker, to appeal again to Government to see to it that the blue economy becomes a reality. We know why!

The traditional activities and the established marine activities include shipping, ship building, fishing activities, port facilities and handling. We also know the coastal tourism and leisure activities, craft building, equipment production for coastal tourism and nautical sports activities. The most important category, that is, the emerging ocean-based industries includes offshore wind, oil and gas extraction in the deep sea, marine aquaculture, marine biotechnology, seabed mining, ocean monitoring, control and surveillance. It is this area that requires both exploration and exploitation. This is why, Madam Speaker, I ask the hon. Minister to promote this sector and scale up Mauritius to the status of an enlightened nation. This is a great idea for a little nation like ours and I am sure that we all understand the potential in this industry.

Having said that, I would, now, say a few words, if you would allow me, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo:...on - this is the political part of it – ethics, good governance, transparency, openness and meritocracy. Madam Speaker, I heard the Rt. hon. Prime Minister talking of meritocracy and transparency, and we felt all elated by his words. However, words are not enough. We want to see action. This Government has to carry out ideas it sold to the electorate. We have seen recently a number of advertisements for high level jobs. We hope that these advertisements calling for the best candidates are selected in the most transparent manner based on meritocracy. At the same time, we will not be fulfilling our duty if we close our eyes on some of the things currently taking place. These posts are funded from public funds and every citizen has a right to equal opportunity.

The Government announced, during the campaign, that it will invite applications to fill vacancies at executive level. However, within weeks, it started violating what it told the population and the electorate. When critics started to rain, there was a *volte-face* amidst confusion. Government then explained that Chairman would be nominated but Chief Executives would be chosen on the basis of competition, meritocracy, concepts that appear in the Budget Speech.

My appeal is that we should not send the wrong signal, especially to our young population who are plunged in a swamp of frustration and despair. It is never too late to remedy the situation. These institutions which have proceeded by sheer nominations should put an end to it. In some cases, we have been told that advertisements have been made tailor-made to fit the profile of specific candidates.

I am convinced that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister would wish to leave a legacy of fairness to the nation. I must commend him for one of his actions which he did this week, Madam Speaker. I think most of us did not realise what happened this week during Question Time. There was an answer to the question put to the hon. Prime Minister which he gave to the House last week. The PQ dealt with the recruitment of Police officers. As far as I know – I have been in this House for sufficiently a long time – for the first time in this House, the answer was unprecedented. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister tabled a list of the names of all the recruits in the Police Force which took place recently.

Again, I do not want to have a go at the previous Prime Minister. I had one. I can show the record to anybody who wishes to see it. I did, one day, asked a supplementary question to the then Prime Minister about recruitment of Police officers. Do you know what was the question? The question was - and I will make this suggestion to the Rt. hon. Prime

Minister – “why is not the name of all recruits of Police officers or civil servants, as soon as they are recruited be published in the Government Gazette?” 500 Police officers are recruited, we do not have to come to this House to ask the Rt. hon. Prime Minister questions, to table the list or give the names. It is automatically gazetted as soon as the exercise of recruitment is over. So, I think, the Rt. hon. Prime Minister has to be commended for that. I suggest that for all the new recruits, not only in the Police Force, but in the Civil Service, their names should be gazetted and this will implement a modern concept of transparency and openness and the Rt. hon. Prime Minister will set strong foundations for any future Government.

We must do that also for the statutory bodies, parastatal bodies, just like we have a Disciplined Forces Service Commission, a Public Service Commission, a Local Government Service Commission, we should have a parastatal service commission, that is, a commission whose task will be to recruit all candidates wishing entering or who have applied for a job in all our parastatal bodies or other statutory corporations. Instead of the Board or the Chief Executive or the Chairman, it should be a board nominated, of course, by the Prime Minister in accordance with the President and so on, as it appears in our Constitution so that just like the LGSC we have a service commission to cater for all our parastatal bodies and our statutory corporations.

In the same breath, Madam Speaker, I would like to again commend the Prime Minister for the parliamentary committee he decided to set up concerning the Chagos issue. Although the Chagos issue, as we all know, transcends political divides or political parties, but this, I hope, will be a first step so that in the future, there is real consultation between Government and Opposition. We know that Government has been elected by the people, is the majority, has been given a mandate to rule this country, but in an open democratic system, we know also that Government, very often, consults the Opposition on major issues. Let this be a first step for further better coordination liaison and consultation between Government and Opposition.

I wish to address, in the same vein, Madam Speaker, on an issue which baffles me and which shook all of us, I think, as Members of this House recently. I am talking, Madam Speaker, of what happened to a few Permanent Secretaries recently. They had to climb the stairs of the Central CID for Police questioning in connection with cases of suspected irregularity or fraud and corruption. All of us, I think, followed these events with a lot of

interest and also sometimes sadness and we saw some of them high-profile Permanent Secretaries or the post above the Permanent Secretary...

(Interruptions)

... Senior Chief Executive - all of them being called by the Central CID, Madam Speaker.

What reflections we do on what happened in this case, Madam Speaker? Ministers have a strong hold on the Ministries they are responsible for and control, especially those Ministers sometimes tend to assume more powers than what our founding fathers in our Constitution gave them. Politics attracts the person who is eager to change society to his own view. The Minister is, therefore, naturally tempted to take actions that yield results in the short term and this is what leads to the administration being subject to political influence. Madam Speaker, it is generally agreed that the Minister and the civil servants each have their role in the initiation, formulation and execution of public policies, neither can and should substitute himself for the other. Modern governance is based on the premises that the separation of rules and functions between politics and administration. The Minister is *le fonctionnaire d'autorité* and the Permanent Secretary is *le fonctionnaire de gestion*. This increases the quality and potential of either of them.

Civil servants should be able to speak the truth to power as it is a vital ingredient, Madam Speaker, of professional ethics and moral integrity of not only civil servants, but the administrative machinery as a whole. According to our Constitution, the Minister is responsible for the good administration of his Ministry within the confines of the Constitution. On the other hand, the Constitution also provides that a Ministry is under the responsibility of a Minister and shall be supervised by a Supervising Officer, Senior Chief Executive or the Permanent Secretary. But, between the political and administrative chambers is found in every Ministry, a grey area, and it is this grey area that political and administrative influences meet and confront each other. Since Ministers share the responsibility for upholding the values of the Civil Service, they too are required to behave according to the highest standards of constitutional and professional conduct in their performance of the duties and to contribute to reduce the risk of politicizing the Civil Service.

It is precisely, Madam Speaker, for this reason that in UK, the British Government has introduced a Ministerial Code which provides guidance to Ministers on how they should conduct the affairs of the State in order to uphold the standards. Madam Speaker, the introduction of such a code in Mauritius will not only help considerably in clarifying the grey area that characterizes the political and administration interface, but it will also contribute

significantly in enhancing public trust in Government. Besides, this code will certainly dovetail the Civil Service Code and the Code on Good Corporate Governance. Of course, the Code for Ministers will not be a rulebook and it will certainly not be the role of the Secretary to the Cabinet to enforce it. Ministers are personally responsible for decisions, how to act and how to conduct themselves. Ministers remain in office as long as they retain the confidence of the Prime Minister. It is, therefore, the Prime Minister who is the ultimate judge of the standards of behaviour expected by Ministers and the appropriate consequences for any breach of these standards.

Madam Speaker, this eventual Code for Ministers would be framed against the background of the overarching duty of Ministers to comply with the law to uphold the administration of justice and to protect the integrity of public life. In Mauritius, the Manual of Cabinet Proceedings is the only document provided to a Minister on his assumption to office. Young and first-time Ministers have to learn all the rest on their job. A Code for Ministers would, thus, not only be an immensely useful guide to all Ministers, but would significantly enhance transparency, public trust and confidence in Government.

Having said this, let me ask the question whether the Permanent Secretary or other officials would be sufficiently protected in the execution of their duties with such a Ministerial Code....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, public officers cannot plead superior orders if they act in contravention of statutory provisions or of rules of procedure if any decision they make is in breach of the laws of the land. The first principle, that should guide the public servants, is that they should do their work without fear and favour with an objectivity which is not always available to the Minister. The Minister and the officials are in close daily touch and it is not always sufficiently understood that the Permanent Secretary is not the Minister's personal secretary. He is the Permanent Secretary to the Government and accountable in many other ways than in the line authority of the Minister himself.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, the worst thing that can happen to the administrators is to allow themselves to be subordinated to a political Government through political pressures, attempt at interference or even, intimidation with threats of punishment, if they are not amenable to personal whims of politicians and Ministers. Therefore, the Permanent Secretary must decide.

If he chooses to submit, he may find peace for the moment, but very soon he will find himself having to cope with opposite pressures. But what if the Permanent Secretary decides

not to submit? At present, the only recourse that he has is to report the matter to his hierarchy; in the case of a Permanent Secretary to the Secretary to Cabinet. But is it sufficient? I would venture to say, Madam Speaker, that this course of action, that is, reporting the matter to the Secretary to Cabinet, does not give him sufficient protection and that there should be an independent institution to which he could resort. The creation of another organisation to handle such issues, disagreement between Ministers and public officials would undoubtedly mean additional expenditure, and we are not suggesting that. But may I, therefore, suggest that the statute of the Public Service Appeal Tribunal be extended to incorporate the settling of such matters. I believe this will go a long way to preserve good constitutional Government and by the same token to prevent the queuing up of Permanent Secretaries in the corridors of the Central CID.

Je termine en disant, Madame la présidente,...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Allow the hon. Member to complete his speech.

Mr Ganoo: Madame la présidente, depuis deux semaines nous nous évertuons à débattre du budget, de ses propositions, de leur impact, de leur pertinence sur l'économie de notre pays. La présentation d'un budget et les débats qui s'ensuivent sont un moment important, un moment capital dans l'histoire d'un pays. Mais en vérité, Madame la présidente, l'économie est tributaire de la politique. L'économie est le concentré de la politique. Je m'explique.

Les effets du meilleur budget proposé à la nation ne sont que limités si le climat politique du pays n'est pas propice et ne favorise pas le développement et l'édification de l'économie de ce pays.

The destiny of a nation is not founded only on economic principles, on financial doctrines and measures.

C'est dans ce contexte que nous devrions apprêhender et analyser l'affaire Bramer Bank et la saga de la BAI, et quelques récents événements survenus dans un passé récent, Madame la présidente.

In fact, the hon. Minister of Finance, when he was answering the PNQ last time, informed the House and the public that the Leader of the Opposition has been in consultation with him on this issue. We all agree that Bramer Bank went against some regulations, ignored instructions to comply with certain banking norms, deviated from prudential management, failed to observe certain mandatory financial ratios and so on. I cannot speak

longer on that because I understand perhaps that there might be a case in court. But what I want to say, Madam Speaker, is that there has been recently in our country, unfortunately...

(Interruptions)

I am finishing! Don't worry!

(Interruptions)

There has been recently in this country events, Madam Speaker, before the Bramer incident, but specifically on the Bramer Bank saga, and as a result of these events, a general background which has resulted in unclear, blurred, inappropriate signals being sent by Government to the financial community and international investors. I am referring, Madam Speaker, to –

- the arrest and the search of a solicitor at the airport, and
- the offer of the SBM to acquire interest in Bramer Bank without any clear assessment of the extent of damages.

We will remember that the SBM came back on its decision. Government's commitment again without any assessment of liabilities being handled, hasty press coverage of events related to the scandal. We heard about the retrieval of Rs1.3 billion by Government within a short period before the licence revocation; open criticisms of the FSC by certain Ministers saying that the FSC was inefficient. This can have a very negative impact when dealing with India for our Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) bearing in mind that it is the FSC rules that govern our DTA. The new bank is created in a few hours, owned by the State to take over the Bramer Bank, with a new CEO designate who is none other than the CEO of the now dead Bramer Bank, and the revocation of the revocation of the licence.

Sur le fond le gouvernement a raison mais pas sur la forme. This is the point I wish to make, Madam Speaker. That is, the unclear signal that we should not be sending to the financial sector, to the foreign investors and to the business community. We should be very careful. This is why, Madam Speaker, we need take stock of this damage that might have been done. We can't quantify it. But we need to take stock of the collateral damage that might have been inflicted on the image of Mauritius and to the financial sector in particular. Government needs to handle the situation with great care. I am saying that because this is a genuine reflection. The perception of Government's action, even if viewed with satisfaction, is seemed elsewhere in the international arena with suspicion. This is why I urge Government to handle the situation with extreme caution and dissipate any ill feelings not only to ensure

continued harmony in our country, but also to refrain from undermining the level of confidence in the global financial community.

Madam Speaker, the nation expected high quality, objective and entertaining debates.

(Interruptions)

I am concluding.

I analysed the Budget proposals critically not for the sake of mere criticism, but because I have tried to open the eyes of those to whom the electorate has bestowed the sacred responsibility of policy formulation and implementation. As a responsible citizen, my démarche has been to adopt a fair approach so that the debates benefit from a better outcome.

There are some measures which are progressive in this Budget and highly satisfactory. At the same time, I believe that this Government had a wonderful opportunity to create a Big Bang effect through a huge investment. But unfortunately, it missed the opportunity. This is why I am afraid the Budget will not have a major impact on socioeconomic affairs. It is sad to say it. The budget proposals are insufficient to bring our country back on the trajectory of high sustained and sustainable growth because some strong actions long overdue had not been taken.

Nevertheless, I wish the Government good luck. I have done.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bodha!

(7.20 p.m.)

The Minister for Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, let me congratulate hon. Alan Ganoo for his speech and the constructive contribution to the debate. He is one of the last Mohicans of the 1982 60-0 victory. We have the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we have the Rt. hon. Prime Minister, and we have also the hon. Minister of Ocean Economy.

Madam Speaker, one day in politics is a long day. Today is 10 April and this is exactly four months when, at this time on 10 December, the people had already made their decision. They had already made their choice and history was in the making. I will come to what we achieved so far. But what would have happened if there was not this cry for change and the change had not occurred? Where would we be today, four months after December 2014? Just imagine where the country would have been! We would have been, I am sure, still working on the Constitutional amendments; we would have been waiting for the date of a Presidential Election, we would have been waiting for a date for a by-election in the No. 5. And what would have happened is that, all that have happened over the whole of the 2014 would have continued. Can we imagine the country, in 2014, when no decision was taken?

When the economy was on an automatic mode, when we know what happened about the politicking and, today, when we say that the growth rate - we can't have a growth rate which is better than last year. I think we should believe in ourselves, we can make it because decisions will be taken. I am glad that hon. Ganoo spoke of the 'Rambo Government'. It is a 'Rambo Government'! That's the fundamental change, Madam Speaker, because hon. Ganoo spoke of mixed feelings, missed opportunities. He spoke a lot about the nostalgia of 2000 and 2005. A lot about that! Yes! But, Madam Speaker, in politics, he said –

"Budgets are not only about estimates, about figures, about statistics about measures, it is about faith".

Do we have faith in ourselves? Do we have faith in the Minister of Finance to deliver? Do we have faith in our nation and do we have faith in our people? The Budget - you have the figures you have the measures, but do we have the capacity to deliver? Can this Government and this team have the vision, the leadership, the resilience, the capacity to see that all these measures become what we want them to become, that is, reality?

Madam Speaker, we must have faith in ourselves, first of all. In 1983, there was one team which took this country from where it was to an economic miracle and to the making of modern Mauritius and that team was Sir Anerood Jugnauth as Prime Minister and the hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo as Minister of Finance. That team delivered in spite of so many difficulties. I still remember the 1983 Budget, the priorities were to correct the imbalances of the economy, the second one was to boost investment and to create jobs and the third one was to help the most vulnerable classes of our society. These were the three priorities of the 1983 Budget, but then, in the given circumstances of 1983, with a split of the MMM, the birth of the MSM, what was the criticism which was levelled from the Opposition? They never believed in it! They never believed we could make it, that's why I am saying that, today, we have faith in ourselves that we can make it. This is the bonding factor of this team, this is what makes us a Government, an alliance, a team so that each Minister can deliver in his Ministry, give to the best of his ability so that we can altogether build this Mauritius we want to build and to achieve what the people wanted us to achieve when we were elected on 10 December.

In 1983, I remember, when we were launching the EPZ - the textile industries - hon. Jean Claude De L'Estrac said –

"M. le président, nous sommes en train de faire de ce pays une nation de chemisiers".

Because we were starting the textile industry! Ten years later, in 1993, he was the Minister of Industry of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, promoting the Mauritian added value in shirts. Why? Again, because we believed in it, we had faith in his Budget, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

We have faith in ourselves, this is my message today. Beyond the statistics, beyond the estimates because what happened on 10 December? Hon. Ganoo has painted a terrible picture of what happened in December. We also have been painting this picture, we know what happened to the country for 10 years and I chose the date of 10 today to say that it is only four months and, in four days, on 14 April, it will be only one year since the remake was unmade on 14 April; it was at Varusha Pirappu, that was the day!

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is only four months and four days. That's why I say in politics a day is long, Madam Speaker. And I come back to what I say, let us have faith in ourselves to deliver, let us have faith in the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth to deliver another second miracle.

(Interruptions)

I have heard some fiery speeches from the new comers at the National Assembly and they were passionate because they want to participate in this rebuilding of Mauritius. I have heard one of the most interesting speeches from hon. Koonjoo - even hon. Ganoo said so - about the hopes of the Ocean Economy. We have set up a Ministry for the Ocean Economy. It is because we have faith in it; we believe in its potential, we believe that we have an Exclusive Economic Zone of 2.7 million kilometres and we can make the most out of it. The other day, we discussed about the Convention, about the research that we can do as regards petroleum products, sea mining and to all that can be done in that area. We have faith also that we can govern this country better, that is why we have created a Ministry of Good Governance. The whole thing is about the way you govern, it is about the role model you have as a Prime Minister, it is about things that you can do as a Minister and things you can't do. And when Sir Anerood Jugnauth is the Prime Minister, Ministers know what they can do and what they can't do. MLAs know what they can do and what they can't do. The sheer presence of Sir Anerood Jugnauth at the head of this team is another testimony that we can achieve what we are saying in this Budget. Madam Speaker, we should also believe in the capacity of our nation because what they said, what they saw and what they did on 10 December show that they love this country and they believe that men and women who love this country can work for them. We are given an opportunity to serve our nation. I have always said we should always remember why we were elected on 10 December, it is an

extraordinarily miracle. It is a political miracle and we should deliver on that. We should believe in our nation and what does our nation expect us. We have been cleaning the country; a lot has been said about all this. We have seen the scandals, we have seen unbelievable pictures and videos; we never thought this would happen in our country, but we have seen it happen. In regard to what we have done in four months, only four months, today, the billions we have given to the needy, to the most vulnerable segments of our society to have a better quality of life. Today, in Cabinet, it is announced, we are going to pay the full subsidy for 30,000 students sitting for SC and HSC examinations.

(Interruptions)

We will honour our pledge. Why? Because Sir Anerood Jugnauth is a man of his word!

(Interruptions)

And we have years to go. Sometimes when I listen to our friends on the other side of the House, it is as if our programme for five years should have been in this budget. We cannot do that. This budget is the laying of the foundation of the making of modern Mauritius. This is what we do. This is because we believe in ourselves and we believe in our nation, and we know what the nation expects us, we know that, we are cleaning the country; we have created a unique wave towards a better future. I remember hon. Ganoo said, I think that 33% of the votes came to us, he has made some calculations, but a few months later, we have heard that 80% of the people out there say that we are doing what has to be done. What does that mean? We are doing better today, four months later, than four months before. People believe in us. That is where our strengths lie; our strengths lie in the leadership, in the vision, in the teamwork and in our capacity to deliver.

Madam Speaker, there have been a number of criticisms which have been made. The hon. Leader of the Opposition said that *c'est un bluff*; hon. Uteem said that we have no ambition. But what is our ambition? We want it or not, Madam Speaker, in the next month, people will expect us to do two things: employment, quality of life, purchasing power, and this budget is all about this. We have to be able to deliver on jobs; we have to be able to deliver as regards the purchasing power of our citizens. We are doing whatever we can for the poor and the needy. We have the Marshall Plan, I am not going to go into details into this, but when it comes to employment there are a number of sectors we have to revive. We have to give them an impetus. I will take just the construction industry, there has been a fall between 11% to 9%, and *comme on dit en français, quand le bâtiment va tout va, quand le bâtiment ne va pas tout ne va pas*. So, all the projects that we are coming up with, but it will

go also with a number of things that we have to change. I remember when my predecessor was sitting and he made speeches, he would make a list of all these projects, he knew all the number of millions by heart. He said this project is costing so much, this project is costing so much...

(Interruptions)

But why don't the Mauritian people want to be in the construction industry; why are we importing labour? Because if we don't import labour, we can't meet the deadlines! Again, why are we bringing Chinese lorries which are 10 years old to carry the soil when we are making roads. So, there are the fundamental changes that we have to bring in each sector just like this is a sector which is mine, but in a number of other sectors, my friend from the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training has set up a committee to address the issue of employability. Why there is the mismatch and how we can address this issue of mismatch in the years to come, in the Smart Cities, in the sector of Innovation and Technology. A new Ministry again, so that we can have this new generation of people having a better income, having a better salary and moving towards a better future.

Madam Speaker, let me come now to the sector of the Public infrastructure. This sector has invested billions and billions over the years and there must be fundamental changes. I am going to take one example. The free bus transport for the students cost Rs800 m.; for the elderly another Rs400 m., the public servants in Government and elsewhere, they cost us Rs660 m. So, in public transport the Government is spending Rs2 billion every year. Totally unaccountable, there is no accountability and I said the other day in the House, we don't know which are the buses; we don't know the drivers; we don't know the conductors; we don't know the number of students who are being carried out. There is no record and what is amazing, there is no contract between the NTA and the service providers since 2006, no contract, no responsibility, no obligation, the NTA has been a paying agent of Rs1.2 billion every year, without receipt.

Now, this has to change, and we have to make the changes. There should be accountability. That's why we said, we will reduce the number of students travelling in the bus, we will have a record of every bus, we will have the buzzer, we will have a conductor, because our children have to travel safely and there should be accountability, but I am asking also the institutions to have one dedicated officer who sees to it that the children, the students have taken the bus before the bus leaves the school yard and, at the same time, the CNT will have to shoulder its responsibility and we should see to it that most students, a majority of

students travel by the CNT, in the best buses and that then the money we are paying to that sector, most of the funds will go to the CNT.

To come back to the CNT, today it has Rs450 m. of debts; it has buses of over 16 years. You have about 400 people overstaffed and I have been told that buses which were sold for scrap, they would enter the garage of the buyer with new tyres and two or three engines inside and spare parts for Rs60,000 or Rs80,000. And there is a mafia as regards spare parts, fuel and tyres. So, we have to put order in all this so that the CNT becomes the most important instrument of land transport in this country with new buses, and if we buy 100 new buses, Madam Speaker, we have 170 buses which are less than five years old, that is 270 buses. With 270 buses and four employees per bus, that's 1,000 buses; we are going to train them. We are going to see to it that they offer a better service and it becomes a model for the country, and we are all about to gain in all this.

Now, we have decided that we will have an advertisement for the post of General Manager. We will see to it that we have somebody who can be the Sarathi of the third millennium. Hon. Rt. Prime Minister knows about all this. I think he inaugurated the 100th bus of the CNT - Isuzu.

Let me now come to the Terre Rouge-Verdun. How can we spend so much money and, at the same time, there is no accountability? I am told here that, for a project of Rs4 billion, the test had cost Rs400,000. Tests were carried at one kilometre from one end to the other and, today, we have huge problems with the collapse. The first day I went there, it was a crack of about 10cm. Today it is a crack of about 1 m 50cm over 150 metres over the six lanes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, this is where the road has collapsed. Then, you have the road where there were the cuts in the mountains. We have stopped the works because we have to see to it that the profiling, the design, the tests are done properly because we will have to make a road for the next 20-30 years, Madam Speaker. I am also very happy about one thing: it took about four weeks to build a diversion of about 450 metres, a two-way so that now we can use the Terre Rouge-Verdun motorway as from 6 o'clock on Monday.

(Interruptions)

4,000 vehicles are going to take that road and I am sure that it will bring some solace, relief to many of us because we all know that we are losing time, we are losing money with the congestion.

Madam Speaker, I have spoken about the Terre Rouge-Verdun. I have spoken about the CNT; let me talk very briefly about the penalty point system. The Bill is ready. It will be presented to Cabinet next week and to Parliament in the weeks to come. I am convinced that we can have a system which is more humane; *qui responsabilise les usagers de la route* and which will be accountable, which will be very simple. I want drivers just to know that on the motorway it is 80 and 110; on the other roads it is 60 and 80. You will have the speed cameras; we are going to relocate some of them. We removed some of them. It will not be *des pièges à camera* and it will be seen from far. I wanted to have it in orange, but I think it will be a bit...

(Interruptions)

So, we are putting it in yellow. On the roads, you will have markings at 300 metres, 200 metres and 100 metres.

(Interruptions)

I hope this will work out. We have to explain it to the people so that it becomes something that is user-friendly and people know that security, safety is as good for them than it is for the others. This is for the penalty point system, Madam Speaker.

When it comes to the decongestion programme, what had happened here? There was a decongestion programme which was presented by my predecessor which cost Rs30 billion. Rs30 billion PPP! But it was a strange PPP. In fact, Government was supposed to take a loan of Rs20 billion and give it to the private promoter, guarantee that loan and there would be a toll so that everybody has to pay.

What have we done? We have reduced the scope of work and we will come up to Cabinet in the weeks to come with a new revised decongestion programme. We will see that all the designs get on the way they have to be done. We will be able in the near future to start a number of projects like the Ring Road Phase II, the Ring Road Phase III from Champ de Mars to Mer Rouge where Mer Rouge is going to be the outlet for the new port development and we will have the M1-A1-M1 over Sorèze so that when you come from Rose Hill, you can branch out at Sorèze either you go to the cyber city and to the new Smart Cities on your right or you take the tunnel and come to Port Louis. I hope that, with the Terre Rouge-Verdun which would have been repaired by then, we will be able to be in a position where we have fluidity in traffic in the next 10 to 15 years because we want to build a new Mauritius with all these cyber cities, with all these Smart Cities, with the Highlands Administrative Centre and all the development that we are having.

(Interruptions)

We are having a flyover at Phoenix. There is a lot to be done, Madam Speaker, and the Budget has provided for this year all the consultancies and all the feasibilities. If everything goes on as it should, we should be able to start works soon. For example, if you are going to enter into Port Louis at Decaen where the Labour party quartier general is; you will not enter Port Louis at Place d'Armes because there is a glut at Place d'Armes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, the most important thing - that is why I am saying that we should have faith in ourselves - is to see to it that each rupee is well spent. We cannot start a road, like the Terre Rouge-Verdun road, starting from Rs2 billion ending at Rs4 billion. We cannot have a roundabout at Caudan starting at Rs75 m. ending up at Rs175 m. We cannot have the Ring Road Phase I costing Rs1.2 billion and it is now costing Rs200 m. because it collapsed. Let me give you another example; the NDU which is no longer under my purview, but under the purview of the Rt. hon. Prime Minister. For five years, there is one company called Super Builders. They got contracts to the tune of Rs1.2 billion.

(Interruptions)

Super Builders! We don't know them! There is another company called Best Contractors to the tune of Rs900 m.

(Interruptions)

I explain the other day in the House that the country was divided into four regions and it was always the same four main players. It was not a surprise - the question was put to me by hon. Rughoobur - that the greatest variation was in Flacq; the greatest budget of Rs600 m. was in Flacq and Colas was the dedicated contractor. But all this must stop, Madam Speaker! This is where we have to see to it that there is governance. The budget cannot say anything because the budget is an estimate. It is in the way we translate this budget in reality which matters. It is in our capacity to deliver in all transparency, accountability and efficacy. That is where the team has to deliver and we are here to do that. The Budget, *c'est un acte de foi*. As I said, the hon. Minister of Finance has addressed a number of issues. I am not going to address the macroeconomic indicators. Suffice it to say that last year no decision was taken; no project was launched, but still we had a growth of three point something per cent and if this year, this Government has the dynamism, the decisiveness and the will to go forward - the hon. Minister of Finance has put a number of Fast Tracks Committees to see to it that projects are on the right track and that the projects can be delivered in time. I think that those projects which are in the pipeline, which depend on one permit, one licence

somewhere and with the fast-track and our ability and our determination, we will be able to have a number of projects which are starting in the months to come.

Madam Speaker, there is a new buoyancy in the tourism industry. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister made a statement saying that this year is going to be a good year.

(Interruptions)

It shall! There is buoyancy in the IT industry. We have to see to it that we have had a growth in the financial sector, to see that what has happened these last days does not jeopardise that growth. We know that in the agriculture industry, we are going to have some problems. But things are set for us to achieve the objective that the hon. Minister of Finance has said he will. As I said, it is a question of whether we believe in ourselves.

Madam Speaker, let me address a few other issues. It is a question of culture, the way you govern this country. It is a question of leadership. Madam Speaker, in 1964, Kenya had the same economic rating as Portugal. 50 years later, where is Kenya and where is Portugal? Zimbabwe was one of the richest, most developed countries in Africa when it got independence. Where is Zimbabwe today? It all boils down to leadership. It all boils down to the one who decides to build a nation. And the difference is clear. We have seen what the former Prime Minister has done to this country and we have seen what hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth has done to this country in the past, together with the Minister of Finance, hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo. That is why we are saying that everything is in the culture. You use political power to do what? We know what the former Prime Minister has done? When I listened to him – we were sitting there, he was writing those beautiful speeches, well crafted, extraordinary words and he was threatening people. He said: “*Si ou envie faire business pas vine faire politic*”.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Bodha: We remember the way he was treating his colleagues and the speeches he made, the crafted words...

(Interruptions)

When we see what was really happening, I think even his former Ministers were flabbergasted. But everything is in the culture of power, the way you promise to the people and the way you deliver.

You will remember, Madam Speaker, we have the voodoo economics. We spoke, in those years, of special funds which were hiding, unspent expenditure, colourable devices, the arrogance, shrouding insignificant economic results in pompous words. We were told that only doctors and economists could become Ministers of Finance. And we spoke, in those years, of green shoots, we spoke of early harvest, we spoke of robust growth, bumper crop, but we are not going to talk about all this. We are going to deliver! Each Ministry and each sector of the economy are here to make the most and to see to it that we give the results that are expected from us.

You remember those days, Madam Speaker, when there was a difference between absolute poverty and relative poverty, insulting the dignity of the poor. But, we are not doing that. We have a plan. We are committed. Because this was one of the ideas we canvassed and we will see to it that in the housing sector, in the social security sector, in the education sector and in the health sector, the most vulnerable groups of our society have the better share. Poverty is a complex issue. My colleague, the hon. Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is not here. It is a very complex issue. Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval addressed this issue in 2010. We have been addressing it. It is multi-faceted, it is complex, but we should be able to address each family, because each family has a poverty equation and we should be able to see to it that when it comes to social security, housing and education, we give them the support that they need, Madam Speaker.

When I say it is about the culture of power, we have a culture of power. In fact, in Mauritius, you have the labour culture and you have the militant culture. Who is the one who has seen to it that the dream, the ideals and the principles of the militant family are respected and we achieve them? It is Sir Anerood Jugnauth!

(Interruptions)

We have achieved the militant dream from 1983 until they joined again in 1991. We achieved the political dream of making hon. Paul Bérenger the Prime Minister of the militant family and we are going again to continue, because we will continue with our same culture of power, that is, we use power in the best interest of our people.

I will come and say one word about the Bramer Bank and the BAI saga. What does it show? Our friends are saying that *dans le fond c'est bon, dans la forme ce n'est pas bon*. The Rt. hon. Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Government took bold decisions, because they have to be taken, otherwise we would have seen a crisis of such magnitude that

it would have been a havoc for the whole financial system of Mauritius. We have been able to address the issue, take decisions and I think that we have saved what has to be saved. Let us see what happens. But Government will stand by those who have policies, who are clients and will stand in the interest of the people of Mauritius to safeguard the image of Mauritius as a financial centre. We have to do it, because when we see how a financial crisis can destroy the credibility of a nation, of an economy. I think that the Rt. hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Finance will see to it that this is done. In fact, today, we were briefed in Cabinet. We will brief the hon. Members of the National Assembly. We will also tell the nation what we are doing and what has to be done in the best interest of the country. Why? Because there was a '*laissez-faire*' culture! It is the '*laissez-faire*' culture of the former Prime Minister which has brought the situation to where it is, just like it was...

(Interruptions)

'*laissez-faire*' in certain cases and '*trop faire*' in other cases, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I come now to this culture of power and I talked about the militant. I will end on a note, Madam Speaker. What are our strengths? Our strength, Madam Speaker, is our capacity to take bold decisions, just like we have taken in the cases of Betamax, BAI and Bramer Bank, JinFei and just like my hon. colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister is taking decisions on the issue of State lands, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Neotown! Our strength is our capacity to take bold decisions. Our strength is our team spirit. This Alliance which was carved in only a few weeks, in fact, has bonded us all for this mandate, Madam Speaker. This team spirit, I have heard, I said, fiery speeches from the newcomers, I have heard the seasoned Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands, hon. Koonjoo say his hope in this Budget. We have seen the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Duval when he saw the urgency of change and the call of a nation, he stood up and came with this in this Alliance...

(Interruptions)

...because there was an urgency for change, because in fact, as I explained, had it not been for the change, where we would be today? There would be a Presidential election, we don't know the dates!

(Interruptions)

I would like to pay tribute to the leader of the MSM because when we left Government in July 2011 we never turned our back again!

(*Interruptions*)

In spite of all those who changed, *les transfuges*! They were looking at us as if to say “you are fools!”

(*Interruptions*)

They were looking at us in an arrogant manner, passing by. And, we stayed there because we believed that sincerity of purpose, resilience, will take us very far. I would like to pay tribute to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, hon. Collendavelloo. Le soldat lalit militant est devenu un général...

(*Interruptions*)

Le soldat lalit militant est devenu un général qui a ses propres troupes et il porte très haut les idéaux...

(*Interruptions*)

Un vrai Militant ! Et il porte très haut le rêve, les idéaux et les principes de la famille militante. Que nous sommes!

Madam Speaker...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker, I said our strength...

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: No cross talking, please!

Mr Bodha: Our strength is our capacity to take decisions, our strength is our team spirit, our strength is our bond with the people of Mauritius. Nous sommes l’Alliance Lepep! And, our strength is also the fact that this Budget translates a dream, a vision in figures, statistics and estimates. But, we have to transform it into reality. When I see the Opposition, Madam Speaker, we know the Opposition is in disarray. The tremors of the earthquake of 10 December and the after-shocks are still here! The after-shocks are still here! The turbulences are still here and deep-rooted! We don’t know what is going to happen. Let us see what happens! When it comes to us, Madam Speaker, this Budget *est un acte de foi*, it is a commitment, a promise, it is a sense of duty which falls on us and I am very happy to be here to stand up and speak on this Budget and to see to it that the hon. Prime Minister achieves what he wanted his legacy - a land of meritocracy, of prosperity where we will all live together, and we are all like a team to make this happen.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Duval!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Debates adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 15 April 2015 at 10.30 a.m.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 7.47 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 15 April 2015 at 10.30 a.m.