

No. 28 of 2013



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2013

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Members

THE CABINET**(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
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Hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed-Hossen	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Surendra Dayal	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
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Roopchand Seetaram	
Hon. Mrs Maria Francesca Mireille Martin	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sutyadeo Moutia	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

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<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
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<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Gopall, Mr Navin (Temporary Transfer to RRA)
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 28 of 2013

Sitting of 19 November 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

OBITUARY- DR. BEERGOONATH GHURBURRUN

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise of Dr. Beergoonath Ghurburrun on 17 November 2013 at the age of 85. Dr. Ghurburrun was born on 14 January 1928 at St. Julien Village where he attended St. Julien Government School for primary education and New Eton College for secondary education. Dr. Ghurburrun then proceeded to France in 1952 for medical studies and studied at the Faculté de médecine de Bordeaux from 1952 to 1955. He also attended the Faculté de médecine de Paris from 1955 to 1956. Dr. Ghurburrun also worked as a medical practitioner in Paris and Morocco.

On his return to Mauritius, Dr. Ghurburrun joined the Mauritius Labour Party in 1960 when the struggle for independence intensified. On 11 November 1963, Dr. Ghurburrun was nominated as a Member of the Legislative Council which he served until 10 December 1963. On 16 March 1965, Dr. Ghurburrun was again nominated to serve as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. On 23 November of the same year, he was appointed Minister of Social Security and occupied that post until August 1967.

He stood for the 1967 General Elections in the Constituency of Piton and Rivière du Rempart under the banner of the Independence Party and was elected Second Member of the said Constituency. He was again appointed Minister of Social Security and he remained in that post until 04 June 1968.

From 11 June 1968 to 25 November 1969, Dr. Ghurburrun occupied the post of Minister of Commerce and Industry. As from 02 December 1969, he was appointed Minister of Communications, a post which he occupied until 29 June 1971. He was appointed Minister of Labour and Social Security on 26 October 1971. On 26 March 1974, Dr. Ghurburrun was appointed Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and occupied that ministerial post until 25 May 1976. From 20 July 1976 to 21 October 1976, Dr. Ghurburrun occupied the post of Minister of Commerce and Industry. He stood as a candidate for the 1976 and 1982 General Elections in Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart, but was not returned.

However, on 27 November 1979, Dr. Ghurburrun was nominated to replace late hon. Mahesh Teelock. Thereafter, Dr. Ghurburrun became Minister of Health, a portfolio which he

occupied from January 1980 to June 1982. In 1983, Dr. Ghurburrun stood again for the General Elections in Constituency No. 5 Pamplemousses and Triolet under the banner of the MSM/Travailliste Alliance and was elected First Member of the said Constituency. He occupied the post of Minister of Health from September 1983 to February 1984. From 13 March 1984 to 30 August 1987, Dr. Ghurburrun occupied the post of Minister of Economic Planning and Development.

He again stood for the 1987 General Elections in the same Constituency, that is, Pamplemousses and Triolet under the banner of the Alliance MSM/Mauritius Labour Party and was elected Second Member of the said Constituency. From September 1987 to 05 August 1991, he occupied the ministerial post of Economic Planning and Development. He then retired from active politics and did not stand as a candidate at the General Elections of 1991.

Dr. Ghurburrun was also quite actively engaged in social work and contributed significantly to charitable institutions, particularly the Gandhi Breedh Ashram in Petit Raffray. In June 1969, Dr. Ghurburrun was conferred the title of *Officier de l'ordre National Malgache* and on 28 July 1990, he was conferred the title of *Officier de la Légion d'Honneur*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I request you to be kind enough to direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the deep condolences of Government and of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): Mr Speaker, Sir, I join with what the hon. Prime Minister has just said and would also request you to convey our condolences to the family of the deceased former Minister.

Mr Speaker: I associate myself with the tribute paid to the late Dr. Beergoonath Ghurburrun by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the assurance of our sincere and deep condolences.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIV of 2013).

B. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities –

- (a) The Radiation Protection (Licensing of Radiation Practices) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 256 of 2013).
- (b) The Radiation Protection (Registration of Radiation Sources and Facilities) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 257 of 2013).

C. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Annual Report 2012 of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council.

D. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 258 of 2013).
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 20) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 259 of 2013).
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 21) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 260 of 2013).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

STC - DIESEL & MOGAS - PRICES

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to diesel and mogas, he will

—

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the -
 - (i) reasons why the price thereof has not been reviewed downwards, since 01 March 2013, indicating the total sum paid into the Price Stabilisation Account, since then;
 - (ii) freight and insurance rates and premium paid to the supplier thereof, as at 01 March 2013 and as at to date, respectively;
 - (iii) total hedging losses paid as at to date, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given for the levy of one rupee per litre on the price thereof to finance the Bus Replacement Mechanism, as announced in the Budget Speech, to be reviewed.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) (i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the Petroleum Pricing Committee (PPC) met on 01 March 2013 and five more times since then, the last meeting being held on 31 October 2013. At its meeting of 01 March 2013, the PPC recommended an increase in the retail price of Gasoline and Diesel after examining the figures submitted by the STC and applying the Regulations in force governing those prices.

The price for Gasoline was increased from Rs49.30 to Rs52.25, that is, by 5.98% and for Diesel from Rs41.20 to Rs43.95, that is, by 6.67%.

I must point out here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that these increases came about no less than 23 months after those prices were fixed on 30 March 2011. Over that period, the price of petroleum on the world market had fluctuated enormously and had been generally on the rise since the

beginning of 2011. In addition, the rate of exchange of the rupee against the dollar had risen from Rs30.50 to Rs31.25.

The Price Stabilisation Account (PSA) put in place to mitigate fluctuations in retail prices, which was positive by Rs198 m. in February 2012, had by end February 2013 been depleted and was furthermore in deficit of Rs305 m. What this implies is that the Price Stabilisation Account of the STC had, over a period of one year, contained the retail price of Gasoline and Diesel by injecting as much as Rs503 m. in the price structure. However, as at end February 2013, the PSA could no longer be resorted to absorb the increased cost. This is already provided for in the Regulations as the impact of the increased cost in the retail price exceeded 5%.

In subsequent meetings of the PPC, that is, since March 2013, the changes in cost of petroleum products never reached the critical points at which further increases or decreases could be envisaged.

I wish to enlighten the House on the mechanism of the PPC, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In the event of a decrease in world market prices and if the percentage decrease between the calculated price and the current retail price is below 7%, there would be no change in the retail price and the difference is credited to the Price Stabilisation Account. If the decrease is between 7% and 10%, there would be an equivalent decrease in the retail price and in case the decrease is more than 10%, the decrease would be restricted to 10% only.

In the event of an increase of world market prices and if the percentage increase between the calculated price and the current retail price is below 5%, there is no change in the retail price. Funds from the Price Stabilisation Account are then used to offset the loss incurred by the STC. Again in the same way, if the increase is in the range of 5% to 15%, the increase will be passed on to the consumer. In the event the increase is more than 15%, the retail price change will be restricted to 15% only.

After examining the figures submitted by STC in respect of all consignments imported since March 2013, the PPC found that there was no ground on the basis of existing Regulations to effect any change in the prices fixed on 01 March 2013, either upwards or downwards.

This does not mean, however, that decrease in world prices impacting on the cost to STC is not recognised or acknowledged. At its last meeting of 31 October 2013, the PPC recorded a decrease in the price of Gasoline of the order of 4.5% and for diesel of the order of 3.24%. Since these percentages were below the critical 7% threshold to approve a decrease in price, the PPC decided to maintain the prevailing prices and to allow all surpluses achieved by STC to be credited to the Price Stabilisation Account. As I have said earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is to shelter the market from eventual cost increases as is always the case with the fluctuations in oil prices worldwide.

As a result of keeping prices unchanged despite minor decreases in oil prices, the Price Stabilisation Account has now covered the deficit in which it found itself in March 2013 and is now showing a positive balance of Rs281 m.

I, further, wish to inform the House that the Chairperson of the Petroleum Pricing Committee has made pertinent observations regarding the functioning of the mechanism of the PPC. These observations have been communicated to me.

The most pertinent observation is that the mechanism has largely achieved its objective of stabilising retail prices of Gasoline and Gas Oil on the domestic market. However, the limits set out initially to trigger price increases or decreases to reflect prevailing world prices might need to be adjusted. When this is done, limits can also be set to the surplus or deficit that the Price Stabilisation Account can hold.

In September 2013, about seven weeks ago, I requested the State Trading Corporation to propose a review of the said mechanism in the light of experience acquired so far.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since March 2013, the total sum paid into the Price Stabilisation Account is Rs586 m. Of this amount, Rs305 m. have served to cover the deficit as at end February 2013, and the present surplus of the PSA is Rs281 m.

This situation was to be expected as we are going through a relatively stable oil market situation since March 2013. As a matter of fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, Brent prices have been fluctuating between USD 100 and USD 120 per barrel with an average of USD 109. This is only slightly lower than the average price of USD 111 in 2012.

Over the last three years, Mr Speaker, Sir, periodic oscillations with amplitudes for increases higher than decreases have characterised oil prices on the world market. On average, prices have been on an increasing trend and it is, therefore, wrong to focus on a short lapse of time only when there is a temporary drop in prices.

For further information of the House, in India, prices rose for seven times over the period June to mid-September 2013, the last increase being Rs1.63 per litre. In September alone, there were two increases amounting cumulatively to a total of Rs4.78, only to see, in October last, a minor reduction of Rs1.15 per litre of Gasoline, but accompanied by an increase of R0.50 per litre of Gas Oil.

In Madagascar, right in the midst of the elections, prices were increased over the last weekend by an average of 0.035 Euros, that is, roughly Rs1.44 per litre.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed as follows –

Freight paid to the shipping company is made up of three components –

- (a) basic freight at the rate of USD17.18 per Mton of cargo;
- (b) bunker cost, which varies according to the price paid by the shipping company from trip to trip;
- (c) port dues at loading port and discharge port.

The total freight paid for the last tanker, which arrived in October 2013, amounted to USD 1,792,992 for a cargo of 63,069 Mtons. This works out at R0.73, i.e. 73 Mauritian cents per litre, i.e. 1.66% of the retail price of Gas Oil and 1.4% of the retail price of Mogas.

As far as insurance rates are concerned, I wish to inform the House that, after a tender exercise carried out in July 2010, the State Trading Corporation allocated the Marine Insurance Cover Policy for petroleum products to Mauritian Eagle Insurance Company Ltd for period 01 August 2010 to 31 July 2013, at the rate of 0.034%. This policy was extended up to end September 2013.

In August 2013, following a new tender exercise, the Marine Insurance Cover Policy was awarded to Mauritian Eagle Insurance Company Ltd at the reduced rate of 0.030% for importation of petroleum products for period 01 October 2013 to 30 September 2016.

Premium now, Mr Speaker, Sir: premium agreed between the STC and MRPL is of a commercial sensitive nature, and cannot, as per provisions contained in the Supply Agreement (which contains a Non-Disclosure Clause), be disclosed without prior approval of the supplier. I wish to inform the House that, for the ongoing Supply Agreement, covering the period 01 August 2013 to 31 July 2016, premium has been revised downwards. Furthermore, in a spirit of transparency, I am most willing to make the hon. Leader of the Opposition privy to the Supply Agreement and, therefore, invite him to consult the said Agreement if he so wishes.

With regard to paragraph (a) (iii), Mr Speaker, Sir, the total hedging losses incurred and paid to date amount to Rs4.94 billion, inclusive of interest, but this has been canvassed a number of times in this House.

I wish to inform the House that the item Hedging Loss Recovery was amounting to Rs1.25 per litre on Gasoline and R1.00 per litre on Diesel, and these were removed from the price structure of these two products with the price change of 01 March 2013.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, the difficult financial situation of bus operators is known to one and all. The frequency and quantum of increases in the bus fares do not enable these operators to be financially viable for the timely replacement of their buses even for the purchase of conventional buses, which are at present being operated for public passenger transport.

In order to ensure a notable improvement in the quality of bus services, there is an urgent need to come forward with a mechanism which will enable bus operators to replace their buses, as and when required, by modern and eco-friendly buses, which will meet the expectations of the travelling public, and change the transport landscape in consonance with the development of the country. The proposal for part funding for the purchase of up to 2,000 buses over the next five years by semi-low floor buses, complying with at least Euro III emission standards, can only be achieved through the mechanism announced by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development in his Budget Speech.

Supporting bus operators, Mr Speaker, Sir, to improve the quality of public transport is a practice followed in many countries, and direct Government intervention to that effect is normally resorted to. As yet, about 175 buses used for public transport (i.e. about 10% of the fleet) are over 16 years old, and need immediate replacement.

The modernisation of our buses has been on the agenda for years, but as yet only four semi-low floor buses are in operation. With this trend, it will take years, if not decades, to realise a full modernisation of our bus fleet, if Government does not partner with bus operators to meet the marginal cost of semi-low floor buses, as compared to conventional buses.

This partnering, Mr Speaker, Sir, should be viewed as a support to benefit commuters, in terms of convenience, comfort, efficiency, reliability and safety, and not simply as a subsidy to bus operators. It is also noteworthy that our elderly, disabled persons and children encounter considerable difficulty to have access to public transport facilities, owing to the high steps and the high floor level of the buses now in operation. The replacement of these buses by semi-low floor will bring a major boost to the mobility and quality of life of these persons.

The House may wish to note that the Government of Singapore has recently acquired 600 semi-low floor buses, and has made these buses available to bus operators on a long term soft loan scheme. This measure was taken in Singapore, in view of the dire financial situation of the bus operators.

I wish to further inform the House that, in terms of accounting, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we include that one line, that R1 levy, this will automatically deduct R1 from another line on the price structure, which is adjustment. Therefore, the overall impact will be zero. The overall impact of the introduction of that R1 levy will be zero because this will adversely affect the line adjustment, and I can assure the House that, following this, there will be no increase in the selling price, in the retail price of gasoline or diesel. I repeat: there will be no increase in the price of gasoline and diesel, as a result of this measure. Now, if the price of oil increases on the world market, this is another story.

The amounts collected under the Bus Companies Recovery Account (BCRA) are by far inadequate to fund the bus replacement programme. This Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, is conscious of its commitment to improve the quality of life, including the quality of public transport, and Government imperatively had to come up with a mechanism to ensure this improvement. The measure announced for the levy of one rupee per litre on the price of Gasoline and Diesel will serve that purpose, and is an integral part of Government policy.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has acknowledged that prices have been going down since 01 March. He referred to poor Madagascar, as an example, where prices have gone down, but he did not refer, for example, numerous countries across the world where, since 01 March, decreases have taken place. Is he aware that such has been the case last week in Kenya, for example?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not deny the fact that in many countries there are fluctuations in the retail prices of petroleum products. I have said in my intervention that, with the introduction of the PPC mechanism, this has allowed to keep stability on a long term basis in retail prices. For example, I mentioned the case between 2011 and 2013. For nearly two years, 23 months, prices have been kept stable, in spite of the fact that prices were going up. Therefore, this is a flattening structure, Mr Speaker, Sir. It does happen that, at one moment in time...

(Interruptions)

there is an increase in prices, in cost, and the Price Stabilisation Account will absorb the increase, and maintain the price at a level that is affordable. Then comes a time when the PSA can no longer support that, and then prices increase.

What used to happen before that, Mr Speaker, Sir, was with the automatic pricing mechanism, the automatic pricing mechanism used to cause a great instability in prices, and prices would change every month. There would be total unpredictability in budgeting, not only for companies, but also for households and this would cause – I think everybody remembers that – long queues at petroleum stations at every end of month when the automatic pricing mechanism would be meeting and, of course, this has helped tremendously to contain inflation and to help budgets of households.

Mr Bérenger: The bottom line, Mr Speaker, Sir – and I am sure the hon. Minister will agree – is that since the 01 March across the world prices have been going down, not in Mauritius, and the results, he has just given us the figure, a massive Rs580 m. has gone into the Price Stabilisation Account since 01 March 2013. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that, at least, part of that Rs500 m. should have been passed on to consumers?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition or the Opposition in itself did not say anything when the deficit of the Price Stabilisation Account stood at Rs305 m. in February 2013. There was then no talk of increase in prices. The Rs586 m., which have been collected now, represent a surplus of Rs281 m. which is less than what has been collected and I have also said in my main reply that I have requested STC to come up with a proposal to review the mechanism of the PPC. I will wait for the recommendations of the STC and Government will decide on a way forward. Certainly, the Price Stabilisation Account and the PPC system have been operating perfectly to stabilise prices, and especially to contain inflation.

Mr Bérenger: I listened to the hon. Minister carefully. Am I right in saying that what he has informed us is that freight rates and insurance are now negotiated by the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I don't think I said that. No, I did not say that. Let me re-read very briefly my answer to that. I said freight paid to the shipping company contains three components; basic freight at the rate of 17.18 US dollars, then bunker cost which varies. It depends on what the shipping company pays.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: As far as changes in premium are concerned, the hon. Minister referred to confidentiality clauses once again, and then offered me, supposedly, to turn into a '*bhai looké*', and I don't know what happens then to the confidentiality - when I look at you I thought I saw the MBC behind you, when, in fact, somebody from your ...

(Interruptions)

Am I right in saying that, at least, as far as the premium paid to the supplier is concerned, this is negotiated by the STC and as a result of it being negotiated by the STC, has gone down, as the hon. Minister has said?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I did not treat the hon. Leader of Opposition as '*bhai looké*', but, I mean, that's his own words, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did not call the hon. Leader of Opposition '*bhai looké*'. He called himself '*bhai looké*'.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am sure, understands that the supply agreement concerns the STC, on one hand, and MRPL. We do not represent MRPL. If in the

supply agreement there is a confidentiality clause, we have to respect that. However, my invitation to the hon. Leader of the Opposition stays good.

Concerning the premium, the premium negotiated with MRPL actually was negotiated by the State Trading Corporation after obtaining independent expert advice from petroleum consultants and neither the freight nor the insurance rates have been negotiated. The freight rate is established by a contract. The insurance rate is obtained through tender. We are in a long-term contract for tender and the premium rates have been negotiated by the STC with MRPL and have been reduced.

Mr Bérenger: My question is: has the premium paid to the supplier always been negotiated by the STC or negotiated by others before and, as a result of STC negotiating, it has gone down? This is my question.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: To my knowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir, the premium rates have always been negotiated by the STC.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has given us the figure for total sum paid for hedging losses, Mr Speaker, Sir; Rs4.9 billion that have come out of consumers' pockets. Does the hon. Minister have the total sum paid into the *MID* Fund, being given that we have been informed in the course of the presentation of the Budget that this Fund is going to be wrapped up? How much in total has been paid through this levy for the *MID* Fund?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I have the figures here, Mr Speaker, Sir. In 2011, Rs124 m. were paid to the *MID* Fund; in 2012: Rs126 m.; and it is estimated that for 2013, the total sum would be Rs132 m.

Mr Bérenger: Since the hon. Minister has the figures with him, can he tell us how much has been spent out of that contribution by the consumers through that levy, how much has been spent, and how much transferred to the Consolidated Fund?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The *MID* levy is levied by the STC and goes to the Consolidated Fund, Mr Speaker, Sir. From there on, I would not be in a position to answer the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Bérenger: The consumers would like to know. Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, if I can move on to this levy of one rupee to pay subsidies for the private bus companies to purchase buses. I

could understand if one told me that there will be no increase in the bus tariffs, because the hon. Minister said there would be no increase in the price of diesel and mogas. But, I did not hear him say that there will be no further increase in the bus tariffs, because the last one, as we know, goes back, not long ago, to August, 12% increase in the tariffs - and I am sure - will the hon. Minister agree with me that this must have been included to what the private companies need to renew their buses? Can the hon. Minister tell me why, although an increase in tariffs of 12% was granted in August, a few weeks later we have this time to impose on consumers a levy of R1 per litre for the same purpose, amongst other things, renewal of bus fleet?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Following information which I obtained from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, I can assure the House that there will be no increase in bus tariffs as a result of this.

Mr Bérenger: I am not saying as a result. I am saying in the absolute because the tariff includes renewal of bus fleet. Can I know from the hon. Minister how much will be collected per year through that levy? The figure of Rs240 m. per year has been calculated all over the place these last days. Is an estimate available, whether that figure of Rs240 m. per year is correct?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: The amount collected with this levy will be slightly more important than the Rs240 m. It will probably be around Rs350 m., Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister aware that this R1 levy, the increase in the levy and so on, is going to be paid by the small operators, and the big operators are going to be helped supposedly *à travers* this Fund? Is he aware that all those measures, including that levy which is going to be translated through the price of diesel and Mogas which the small bus operators – the *bus individuel* – pay, that, in fact, they are in even more difficulties than in the past? I am talking of the small bus operators and *les bus individuels*. So, what will be done to help them survive and renew their fleet?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr understanding, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the Bus Fleet Renewal Scheme does not concern exclusively companies, but also addresses small operators and probably even more so. Then, I would say that this question would better be answered by my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

(Interruptions)

Of course, I mean I don't manage transport!

Mr Speaker: Last question to the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: My last question would be not to the hon. Minister; he has just referred me to his colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. My question is: being given the situation and the startling figures that we have just been provided for in terms of hedging losses, in terms of how much money will be collected through this special levy and so on, will Government consider seriously now bringing down the price of diesel and mogas as has happened across the world and cancelling this levy of R1 per litre which, I must point out, comes on top of the Rs1.85 per litre already collected and paid to the RDA?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2005, the Automatic Pricing Mechanism was still in force. It was supposed to meet every quarter. It was supposed to meet at the end of June or early July. It was evident that if the Automatic Pricing Mechanism were to meet and make the prices public, prices of diesel and gasoline would have gone up by 15%. That was on the eve of the elections which were due on 03 July 2005. The then Government decided to postpone the sitting of the...

(Interruptions)

Automatic Pricing Mechanism Committee...

(Interruptions)

for three months later because...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say silence!

(Interruptions)

I want some silence!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: ... they feared that prices would go up, that they would lose votes and lose the elections. However, they did lose votes! They did lose the elections, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

We do not interfere...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Allow the hon. Minister to answer!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: We do not interfere with the Petroleum Pricing Committee.

(Interruptions)

If the mechanism of the Petroleum Pricing Committee comes to the conclusion that...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say silence, now!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: ...prices have to be reduced, then prices have to be reduced. There is no interference from my Ministry or from the STC into that. It is an independent committee which operates independently.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/930 and B/931 addressed to the hon. Minister of Fisheries will now be replied by the hon. Prime Minister. In keeping with practice, PQ B/930 and B/931 will be replied at the end of the Prime Minister's Question Time, time permitting. Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Jhugroo!

AIRPORT TERMINAL (NEW) – SHOPS – RENT

(No. B/891) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the new airport terminal, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Airports of Mauritius Limited, information as to the number of new shops operating thereat, indicating in each case, the rent payable therefore.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me remind the House that the Airports of Mauritius Limited and Airport Terminal Operations Limited as any company governed by the Companies Act and its Constitution have their own internal procedures to allocate commercial spaces for the operation of shops at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport. The management of the companies is vested in their Directors and their Management. As such, I would have refrained, on the grounds of lack of ministerial responsibility, from giving details about commercial contracts and the allocation of commercial spaces to operators at the Airport.

However, while respecting and upholding the provisions of the Companies Act by which any Company must abide, with the consent of the board, I have decided to seize this opportunity to give some clarifications to the House given that there have been some gratuitous baseless allegations and innuendoes made in the House, in fact, by the hon. Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien during his intervention on the debates on the Budget 2014, and relating to the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise (MDFP) and the allocation of shops in the New Passenger Terminal.

First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me state categorically that, as at today, I am advised that no contract for the management of the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise has been awarded, contrary to the false and malicious allegations being made. Such allegations can only be the product of a hallucinatory imagination...

(Interruptions)

or deliberate in order to pursue their well-known tactics of mud throwing and denigration.

I am further informed by the Management of Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL) that after consultations with Airports of Mauritius Ltd (AML), its Board at its meeting of 05 October 2011, had taken the decision to relocate all the concessionaries who were operating at the old Terminal to be relocated at the new Terminal on new commercial conditions.

ATOL, therefore, has not allocated any new commercial space for any shop to operate at the new Passenger Terminal.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House what measures have been taken by Airports of Mauritius Limited to recover huge amounts of money which represent the unpaid rent for these commercial shops by some tenants?

The Prime Minister: On the contrary, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have a new commercial agreement where they are paying much higher rental than they used to before.

(Interruptions)

of course, they are paying all the rents. That's what you are saying, but it is not the fact!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Prime Minister say whether the contract of Heinemann which was supplying duty free goods to MDFP had been terminated and that the new company which is now supplying those goods is Dufry?

The Prime Minister: Not quite, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would rather not; this is a different issue. If you want to talk about Heinemann, I would be very glad to talk about Heinemann; how did they get the contract in the first place. What is, in fact, a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have suppliers who still supply MDFP for products that the MDFP then put on sale. Dufry only does, I think, what they call liquor, tobacco, confectionaries and all those things. But otherwise you have a list here of all the suppliers who used to supply MDFP before and they are still supplying. They are the same suppliers. I can give you a list. It includes your brother-in-law in that list.

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister table a list of all the commercial tenants occupying spaces at the new terminal.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I have no difficulty in that, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would rather ask the Board because I don't want to interfere in the company, but I have no problem in giving that.

Mr Roopun: I understand that all the previous tenants are being relocated. I wish to know in addition to those who have been relocated whether there are still empty spaces to accommodate other economic operators within the new terminal?

The Prime Minister: Not to my knowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten the House whether the commercial space at the old terminal and the commercial space at the new terminal is the same?

The Prime Minister: It is not the same. It is a new terminal. It is obviously not the same.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister then that the operators who were granted space in the old terminal have been granted new space, is it additional space?

The Prime Minister: No.

Mr Bodha: Is the number of shops the same?

The Prime Minister: The number of shops is exactly the same, shifted from one to the other.

Mr Jhugroo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, being given that specifications regarding previous tenders have changed, why Airports of Mauritius Ltd has not gone for a fresh tender before the allocation of spaces to these previous tenants?

The Prime Minister: It is very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir, these tenants have been there - and I can give you a list – since a long time. They have had quite experience. It was felt...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I can give you the list! It was felt that it's fairer to allow the tenants who were there at the old terminal to move into the new terminal. That is what has been done.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question!

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Prime Minister is saying that the amount of space in the old terminal is the same as the new one.

The Prime Minister: No, I did not say that.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Prime Minister just said.

The Prime Minister: No, I did not say that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: So, in that case, if it is different, may I know why a tender exercise has not been carried out?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let us listen to the question!

Mr Jugnauth: May I know why a tender exercise has not been carried out for the additional space that now contains in the new terminal?

The Prime Minister: No. Mr Speaker, Sir, what has happened is that they were operating in the old terminal. Obviously, the new terminal is a larger space. The same people have been given the larger space - a new commercial contract - so they pay higher rent. But it is the same people who have moved to the new airport terminal.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Bérenger: Can I put one question?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, I just heard him - I don't know if it is *saper* or what - say that he is going to give the list, the list of all the tenants before. And now, well, for transparency sake, can we have the complete list which he has offered to table with the space before and after and the conditions before and after?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I said I have no problem in giving it provided the Board accepts that I give it because it is a commercial...

(Interruptions)

But I am sure they will accept because they are the same. Where would the problem be? I can even give the list of those who are supplying the MDFP. I also can give you that list and it is the same people again starting from 2001, 2002 coming on. They are the same people.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(Interruptions)

DRUGS - BLACK MAMBA – MEASURES

(No. B/892) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the drug commonly known as *Black Mamba*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the quantity thereof estimated to have been introduced in Mauritius, indicating the measures taken or that will be taken to prevent the proliferation thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a new type of drug ‘Synthetic Cannabinoids’ is suspected to have entered the local market, and *Black Mamba* is one of the street names for Synthetic Cannabinoids. This new type of drug was, however, not covered under the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000.

In order to address this issue, the Police Department has had consultations with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Mauritius Revenue Authority and the Forensic Science Laboratory. Subsequently, the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life has by way of Regulations, included Synthetic Cannabinoids and their derivatives as dangerous drugs in the First Schedule of the Dangerous Drugs Act on 08 October 2013.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that following the promulgation of the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment Schedule) Regulations, no case of sale or consumption of this new type of drug has been reported.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on several occasions stated that we should be merciless and ruthless against drug trafficking. In this respect, Government has taken a lot of measures to deal with the issue.

The Asset Recovery Act was amended in 2012 to strengthen the powers of the Enforcement Authority. It provides for action to be taken in respect of unlawful activities carried out within 10 years before the commencement of the Act. This retroactivity was necessary to deal, *inter-alia*, with ill-gotten gains of those involved in illicit drugs.

Intelligence-led Policing, Prevention strategies and Enforcement strategies are being implemented by the Police. Also, the Police is working in close partnership with the Mauritius

Revenue Authority and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to tighten security so as to prevent the entry of drugs at the port and airport.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Mauritius Revenue Authority is using sophisticated scanners to identify suspicious material in imported parcels and packets. The use of sniffer dogs for drug detection is increasingly being resorted to and we are purchasing additional dogs from South Africa. The Mauritius Revenue Authority is also using the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) to gather, share and disseminate information related to drugs among members of the World Customs Organisation.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that regular inspections are also carried out in pharmacies to ensure compliance with the Pharmacy Act and Dangerous Drugs Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, an amount of Rs25 m. has been provided in the 2014 Budget for the acquisition of a High Resolution Mass Spectrometer for the Forensic Science Laboratory. This sophisticated equipment will enable the Forensic Science Laboratory to carry out further analysis of chemicals or other substances.

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

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why it took so long for these drugs to be declared as dangerous drugs because it was reported already in the press since March and April this year and also whether the officers of ADSU and other units of the Police have been trained regarding all aspects of this drug?

The Prime Minister: It is not quite right, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a new synthetic drug as I explained at the beginning. The first case that was found was in 29 August 2013 where the Police were searching a house and they found this matter which was then confirmed to be *Black Mamba*. And then, from September 2013 to October 2013, the ADSU personnel, based at the parcel post office, had jointly with customs, intercepted and tagged several parcels which had been referred to the Government pharmacists on the ground that the hazard labels on these parcels looked doubtful. And from there on again a series of *sachets* were confiscated confirming

that these are the Synthetic Cannabis. So, this is since when? As soon as this has happened, we have added that on the list of dangerous drugs. We have amended the schedule as I explained and this is what is happening now.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Mr S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the ever changing face of the drugs scene in Mauritius and in view of a fairly inefficient communication cell at the Trust Fund for the rehabilitation of drug addicts, could the hon. Prime Minister kindly consider the setting-up of a kind of Drug Observatory so as to keep the population, the parents and the educators informed of what's new on the market so that we may take the necessary precautions?

The Prime Minister: In fact, they are doing that, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are series. I could go through the whole list, series of lectures that they give and they go to communities one by one. But, I must also say the scene is changing not just in Mauritius, it is changing all over the world.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of whether there are other new synthetic drugs which are on the market and whether there have been arrest in those cases and whether the regulations have been amended to provide for other new synthetic drugs besides the *Black Mamba*?

The Prime Minister: Yes. That's what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir. There are new types of drugs. They are called the synthetic cannabinoids that include the *Black Mamba*, but it is not the only member. That is why we have already amended the schedule to include all those in it.

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, il y a beaucoup d'ONGs, de travailleurs sociaux comme Ally Lazer et le centre Dr. Idrice Goomany qui mènent déjà une campagne de sensibilisation, de prévention concernant cette drogue mais ils déplorent le fait qu'il y ait très peu de centres pour réhabiliter les jeunes concernant ceux qui sont surtout sous l'influence de cette drogue.

Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, if he can set up a committee under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and all the stakeholders so that new centres be built to cater for the

youngsters, and also these existing three or four centres, which we have, to my knowledge, for the whole island, be sufficiently equipped?

The Prime Minister: First of all, let me say the statistics show that actually the numbers are going down, not up. But, secondly, there is a problem. I am sure the hon. Member knows himself that in his own Constituency there is this problem. Nobody wants to have these centres in his Constituency. So, it is very difficult to locate. But, at the moment, the trend is going down I must tell you.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Further to the regulation that was made by the hon. Minister, does not the hon. Prime Minister feel that there should be a necessity to define the synthetic cannabinoids and their derivatives so that it is clearer for the Court and the Police, while doing their work, to be able, whenever there is any seizure of any drugs, that it falls under those that are prohibited by the Dangerous Drugs Act?

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, these are new drugs, even in Europe, we have followed exactly what they have done. There is a clear definition of what it covers, their street names and everything. All this is covered in this Schedule.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Fakkeemeeah: In line with this new synthetic drug, black mamba, I believe that I have identified in my Constituency two new points of sale. My question to the hon. Prime Minister is: will he give the Police instructions to give a special consideration of priority to disclose these to the Police?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I would have liked the hon. Member if he could, at least, send me the details of what he is saying. I will send them to the Police.

BETHANIE LANE, BALFOUR – SWIMMING POOL – WATER TANK VEHICLE

(No. B/893) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state if he has received a letter on

Tuesday 18 August 2013 informing him that the water tank vehicle bearing number 6311 DC 07 of the Central Water Authority has recently filled a swimming pool found in a residence, situated at Bethanie Lane, Balfour and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was on 27 August 2013 that I received an undated letter concerning a water tank vehicle bearing registration No. 6311 DC 07 belonging to the CWA which has filled a swimming pool found in a private residence situated at Bethanie Lane, Balfour.

As soon as the letter was received, it was referred to the relevant authorities.

From information submitted by the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, I understand that it is the normal practice for the CWA to provide such services whenever possible against payment of a relevant fee. In this case, the beneficiary concerned has duly paid for the water which was supplied to him at a time when the supply of water across the island note was normal.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister – I listened to his answer - but how does he reconcile the fact that when the whole population of this country is regularly subjected to drastic cuts and when the CWA itself is carrying out a sensitisation campaign not to waste water, one particular consumer is getting his swimming pool filled by the CWA?

The Prime Minister: First of all, as I said, there was no water shortage at that time, it just started afterwards.

(Interruptions)

Secondly, I have the dates.

(Interruptions)

You might not like it, I have the dates here. Second, I remind the hon. Member that he is referring to one case. There are many such cases.

(Interruptions)

That has been the normal practice. Now if you want we can change it and stop the practice.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm, if he has the information, that the filling of that swimming pool took place two days before Assumption Day? Is he aware that many consumers in that area complained about water cuts on Assumption Day?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't know what date was Assumption Day. Maybe the hon. Member can remind me.

(Interruptions)

Well, the trips were done on 12 August and they did end on 19. There was only one trip on 19, otherwise it ended on 13 August.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can confirm whether that particular consumer is related to a senior Minister and his Government?

Mr Speaker: No! Next Question!

RODRIGUES - RIVIÈRE COCO - NATIONAL COAST GUARD POST

(No. B/894) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the construction of a post of the National Coast Guard at Rivière Coco, in Rodrigues, as announced in the 2013 Budget, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that action is already in hand for the construction of a National Coast Guard Post at Rivière Coco. Architects and Engineers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping are currently undertaking designs and construction is scheduled in the course of next year.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister in the light of his answer to also request the Commissioner of Police to consider further recruitment to strengthen the Coast Guard in line with the construction of this new Coast Guard Post and also to provide them with continuous, specialised training, either here in Mauritius and Rodrigues or abroad?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the training forms part of, not just for Mauritians, but also for people from Rodrigues and I will have to see, but probably, they will be increased in numbers.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY - ORGANISED GANGS

(No. B/895) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether in regard to the recent cases of larceny and assault by organised gangs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the urgent measures, if any, being taken to reinforce public safety and security.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there have been a few cases of larceny with assault, which have been committed by a group of offenders. The mode of operation in some cases shows a similarity as they are perpetrated by hooded persons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on various occasions in this House stated, in no uncertain terms, that crimes including larcenies will not be tolerated. The Government is taking all necessary actions to catch the perpetrators of the crimes in order to render our society safer and more secure.

I have personally impressed upon the Commissioner of Police to mobilise all Units and other resources to track those perpetrators involved in these larcenies so that they are brought to justice. In that context, a special cell has been set up at the Central Criminal Investigation Department, backed by Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit and the Divisional Crime Intelligence Unit to collect, analyse and disseminate information about probable criminals and their networks, for targeted actions against them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, as at this morning, 11 suspects in five cases have already been arrested for the offence of larceny with violence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that, in view of the forthcoming festive periods, the strength of the Police Divisions is being reinforced so as to enhance visibility. Also, other units such as the Special Support Unit, the Special Mobile Force and the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit are carrying out targeted patrols as well as road blocks which

will increase. Furthermore, Police are organising awareness campaigns at shopping malls and centres to promote crime prevention, security and safety of our citizens and safeguard of properties.

Let me also remind the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the type of larceny that these suspects may have committed carries a penalty of up to 30 years of penal servitude.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that – in view of the recurrence of such type of larceny – *des hommes en cagoule circulent, even à motocyclette*? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will request the Commissioner of Police, at least, *qu'il y a un manque de visibilité de la part de la Police*. Je prends un exemple, dans la cour de l'hôtel de ville, la cour du Plaza, il y a eu un cas avec des hommes en cagoule. Numerous persons come - especially, we are in summer - in these well frequented public places. If we could, at least, have a sort of visibility in the Police or even the *motard* or whatever. We are on the road, we are all MPs - but there is a real problem of visibility. Despite all the information he received from the Commissioner of Police, I think there is a real danger, *la population a peur ces jours-ci et il y va de la réputation de la Police, même du gouvernement d'insister auprès de la Police*, at least, to have more visibility than they are doing actually.

The Prime Minister: I can always advise, but from what I hear, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is exactly what the Commissioner of Police is doing and, precisely, I think because of the way they are acting that 11 suspects, as I said, have already been arrested.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that the Police has to be well perceived by the public at the work that it is doing, in fact. A first article appeared in the press that this commando, this gang was well known to the Police, they were former prisoners, *récidivistes*. The only thing that the press article did not give were the names. It gave the impression they are well known to the Police, that the Police knows exactly who they are and so on. No reaction from the Police and, therefore, the articles went on and on. In the public, the impression is created that everybody knows who they are, who the criminals are and so on and the Police is doing nothing. So, can I request the hon. Prime Minister whether he doesn't agree with me that the Police should react in cases like that, with a press communiqué, telling the truth and not allowing for a series of articles creating that impression?

The Prime Minister: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right, they should have, maybe, said it straightaway. In fact, that is not the case, but there was close supervision of habitual criminals and they were profiling offenders. They had to send some staff abroad to make sure that they are getting the right person. All this has taken time, but perhaps they should have communicated that better.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister will agree that in last year's Budget, we were informed that there will be electronic bracelets to be given to habitual criminals (HCs). In fact, in last year's debates, the then hon. Attorney General said –

“I am pleased to inform the House again that the procedure has been already started, and the procedural time is June next year.”

So, in June, this year, we were supposed to have that electronic bracelet. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that, had that project started, these gangs – I don't know how they are called – who are apparently known habitual criminals, would not have been able to commit such crimes, and create such fear in the country?

The Prime Minister: There are two things, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to follow procedures. We cannot just go buy the bracelets from who is offering the bracelets. The procedures have taken longer, but we are buying the bracelets.

Secondly, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, we should have maybe quelled the rumour that they are all well known to the Police, which is not the case.

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, one of the rare instances where the Commissioner of Police has spoken publicly is about this case? On 24 October, the Commissioner of Police said that Police Intelligence has identified *les auteurs de ces vols, et que, comme l'a dit le Leader de l'Opposition, tout porte à croire qu'il s'agit d'anciens prisonniers*. With that kind of statement, why is it that, up to now, the Police have not been able, at least, to arrest some of those who are involved in those gang burglaries?

The Prime Minister: I have just said at the very beginning, Mr Speaker, Sir, that 11 people have been arrested.

(Interruptions)

Yes, larceny. We are talking about the same case.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, recently there has been an odious crime on a Chinese national in the heart of China Town. In spite of a series of statements that have been made at the Police Station in China Town concerning a gang of people who are attacking people in that area, till now the CCTV cameras are still not in working order. Can the hon. Prime Minister give assurance to the House that, in view of the negative impact that this may have on the promotion campaign to attract Chinese tourists, things are being handled properly at China Town?

The Prime Minister: I have impressed on the Commissioner of Police, and they will see to it. We are adding more CCTV cameras there.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that a good number or perhaps the majority of the victims of these hooded gangs have been tourists? Would he liaise with the Ministry of Tourism to see that a particular type of sensitisation campaign or education campaign be set up vis-à-vis the tourists, so that we might perhaps decrease the numbers of assaults against tourists?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure has talked to the operators, especially the hotel operators, to guide their clients who come to the hotels. There are certain basic precautions that they should take, and not allow people to be tempted to do anything. That is being done.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been made aware that Police roadblocks stop at a time that is much before the time when larceny occurs? Can he ask information from the Commissioner of Police on whether there is a time gap between roadblocks being removed and larceny occurring?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this fact, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know they move the roadblocks. When the roadblocks are removed - maybe the hon. Member does not know - they are shifted, and they do not give prior notice that they are going to remove the roadblocks, precisely for the reason that they want to take people by surprise.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I am not hitting at the Commissioner of Police, but the population has the impression that we do not have a Commissioner of Police.

(Interruptions)

I think...

(Interruptions)

I think it is the duty of the Commissioner of Police to come of TV, instead of having the TV of Mr Callikan doing other things, and reassure the population. I am not saying every day, but at least once per month or once in 15 days, especially in these cases where the population needs to be reassured. The Commissioner of Police must come on TV and on radio, and reassure the population with the firm action he is taking.

Mr Speaker: This is a suggestion, not a question!

(Interruptions)

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/897, B/901 and B/902 have been withdrawn. Time is over! This is a proper time to suspend for one hour twenty minutes.

MAURITIUS TELECOM LTD. – LARCENY - INQUIRY

(No. B/897) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case of larceny reported by Mauritius Telecom Ltd., on or about 02 July 2013 at the Police Station of Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate –

- (a) when;
- (b) if any arrest has been affected in connection therewith, and
- (c) where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

RELIGIOUS RALLIES, CONCERTS & MEETINGS – POLICE AUTHORISATION

(No. B/901) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to religious rallies, concerts or meetings, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of applications received for the issue of authorisation for the holding thereof, since January 2013 to date, indicating the –

- (a) conditions to be satisfied for the granting thereof;
- (b) number thereof of authorised, indicating in each case, the names of the –
 - (i) organisers thereof;
 - (ii) promoters thereof, and
 - (iii) participants therein.

(Withdrawn)

TEMPORARY MAGISTRATE (FORMER) – MR D. P. - COMPENSATION

(No. B/902) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr D. P., former temporary magistrate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if, following the judgment of the Privy Council in connection thereto, he has been paid any compensation and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

At 12.57 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.24 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

SORÈZE – BUS ACCIDENT – INQUIRY

(No. B/903) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the accident in which the bus bearing number 4263AG07 of the National Transport Corporation was involved, at Sorèze, he will state where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto by –

- (a) his Ministry, and
- (b) the Indian experts, indicating if copy of the respective report thereof will be tabled.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, a full-fledged police enquiry has been carried out in respect of the road accident which occurred at Sorèze, on 03 May 2013 involving a bus of the National Transport Corporation bearing number 4263 AG 07.

As part of the Police enquiry into all cases of serious road accidents, the Mechanical Engineering Division of my Ministry has to carry out an investigation focusing on the mechanical and technical aspects of the accident. In the case under reference, such an investigation has been carried out and the report has been submitted directly to the Commissioner of Police on 20 May 2013.

Insofar as part (b) of the question is concerned, Government secured the services of a team of Indian experts with a view to having an independent opinion about the possible causes of the accident. The report of the experts has also been submitted to the Police as an input in the overall Police inquiry.

I have to inform the House that such reports now form part of the Police enquiry and are, like the rest of the Police case file, confidential and the contents are not at this stage divulged to any other party than the Police. It will now be for the Police and the DPP to decide on the future course of action on the enquiry into, and report on, the road accident.

Dr. Sorefan: Actually the report is ready and sent to DPP with recommendations. May we know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister what are those recommendations to the DPP?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, to be very honest, I am not even aware of the contents of the report. I am not supposed to know anything about the report because they never report to me.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: I am not supposed to.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think those who lost their close ones, they are much traumatised and they want to know very soon, just to relieve themselves. Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister make it a duty to see to it that the report be tabled as soon as possible?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a confidential document which I do not have access to. I do not have anything to do with it and it is with the DPP, if I am not mistaken.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether there is any other enquiry in addition to the Police enquiry that has been carried out into this accident, and whether anyone at the level of the NTC has been suspended or not, following the accident?

Mr Bachoo: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far as I am aware, no other enquiry had been conducted. I am aware of the enquiry conducted by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the Technical Division and the independent experts who were called in Mauritius. Definitely, the Police had done its job.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. vice-Prime Minister tells us that the enquiry conducted at the level of his Ministry has been completed and has been sent to the DPP...

Mr Bachoo: To the Police.

Mr Baloomoody: To the Police. May I know from the hon. vice-Prime Minister who carried out that enquiry in his Ministry and who were the persons who were interviewed with regard to that enquiry?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this had been the practice always. Whenever there is an accident where human lives are lost, the Mechanical Division of the Ministry is requested by the Police to conduct the enquiry, but they never take any orders from us. I am not supposed to know. They pick and choose from the group of engineers that we have and those engineers never come to my office and they never tell me as whether they have been mandated to do the work.

They do it independently of the Ministry because directly or indirectly my Ministry is concerned with these things.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have learnt that there are three enquiries, that is, the MPI, the Indian experts and the Police enquiry. All are going to the Police, through the Police to the DPP and that is going to take time and will determinate whether there is need for criminal prosecution or not. Now, quite apart from that, being given that this accident occurred more than six months ago and that the top most priority is to ensure public safety, in particular at that road bend, but beyond that, generally where these buses are in use.

Does the hon. vice-Prime Minister not consider it proper that he should come out, more than six months after the accident, with a statement to the public, giving the public information as to the results of the enquiries of which he is aware and referring to specific measures that we discussed in this House - speed limiters, sensor speed and so on? And what is being done to ensure that next week there is no risk that we have such an accident again occurring?

Mr Bachoo: If I am not mistaken the hon. Member referred to one sentence, stating 'of which I am aware', that is, of the outcome of the enquiry. I am not aware of any outcome, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have been very honest on this issue because we have allowed the Police to do its work.

Secondly, as far as the measures are concerned, you will see that once the road which is under construction – the enlargement of the road – is over, any other measure that needs to be taken will be taken. But, we have already given the responsibility to a group of technicians to look into the issue and road audits are also regularly being done to see to it that such things will have to be avoided. And, any other measures, for example, at that particular spot, we are also thinking of putting a speed camera, in order to deter people from accelerating and going at a higher speed, even that is being envisaged.

Once that enlargement is over, we are going to take additional measures but, as for the time being, we are more or less satisfied with the actions which have been taken.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. vice-Prime Minister say whether this enquiry will also look into the variations that were noted in the buses that were delivered in August 2007, as opposed to the specifications that were made in the tender documents, and whereby the Director of the CNT,

Mr Robin Soonarane, made certain comments, namely to say that the CNT could not have made a worse deal than it did with the TATA 16/18 buses? Will that enquiry also addressed these issues of the variations that occurred?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member is a lawyer and he knows. There has been an accident, human lives are lost. I cannot dictate the Police what they have to do and let them do their work in full freedom; determine the cause of the accident.

(Interruptions)

I cannot give instructions to the Police. As far as I am aware, the cause that had led to the death of those people is being investigated thoroughly by the Police and by those experts.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm, in fact, the matter to elucidate the cause of the accident, i.e., whether there was any mechanical defect in this bus and can the hon. Minister confirm whether, in fact, there have been three reports on this particular aspect: a report from the engineers of his Ministry, a report from the CNT experts and also a report of the Indian experts who came a few days after the accident. Now, in view of the fact that there might have been three different reports determining the cause of this accident in fact, in view of the fact that there have been so many speculations in the press, for example? What caused this accident? Was there a brake defect? There are also civil cases which have already entered before the court by the family and relatives of the victims. Although the Minister cannot dictate to the Police or to the SLO, isn't it time now to clear the air, once for all, that his Ministry uses its good offices to ask the Commissioner of Police to take a decision on that matter, whether to prosecute whosoever or whether a judicial enquiry should be held in this case once and for all, as quickly as possible? Six months have elapsed since the date of this accident.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am as concerned as the hon. Member; he knows, he has been a Minister and he knows our limitations. But one thing I will hasten to add is that there has not been any investigation officially from the side of the CNT because they can't be judge and party at the same time. That is the reason why, of course, different types of opinions have been expressed. Somebody was telling that the brakes failed, others were telling that - I don't want to make any statement or else...

Mr Speaker: No, if there are cases in Court, you have to be careful. All Members will have to be careful so that the cases in Court are not prejudiced.

Mr Bachoo: That is the reason why I would like to refrain from making any comment.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister said that the report is confidential and that he does not know the contents of that report, but publicly we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the press has reported that action will be taken against the conductor. If it is so confidential, how come the press is aware of it and what action has been taken on the Government side to come with a *communiqué* to say that this is not so?

Mr Speaker: No, this question is not proper. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister cannot answer for the press.

Mr Bhagwan: Coming to the problem of accidents, we have discussed lengthily here the old issue of management of the National Transport Corporation and what led to the degradation of this institution. Now that a new Chairperson has been appointed and I have read a few of his comments, he has been talking about rebranding, cases of accidents and so on, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House as far as passengers are concerned that we won't have two administrations: one administration by the Chairman and one by Mr Soonarane, that there would be clear directives to the Board of the National Transport Corporation in the interest of the travelling public, that the CNT has one line of action, one strategy, at least, as far as the security of the public is concerned and not to come with statements here and there as a new Chairman?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for that. In fact, the last four, five months you have seen the way things have been handled at the CNT. I can assure the House that in fact discipline has been imposed and I have no doubt that the Chairman will do a good job and that there won't be any controversial statements or what not.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, étant donné qu'il y avait mort d'homme dans cet accident tragique du 03 mai, je demande au vice-Premier ministre de rendre public ces rapports dans l'intérêt de la population. Il faut que la population sache ce qui se passe.

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. This is question time. Hon. Jhugroo! Next!

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister...

Mr Speaker: No, either you have a question or you don't.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been reports that we have put an end to the Blue Line service. May I ask whether it was linked to that accident?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have read in the paper, but, in fact, we have not taken any such decision up to now.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has just said, with regard to the Indian experts, that the enquiry *a été commandité par son ministère*.

Mr Bachoo: *Non, par le gouvernement.*

Mrs Hanoomanjee: By Government, so can he tell us at least what were the terms of reference given to the Indian experts?

Mr Bachoo: Well, it is just to investigate into the cause of the accident, what led to the accident or whether there were any defects in the bus.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, following on from this question, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether in the terms of reference there was any directive to look at the *tracé* of the road, whether it is a safe road, the way it has been designed?

Mr Bachoo: Sir, as far as I am aware it was the cause that led to the death of so many people. I don't have in writing any such terms and conditions which were imposed.

Mr Baloomoody: We called the Indian experts to come and examine that bus because this bus was fabricated in India and they are experts in those buses. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether they did examine the report - probably they must have made some mechanical recommendations which can be attended immediately to other buses - whether this part at least of that report - forget about the accident; this is being looked after by the Police but the part which refers to the mechanical aspect of the bus which may affect other buses which were still on the road today, whether this could not have been communicated to his Ministry so that immediate remedial action can be taken?

Mr Bachoo: They have not recommended anything neither to my Ministry nor to the CNT, but, at the same time, we have given instructions to the General Manager of CNT for each

and every bus, be it TATA or Ashok Leyland, to be checked and if ever there are defects in any bus these have to be addressed, and on this issue we are very strict.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, last question!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the Indian experts, we are made to understand that the expert come from the company Ashok Leyland. Isn't it a conflict of interest for them to come and expertise on this accident when the same bus is an Ashok Leyland bus?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can't answer on that, but I can say one thing, that being given that the Ashok Leyland buses, those top experts are engineers, they must be in a much better position to know their buses and anything that is missing or anything that is not good. Probably that might have been the reason which prompted Government to go ahead.

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/904) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Mr S. M., Mr D. K., Mr K. B. and Mr S. M., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation, information as to the respective dates on which they were recruited thereat, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) post held;
- (b) qualifications possessed, and
- (c) terms and conditions of employment.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I recall that in the year 2001, Government decided that Parliamentary Questions relating to internal matters of State-owned companies should not be replied. That was a Government decision. I was, at that time, in that Government.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd is for all intents and purposes a private company operating under the Companies Act 2001 and has a Board of

Directors, I will in a spirit of transparency, and exceptionally, be laying in the Library of the National Assembly the information requested for, by the hon. Member.

Furthermore, I would like hon. Members to understand that my position on this Parliamentary Question should not constitute an unwarranted precedent and that the policy guidance I referred to will henceforth apply.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, well, the answer will be tabled and we don't know the contents of it. But can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to inform the House regarding those Members I have mentioned, whether there is any kind of relationship to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, two out of the four happens to be close to me. One got appointment 21 years ago; 21 years ago he was appointed and all the criteria were observed; the post was advertised, interviews were conducted 21 years ago and he was appointed. I consider it to be very, very sad for someone who got appointed ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, it was 20 years ago. This question is not fair. Next question!

MAURITIUS SHIPPING CORPORATION - RECRUITMENT

- JULY 2000 – NOVEMBER 2013

(No. B/905) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Mauritius Shipping Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, now obtain and table the list of the persons recruited thereat, since July 2000 to date.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, please refer to the reply I just gave to PQ B/904. In the same spirit, I am exceptionally tabling an updated list of persons employed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd. since 2000 including the list of persons recruited by service providers who are bound by a contract of employment to the MSCL. All the lists should be made available.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that a letter had been laid, on 30 April 2013, at the Chairperson's Office of the Equal Opportunities Commission regarding recruitment and promotion at the MSCL each time he has been Minister responsible of the MSCL?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware because that is a private company run according to the Companies Act. I am not aware of whatever letter that has been written.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has informed us that he is not aware of the day-to-day activities of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd., especially with regard to recruitments. Can he enquire into a case which I will be sending him? I will send him a case where somebody has worked for more than 20 years in the shipping lines, and recruited on contract without any adverse report and he has been debarred only on alleged political ground, I would say, being an MMM supposedly. The case has been referred to the Chairperson to whom I have spoken and even to the Acting General Manager. What they did in front of that person, they threw his letter in the basket. I'll be giving the hon. Minister the name and the address of that person and I will ask him to make an enquiry with the Chairperson, Mr Maudhoo.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, well, somebody referred this matter to me - I still remember - but, in fact, that fellow is not directly recruited by the Shipping Corporation, but rather he was recruited through the service providers. Well, I was made to understand that he was not a disciplined crew. That is the explanation they have given me, but I can assure the hon. Member, I am enquiring into the issue and I will report back to him.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, est-ce que l'honorable vice-Premier ministre peut nous confirmer s'il y a eu des marins employés par la Mauritius Shipping Corporation qui habitent la région de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill qui ont été licenciés pour être remplacés par ceux qui habitent sa circonscription, donc Circonscription No. 9?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had just mentioned that they are the service providers and they are not employed directly by the Shipping Corporation. They are employed by a company which is providing those contracts. I will tell you the name of the company. I can add up one thing more. That particular company had recruited four persons from one family to work in the Shipping Corporation. So, that is not within our limit. That is the reason why as from January we are putting an end to all these. Mauritius Shipping Corporation will take over the crewing and manning of the vessels.

Mr Speaker: I have to remind hon. Members that they should not make unfounded allegations, and they take their responsibility. Questions have to be based on facts.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister also circulate the address of those who have been recruited according to the list?

Mr Bachoo: I will do it, definitely.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jhugroo: I have many supplementary questions.

Mr Speaker: Put your question! Don't argue with me!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm to this House - being given that he is a Minister responsible for MSCL - whether all the vacant posts at MSCL had been advertised and, if not, why not?

Mr Bachoo: All the posts which are important need to be advertised, and normally, they are advertised. But, at the lowest strata till recently they had a database which other companies have. They select, for example, the manual grade, they used to select...

(Interruptions)

That is available at the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, at BPML, at OIDC, where you were a member, where you were the General Manager. So, that practice is still there. But, as far as the posts which are concerned, all posts are properly advertised and through advertisement, we take officers.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether Mr D.K., actually the Chief Manager of MSC, who had been recruited and has got five automatic promotions since his recruitment and is very often out of his office, is this person married to the sister of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, yes. He is my relative. 21 years ago, he got recruited in the Mauritius Shipping Corporation. He is the person on whom they were trying to make allegations. He got...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have already said. A question was put before by hon. Dr. Sorefan. I have said: how can the hon. Minister be responsible for something over 21 years ago!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

(Interruptions)

Silence! I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister, this type of language and its teller is not allowed in this House.

Mr Aimée: I remove my words, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

FOOD SECURITY FUND - STATE LAND - GRANT

(No. B/906) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to land granted to the planters under the schemes set up under the Food Security Fund, the agreement signed between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association and the schemes set up for land belonging to Government, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if surveys thereof have been carried out to ascertain if same have been put to the specific purposes for which same was granted and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, taken to retrieve those which have been put to other use or abandoned.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that State Land is not granted or leased under any scheme of the Food Security Fund. However, the said fund does extend financial assistance to agricultural projects being implemented on private lands as well as State land allocated on lease.

State land under the control of my Ministry is allocated for agricultural purposes through a formal lease agreement. The agreement, among other conditions, clearly stipulates that the lessee should not leave such land in an abandoned state or effect any agricultural activities other than those specified in the lease agreement.

Utilisation of all State Land vested in my Ministry, including those acquired under the Government MSPA agreement and which have been allocated to farmers for agricultural development purposes is regularly monitored by the technical support services of my Ministry, namely, the Land Use Division and the AREU. Lands are retrieved by my Ministry in case of non-compliance with conditions of Lease Agreement.

From January to date, my Ministry has cancelled Lease Agreement and retrieved plots respectively from 103 beneficiaries of State land.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In reply to a PQ, in July last year, the hon. Minister said that there is a Monitoring Committee together with all implementing agencies to see that land allocated for specific purposes are used for these purposes. Can he say who chairs this Committee, whether

this Committee is still in existence, who are the Members of this Committee and how many sittings of the Committee have been held since July 2012 to date?

Mr Faugoo: I think the Committee is chaired by the Deputy Director of Agricultural Services. There was the Assistant Permanent Secretary who is a member of the Committee amongst others. I am not in a position today to say exactly the composition of the Board, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I understand that there is monitoring especially of land which is granted under lease for agricultural purposes. And this is for the first time ever as far as I am aware. The hon. Member has been a PS at the Ministry, she must be aware too that since January, 103 cases of lease agreement have been terminated and land retrieved.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, last year, in a reply regarding this question of lands which are abandoned, the hon. Minister stated that a report was under preparation regarding this issue by AREU. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this report is ready and whether he will table a copy of the said report regarding those who have abandoned lands and who are subleasing these lands to others?

Mr Faugoo: It was not in regard to abandoned land. The report, the hon. Member is referring to, was in the case of Plaine Sophie. It was a specific question on Plaine Sophie for cases where the lessees were sub-leasing their land which was strictly not allowed under the conditions as per the Lease Agreement. It was not a report as such. It was a working document. We had asked AREU to go and do some ground proofing to see who is occupying which land, whether they have a lease agreement. Following that particular study, Mr Speaker, Sir, 63 lease agreements have been terminated at Plaine Sophie.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister - he just said 103 cases - the 103 cases represent how many *arpents* of land which have been retrieved and whether this land has been re-allocated to other persons and under which criteria?

Mr Faugoo: Usually, land is given one *arpent* to one lessee, in some cases more. Roughly it would be between 100 to 200 acres. All the lands which have been retrieved, not all have been reallocated. It is allocated in a case to case basis upon application made and assessment being done.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire, à ce jour, quelle est la superficie disponible des terres qui sont à la disposition de ce *scheme* et quand est-ce qu'il compte mettre ces terres à la disposition des futurs *tenants*?

Mr Faugoo: I understand, altogether that there are about 9,471 *arpents* of agricultural land vested with my Ministry which is available for lease and the land already allocated on lease for agricultural purposes is 8,857. When you do some simple arithmetic, it would appear that about 400 *arpents* are left to be allocated.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

IRRIGATION AUTHORITY - LAND LEASE

(No. B/907) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the Irrigation Authority, he will state if agricultural land has been leased thereto in 2007 and if so, indicate the –

- (a) total extent thereof and the extent thereof which is presently under cultivation and
- (b) amount of money it owes to Government.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker Sir, my Ministry implemented irrigation projects at Plaisance on 56ha in 1982, at Belle Mare/Trou d'Eau Douce on 246.68ha in 1985 and at Bel Ombre on 32.93ha in 1988 on land settlement. These irrigation projects were handed over to the Irrigation Authority and the land leased at an annual rate to the Irrigation Authority for subletting to planters in the vicinity of each project for food crop production.

I am informed that the Lease Agreements were renewed between my Ministry and the Irrigation Authority on 11 July 2008 for a period of seven years with effect from 01 July 2007 as follows –

- Belle Mare/Trou D'eau Douce: - 233.78 ha
- Plaisance: - 56.00 ha

- Bel Ombre: - 25.38 ha

Area presently under cultivation is as follows –

- Belle Mare/Trou D'eau Douce: - 215.57 ha
- Plaisance: - 48.82 ha
- Bel Ombre: - 12.87 ha

The Irrigation Authority owes a total sum of Rs2,540,237 to Government for period 01 January 2007 to 30 June 2014.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say why when he is consistently saying that land should not be abandoned and that he needs agricultural land for plantation purposes, why in 2011 he has released part of these lands – which were leased to the Irrigation Authority – to promoters for tourism and development projects.

Mr Faugoo: Because Mr Speaker, Sir, back in May 2001, there was a correspondence from the Ministry of Housing and Lands to the Permanent Secretary – and the Permanent Secretary was no other than hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee – to say –

“The proposal to develop land settlement at Bel Ombre for a hotel tourism project has been approved. In this connection you are kindly requested to advise the Irrigation Authority to freeze any renewal of lease in the above area.”

That was in 2001. Following this letter, again, she was the Permanent Secretary. The Ministry of Agriculture wrote to the Irrigation Authority asking them to comply with the letter of the Ministry of Housing and Lands. She should know this better today why land has been retrieved and given for commercial and industrial development.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that in Belle Mare there were 286 hectares and now there are 215 hectares being cultivated. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the non-agricultural activities to which these plots have been allocated?

Mr Faugoo: I won't be aware because plots are allocated for other purposes than agriculture by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. All I am aware is that today I have given the figure and there is an area of 5.07 hectares which is in abundance.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to tell the hon. Minister that a Permanent Secretary is there to advise on the formulation of policies. She is not there to formulate policies. She can only advise.

Mr Speaker: This is not a question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: This is the first thing. Now, the second thing is that this land has been released in 2011. My part of the question is not on 2001. My question is on 2011. Why is it that this part of the land has been released?

Mr Faugoo: It is the same decision of 2001. Ten years after! It is the same decision of 2001. I have enquired with Irrigation Authority and they are still sticking to those instructions which were given in 2001. The letter which emanates from the Ministry of Agriculture is for the Acting Permanent Secretary. It is signed by someone, an officer, but on behalf of the Permanent Secretary.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Audit reports for the year 2012, we are being informed on this report that in June 2012, the Ministry informed that a new lease will be envisaged regarding this issue. May I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand regarding this issue because in June 2013 there was no new lease according to the Audit reports? May I know where matters stand regarding the issue that is being brought up, that is, regarding excision of land from the Irrigation Authority?

Mr Faugoo: I can't follow the question. I am assuming that the hon. lady is asking me if land has been retrieved, those falling on the ambit of Irrigation Authority. Some of them, I am sure, must have been given because there are cases where lessees have died. This is being given to the family: son, daughter – I don't know, depending on the circumstances of the case. There has been lease in cases – I said – not all the land which has been retrieved has been reallocated. In some cases it has been reallocated.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has been implementing a decision which was taken – he is saying – 10 or 12 years back. Can I understand from the hon.

Minister that he was agreeable to that decision or else can he say why did he not change that decision? There is another Government. There is development regarding need for agricultural land. Why didn't he reverse that decision?

Mr Faugoo: I was not aware of this decision of 2001, Mr Speaker, Sir. What has happened is that, following instructions from the Ministry of Housing to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and from the Ministry of Agro-Industry to the Irrigation Authority, there was no renewal of the lease *per se*. There was no legal renewal of the lease. But, there has been occupation for quite some time on a tacit reconduction of the lease. They are paying rent, but there is no lease agreement. I don't know which year this land was transferred and given to promoters for other purposes. This, I am not aware of, because this is given by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. As far as I am concerned, it is following this decision – this is what I have been told – that these leases were not renewed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This question has been sufficiently aired. Hon. Ameer Meea!

JIN FEI PROJECT

(No. B/908) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Jin Fei Project, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer, in the first instance, to the reply I made to PQ A/213 of 02 July 2013, whereby I indicated that the Mauritius Jin Fei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone Co. Ltd was constructing a service apartment and a business centre on the land leased besides the warehouse facility and workshop, which are already operational. I am informed that, as at date, the construction of the apartment complex and the business centre have reached 66% and 50% completion respectively.

Moreover, Mr Speaker, Sir, to further develop the zone, Government has approved, in September 2013, that the Cin-Jin Group of China uses part of the site for the development of a mixed-use project comprising, *inter alia*, the construction of hotels, villa and townhouse office buildings, and an international exhibition centre. According to information obtained from the

Board of Investment, the promoter is presently finalising its master plan, and will submit same to my Ministry for consideration and approval. Thereafter, a sublease agreement will be drawn between the lessee and the Cin-Jin Group.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Jin Fei project was previously known as Tianli, then Jin Fei, and now we just heard about Cin-Cin. In a past PQ, the hon. Minister announced to the House the setting up of an economic zone, an industrial zone, a trade and logistic zone, an information and business zone, a residential zone, and a hospitality and leisure zone. This dates back to the reply given by the hon. Minister to a past PQ in April 2013. We know that 500 *arpents* of productive land have been snatched from small planters, and all these lands are remaining idle. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if he will agree with me that this project, since its inception back in 2007 or 2008, has been a total flop up to now?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No comment!

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I will not agree or subscribe to the opinion of my learned colleague. I don't think we have snatched it from...

(Interruptions)

the planters. These are lands which are State lands, on which they were growing vegetables. It is productive, okay, but they have been given land in return, and I would not use such harsh words. However, as you can see, this project is coming up slowly. Being given the economic downturn everywhere, but now that China is coming up very fast, there will be more. We expect economic development. Now, I can tell you that this new group...

(Interruptions)

The Cin-Jin Group was established in China in 1999. It is involved in a number of property development projects across China. The Group is engaged in real estate, finance and trade. The Group's headquarter is located in Beijing. The Cin-Jin Group has developed shopping malls, office buildings, hotels and residential properties in China. This Group has come regularly. Actually, I met them, together with my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and they are very serious people. I understand they have just come. In fact, if you bear with me, *comme La Fontaine avait dit : patience et longueur de temps font plus que force ni que rage.*

(Interruptions)

The industrial city is coming up fast. I think it is not at a standstill, and bear me, I can assure you that all the planters who were there have been given portion of land for them to develop their vegetable culture.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. As my learned colleague has just mentioned, the purpose of giving land to Jin Fei was not to create real estate speculative promotion. It was meant to develop an economic zone; prime land close to the harbour. Now, that we have heard from the hon. Minister that the new promoter is going to do apartments, does not the hon. Minister find it appropriate that he takes back the land and invites tenders from other institutions that would be able to convert this land to its primary object of being an industrial site for export?

Dr. Kasenally: There has been so much development in Africa, and also things are changing. With all these turmoil in the economic and financial fields, we had to readjust our objectives, and this is being taken mostly by the Ministry of Finance and the Board of Investment. There is a group working on it. I am just a Minister of Housing and Lands, and have to make sure that every piece of land that is being used is being used properly.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I used the word “snatched” because there was a hunger strike by the planters there, as they requested that they use the land for another one or two years because the land there is remaining idle, and it was a productive land. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in a past PQ dated March 2013, informed the House, and I quote -

“I am informed that a Chinese company namely, China Kingho Energy Group Co. Ltd (CKEG) has submitted a proposal to the Board of Investment to develop, invest, construct and operate a coal-fired power plant in Mauritius and that the Jin Fei park has been identified as one of the possible locations.”

Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand concerning this request from this company?

Dr. Kasenally: As far as this project is concerned, as I told you, it was submitted to the Board of Investment. We have heard nothing about it. It is up to Board of Investment to bring forward other projects, and you have to vet it. Anybody can bring any project, but we have to thoroughly vet it. Now, as far as the planters are concerned, I must remind the hon. Member that with regard to all the lands there, which were apparently given to the planters, not all of them were being fully used. It is only when the project of Jin Fei came that everybody came up and wanted their bit. It was in no way; there were vegetables, and some of them had even residential housing projects on that. But they have all been demobilised, and given alternative pieces of land.

Mr Jugnauth: The agreement between Jin Fei and the Government of Mauritius states that for the first phase, that is, from September 2009 to September 2012, Jin Fei undertook to bring a minimum investment of 1 billion RMB, that is, nearly equivalent to Rs5 billion. Now, may I know, up to September 2012, how much money has been brought with regard to that project?

Dr. Kasenally: Obviously, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not be able to give the figures of how much Jin Fei or whatever. Things have changed and have evolved. I think the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Board of Investment would know more about this. I have to ensure that the land is used most appropriately, according to the rules and regulations pertaining to my Ministry.

Mr Bhagwan: In the recent past, we have been informed that there was a project to transfer our National Archives in that region. Can I ask the hon. Minister where this project in that particular region of Jin Fei is, whether that project is on and what progress has been achieved since this announcement?

Dr. Kasenally: As far as the National Archives is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is under the purview of my colleague, the Minister of Arts and Culture, but I understand that the Prime Minister has given instructions to ensure that the Archives are moved to a fair and secure place. The exact location, I am not aware, but whenever a request is made by my colleague, the Minister of Arts and Culture, we shall endeavour to find an appropriate place and this is a matter which is being considered as a matter of urgency by this Government.

Mr Lesjongard: When this project was flagged by Government, it was supposed to create some 40,000 jobs for Mauritians. Can I know from the hon. Minister – if he has the information – how many Mauritian nationals are working there and whether the jobs they said were for this generation or for the next generation?

Dr. Kasenally: Thank you for your remark which I think is a swipe at me, but I am not responsible for that. It is the Minister of Economic Planning

(Interruptions)

Excuse me! We are in a Government where we all have responsibility, and collective responsibility and we all work together. Obviously, you all perfectly know that the situation has changed in Africa and everywhere and you have to be reasonable about it.

Mr Ameer Meea: I understand that the hon. Minister cannot give to the House the sum of money that the different companies have invested in this project up to now which was announced, as hon. Jugnauth said, supposedly to be billions of rupees. Can he confirm to the house that, up to now, Government has spent in terms of public infrastructure, roads, drains, water, electricity, everything, more than a half of a billion rupees which is public money and, up to now, there is zero return on such investment?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the amount spent is not half a billion, but roughly about Rs300 m. in form of infrastructure.

(Interruptions)

Excuse me! Before we get any return of that, these are permanent fixtures which will be of use in future and, therefore, it is inappropriate to say that they have not been getting any return from it. The return will come. When you build the infrastructure for a city, it may take time before this takes on off the ground. I think it is unfair to draw a conclusion on that basis.

CHILDREN – SEXUAL ABUSE – SPECIALISED COURT

(No. B/909) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to sexual abuse on

children, he will state if, for the protection of the victims, consideration will be given for the setting up of a specialised court for the trial of cases thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it cannot be denied that child victims, and especially child victims of sexual abuse, are particularly vulnerable and deserve a special treatment and protection, so that they can depose on the actual facts of the case in Court with confidence and without fear or intimidation, and do not feel that they are the ones “on trial” during the trial.

I am informed that special protective measures are already in place to protect child victims at different stages of the criminal justice system, from the time a declaration is made to the police up to the final determination of the case.

When such cases are reported to the Police by a child, he is usually accompanied by his parent or guardian. However, where this is not possible, for example, where the parent himself is accused of having committed the offence on the child, then by virtue of section 12 of the Child Protection Act, the child can make the declaration to the Police in the presence of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

I am also informed that there exists a Protocol of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault, involving mainly the Ministry of Gender Equality, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Police, which has as objective to process cases of child sexual abuse expeditiously. The Ministry of Gender Equality also provides continued psychological support to the child.

At the Court level, I am informed of a fast track procedure which was established in June 2012 following a working agreement between the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judiciary. This procedure aims at dealing with cases involving children without undue delay. Since last year, pre-trial conferences are being held in order to prioritise such cases to ensure their smooth running. The Judiciary and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions work to ensure that, as far as possible, children attend court on a least number of occasions and such cases are fixed during school holidays, and early dates are identified by the Intermediate Court for the trials.

With regard to the deposition of child victims in Court, many children may feel intimidated or traumatised when giving evidence in Court. The Courts Act makes provision for child victims to depone, in appropriate cases, in camera under Section 161A Courts Act, which means in the absence of members of the public, only the parties are present and their legal representatives or again under Section 181B Courts Act, through a live video or live television link system and such video conferencing facilities are presently available at the New Court House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government intends to amend the Criminal Code in order to make better provision for offences relating to sexual abuse.

The Ministry of Gender Equality is also working on a Children's Bill, which will provide for a comprehensive protective mechanism for children. Hon Members will also recall that the Budget Speech 2014 provides for the Child Protection Act to be amended to provide for Sexual Risk Orders to be made with regard to victims of child sexual abuse.

In light of these existing and proposed protective measures, it would be fair to say that though we have no specialised Children's Court, specialised services and facilities are available for the protection of child victims at different stages of their encounter with the criminal justice system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, It is therefore not envisaged, at this stage at least, to consider the setting up of a specialised Children's Court.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether special measures are taken when the victim of sexual abuse is a handicapped child?

Mr Faugoo: I am sure there must be. I am not aware of the specific nature or what is available for victims of handicapped children.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am surprised to learn from the hon. Attorney General that there exists at the Court House, a Court where victims, children victims of alleged sexual offence can depone under camera. If this exists, can the hon. Attorney General inform the House what is the Court No., on which storey it is, where is it situated? There is only one Court

where there is camera and it is used for Bail and Remand Court. Please, don't mislead the House! There is no Court whatsoever at the Court House where an alleged victim can depone under camera?

Mr Faugoo: I do not know if the Member is speaking from his personal experience.

(Interruptions)

I am also answering to the question which has been asked in this august Assembly. From the information which I have received, I am only giving information which I have received from the Supreme Court and the law says, the law which was amended in 2011, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is not a question to be annoyed about, it is not a debate; it is factual, whether it is there or it is not there. I have been told...

(Interruptions)

I cannot answer. I am not responsible for the Supreme Court, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can only pass on what I have been given as information from the Supreme Court, from the Master and Registrar. The law provides for a television system...

(Interruptions)

and this is place. They have said that this is in place and this exists at the new Court House. Which room, which Courtroom, which particular area, I do not know the detailed facts, but I am told today - I am confirming to the House unless I have been misled which I do not think; unless I have been misled - things which do not exist.

(Interruptions)

but I will go and check...

(Interruptions)

I will go and check and give benefit of doubt to my hon. friend because this is factual. I will go and check.

Mr Speaker: Okay! Hon. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, from personal experience, I consider the fast track to be a virtual track. I would like to ask the hon. Minister how long does it take between a victim

reporting a case at the Police station and the last time that victim is needed in a Court of law even with the accused identified because this is the form of abuse that we are inflicting on the victim.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no law as it is today which provides for the case to be heard within a prescribed delay. This depends on the Court, the Bench, the number of witnesses, the nature of the case and, also, on the Defence Counsel, Mr Speaker, Sir.

What we are proposing as Government today is a very relevant and important point, a pertinent point, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have to see to it, especially when the victim and the main witness is a child in a case of sexual abuse, in fact, it has been approved by Cabinet and we are proposing to amend the Criminal Code to provide for all prosecutions of sexual offences to be heard within six months of the reporting as far as possible. This is first.

Secondly, we are also proposing – we will be coming to the House soon – that the trial for a sexual offence, save in very exceptional, we are making exceptional circumstances, to take place from day-to-day *de die in diem* meaning continuously, without asking for postponement and postponement being granted, so, on everyday basis, as from the start of the case to the close of the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Also, we are going to bring amendment to the law to give absolute prohibition regarding the disclosure of the identity of a child victim in a case of sexual assault.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what we understand, there is no fast track for such cases. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he will see to it that in no case, be it in the waiting room or the Courtroom, the victims have to face their abusers.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my main answer I said there is a fast track which was established in 2012. This is following discussions between the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Supreme Court. I also said that there is a conference between Counsel appearing for DPP's Office and the Court to establish that fast track. This is in existence and this is how it is being done in practice. Maybe the hon. Member is not aware. Same for the camera, I give benefit of doubt and I am going to check. But this is what I have been told, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Ribot: I haven't got any reply to my question.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

(*Interruptions*)

You will come afterwards!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will come to the same subject that has been raised by my colleagues concerning the existence of a special Courtroom. I agree with the hon. Minister that the law was amended in fact by way of Act No. 30 of 2003 when Mr Leung Shing was the Attorney-General at that time. I remember I was one of those who proposed to the hon. Minister and to my hon. friend who was Minister of Family and Gender, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie to the effect that the video link system should be instituted so that the child victim does not face his aggressor when she is deponing. The law was passed in 2003, but, unfortunately, may I, *pour la bonne gouverne du ministre*, I must tell him that, unfortunately, as legal practitioners, we have never seen any special Court. There is no Court, in fact, which is provided with a video link system. Unfortunately, the hon. Minister has been perhaps provided with the wrong information. But can I appeal to him that this should be instituted as quickly as possible. What happens in our Courts today, true is that the Magistrate clears the Court and asks everybody to leave the Court when a child victim depones...

Mr Speaker: In camera.

Mr Ganoo: Yes, in camera according to the Courts Act. This is what is done but there is no video link as such. Can I ask the hon. Minister also, in terms of fast track, that he has been misled also on that because I know personally of cases where child victims have to depone a long time after since these cases are dragging on for two or three years? Again, perhaps, unfortunately, the hon. Minister has been misled on that score also. Can I ask him to see to it that this protocol which he just referred to is, in fact, implemented so that really in practice, cases where there are child victims are disposed of as quickly as possible? May I remind the hon. Minister also that in the Sexual Offences Act which was introduced by Mr Valayden before 2010 and which finally died before a Select Committee and which never gave its report, there was a proposal in that Bill to that effect.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, I am sorry to interrupt, but you are making a speech!

Mr Ganoo: Can we reintroduce that particular clause of the Bill that, in fact, sexual cases where child victims have to depone are disposed of with celerity and within a set limit of time?

Mr Faugoo: I take note of what has been suggested by the hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir. I must say he is the second Member who happens to be a Counsel, a lawyer as well. It gives me extra reason to go and double check whether the facility of live television link system is in place. It is clear from my answer where it is being said that such video conferencing facilities are presently available at the new Court House. I asked the same question as I was not aware. This is the very reason, as hon. Ganoo suggested, to avoid the child victim to see and be in contact with the perpetrator of the crime who is the accused party.

They also told me that in a case where the child victim is a girl, there is a Woman Police Constable (WPC) who is in attendance with the girl and if it is a boy, there is someone. So, I am going to countercheck but at least one must appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have gone a long way from nothing to today protocol.

(Interruptions)

There is a protocol which never existed before. There is a protocol to deal...

(Interruptions)

with children who are victims of sexual abuse at the level of enquiry, meaning before the case strike, I again say, there is a working arrangement between the DPP's Office, there is a conference which is held between Counsel appearing for the prosecution and the Supreme Court for the smooth running, especially to have the case heard within a reasonable delay. And, the third thing which I said, about television, is something new. We are even in advance of what exists in UK, Mr Speaker, Sir. In the UK, I was reading...

(Interruptions)

I was reading...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, if you could bear with me a few seconds, I was reading an article in 'The Guardian', it was in October of this year –

“Child sexual abuse victims are being failed by Courts.”

It is one of the main charities which deals with sexual cases where children are victims, NSPCC. Look at what they said –

“Children giving evidence in Court in sexual abuse cases need to be given more support because many suffer from stress before a trial (...).”

It goes on to say –

“Fewer than a quarter of the 23,000 child sex offences recorded in England and Wales last year resulted in prosecution (...).”

This is the case of UK. I am not saying that we have done everything, we need to improve. We are learning from experience and there is a lot to be done. But what I am saying is that a lot has been done already, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Okay! Next question hon. Mrs Ribot!

(Interruptions)

SCHOOLS – CHILDREN – ATTENDANCE

(No. B/910) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the primary school going age children, she will state the measures, if any, taken by her Ministry in relation to those who are not attending school.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Education (Amendment) Act 2004 and in line with Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Mauritius is signatory, education is compulsory for all children up to the age of 16.

In this context, non-compliance to schooling is an offence as per the provisions made in the Education Act. On conviction, a responsible party is liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000 and to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years. Furthermore, Article 28 of the CRC provides for the parents or others responsible for the child, the primary responsibility to secure within their abilities and financial capabilities, the conditions of living necessary for the child’s development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever cases of primary school going aged children not attending school are reported by the public to the CDU outstations, including the child protection services

of Vacoas, these are referred to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources for action at their level. In parallel, my Ministry also undertakes social enquiries on the reported cases as appropriate. Cases are referred for actions to relevant stakeholders depending on the child's specific situation. These are, *inter alia*, the National Empowerment Foundation which implements projects under its Child and Family Development Programme with a view to increasing school attendance amongst vulnerable children. The ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions which pays a monthly allowance of Rs750 to families listed on the social register of Mauritius on condition that the children have at least 90% school attendance rate. The Mauritius Police Force, including the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineures* which prevents loitering of children in public places during school hours.

Moreover, crackdown operations are carried out on a regular basis throughout the island with a view to discouraging absenteeism. As regards cases of children who have not been registered at birth, My Ministry issues a referral letter to the school concerned to facilitate the admission pending arrangements being made for their birth certificates. And in conformity with CRC, my Ministry is fully aware that going to school form part of the socialisation process of the child. In this respect, we are working with all stakeholders to safeguard the best interest of the child.

In an endeavour to further encouraging school attendance and detecting prolonged absenteeism of children, my Ministry is involved in the following: conducting information, education and communication campaigns through the school child protection clubs, empowering parents under the *école des parents programmes*, strengthening the surveillance mechanisms through the District Child Protection Committees and Community Child Watch Committees and networking with Ombudsperson for Children's Office.

Under the Working-Together Committee, a protocol of collaboration between my Ministry and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources was signed on 25 October 2012 with a view to rationalising, improving and enhancing services in child protection and development.

Furthermore, I am informed that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has put in place the student tracking mechanism to ensure that children between five to sixteen years attend school and that Educational Social Workers have among their duties, the responsibility to

identify children of school going age who are not attending school and conduct parent education programmes for necessary guidance.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, in her speech on the Budget on 16 November 2012, the hon. Minister said that the Working-Together Committee is supposed to define clearly the responsibilities of each stakeholder involved. I would like to know from the hon. Minister in what way is the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare addressing the issue? Is the responsibility of the Ministry only to transfer the matter to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources?

Mrs Martin: I have lengthily explained in my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, how the Ministry develops mechanisms to work with all the different stakeholders in order to make sure that children go to school. As far as possible, we are ensuring that there is collaboration between the different stakeholders concerned so that children can go to school.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, when we go to the website and look at the mission of the Ministry, it is stated: to design and implement policies and programmes geared towards, amongst others, protecting the rights of children. Children have a right to education, Article 28 of the Convention, and the hon. Minister has just mentioned it. My question is: what are the policies and programmes that have been designed and implemented to protect the right to education of children who are being deprived of this right?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have explained again to the hon. Member, I say it in my answer that the Ministry works together with other Ministries with a view to implement the necessary conditions so that children of school going age can attend and do attend school. It is not only my Ministry which works towards this goal.

However, with the networking that we create – two of which I have mentioned, different facilities are provided by different institutions such as the Police, the National Empowerment Foundation, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and especially the Ministry of Education and Human Resources with whom we have signed a protocol to be able to better streamline the way in which we can ensure that the children can benefit from the right to education.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if she could spell out the policy of her Ministry regarding children in shelters who do not attend school?

Mrs Martin: Actually, Mr Speaker, Sir, we do try at the maximum to send all children who reside in shelters to school. However, because of some conditions, sometimes the children are very behind in their schooling or they necessitate special attention. These children are, in fact, sent to specialised schools or otherwise, there are qualified teachers who come into those shelters and ensure that the children follow schooling programs until they can integrate the mainstream.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether any survey has been carried out by her Ministry to find the root causes why these children do not go to school? What are the reasons the students fail to attend school?

Mrs Martin: There are different reasons why children do not go schools...

(Interruptions)

No. There are not surveys carried out *per se*, but what we do is usually when we have a case, as I have mentioned, there is a social enquiry that is carried out on every case, and, as appropriate, the children are referred to relevant institutions. And they are also, in certain cases, followed so that they may attend school as quickly as possible. For example, when there is the problem of tardy declaration of birth: like I have said, if there is a case like that, my ministry will follow. If ever there are questions of poverty, it is the NEF that will follow and the Social Security as well will give the necessary support.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether her Ministry has carried out a survey or a study of the correlation between children not going to school and those engaged in prostitution, child labour and larceny, for example?

Mrs Martin: I must say no, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister what initiative her Ministry has taken in order to assess the number of children who are not attending school right now and who are concerned?

Mrs Martin: What I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is through the networking mechanisms that we have put in place, there are several reporting of cases which come to us. For example,

with regard to the number of cases which have been referred through the different District Child Protection Committees and Community Child Watch Committees, for example, there is an average in the different Community Child Watch Committees. I can see that there are 32 of them. There is an average of about four to five cases that are being reported through those different 32 Community Child Watch Committees through their meetings and reported to the Ministry. Once it is reported to the Ministry, according to the different requirements of the case, we follow up on the case.

MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

– STATUTES – REGISTRAR OF ASSOCIATIONS

(No. B/911) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Football Association he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if the new statutes thereof are recognized by the Registrar of Associations.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Registrar of Associations that the new statutes of the MFA which were approved at the General Assembly held on 28 August 2012 contain a number of clauses that are not in conformity with the Registration of Associations Act and the Sports Act.

Consequently, I am informed that the new statutes of the MFA have not been registered by the Registrar of Associations.

Mr Quirin: Peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre, s'il y a eu des actions qui ont été entreprises par son ministère à l'encontre de la MFA suite au refus du *Registrar* de ne pas reconnaître le statut ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the election of the management committee of MFA was supposed to be held in December 2012, that is, within four months after the last Olympic Games. However, in view of internal conflicts within the MFA, the elections were delayed eventually and after consultation with the FIFA and the MFA, FIFA agreed to MFA holding its election of managing committee not later than September 2013. Accordingly, upon the request of the MFA, my Ministry raised no objection to the election being held in September 2013 given the time

frame for holding of the special General Assembly in an election of managing committee of the Sports Federation is being reviewed in the new Sports Bill which will be tabled in the National Assembly very soon.

I am now informed that the Registrar of Associations issued a letter to the MFA on 02 September 2013, requesting the Federation to hold its general assembly in accordance with the existing rules within two months. So, we are waiting for the FIFA now to give the way forward regarding these elections.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministère a apporté des amendements au *Sports Act*, le 11 Octobre de cette année. Ces mêmes amendements ont été *gazetted* le 19 Octobre. Si j'ai bien compris l'honorable ministre – et ça je pense que tout le monde le sait – la MFA a organisé son assemblée générale pour faire voter et approuver ces nouveaux statuts depuis le 28 août 2012. Donc, l'honorable ministre est-il en train de nous dire que la MFA est une fédération qui a opéré illégalement pendant plus d'une année ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Football Association operates under the aegis of the FIFA and respecting the rules of the Registrar of Associations Act and the Sports Act. Now, regarding the regulation, in fact, it was according to the new rules of the MFA, the Managing Committee members were supposed to be appointed by post. Previously it was collegial election, then they decided to go ahead with the election by post. This new rule of FIFA was approved. The Sports Regulation had to be amended by my Ministry in order to incorporate the new mode of election as provided in the statute of the MFA to give the opportunity to go ahead with the election.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, permettez-moi d'avoir une opinion différente de ce que vient de nous affirmer l'honorable ministre. Je me répète. La MFA a approuvé ces nouveaux statuts le 28 août 2012, c'est-à-dire bien avant que l'honorable ministre ait amendé le *Sports Act* pour qu'il y ait une harmonie entre les nouveaux statuts de la MFA et le *Sports Act*. Ce qui veut dire, je me répète, la MFA a fonctionné illégalement, donc, pas du tout en conformité avec le *Sports Act* durant cette période d'août 2012 au 19 octobre de cette année. Il y avait disparité dans les lois.

Mr Ritoo: M. le président, le représentant légal de la FIFA était ici pour superviser ces élections. Il était en présence de toutes les données concernant les lois au niveau de la MFA afin

d'autoriser les élections. Ce que nous avons fait, c'est simplement, en consultation avec la FIFA, on a autorisé que ce *voting by post* puisse avoir lieu. C'est pour cela qu'on croit qu'il peut avoir une opinion différente mais la fédération mauricienne du football a bel et bien fonctionné en consultation avec la FIFA.

Mr Quirin : M. le président, si je comprends bien le ministre, son ministère reconnaît l'actuel comité directeur de la MFA ?

Mr Ritoo : M. le président, ensuite il y a eu l'élection que je viens de mentionner et cette élection a été supervisée par Primo Corvaro de la FIFA. Ensuite après les élections, la FIFA n'a pas encore reconnu le nouveau comité. Donc, on attend que la FIFA reconnaisse ce comité pour qu'on puisse aller de l'avant. En principe il y avait la fédération auparavant. On a eu des consultations avec la fédération concernant tous les statuts.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Labelle.

MR L. S., PROBATION OFFICER

– ALLEGATIONS AGAINST – INTERNAL INQUIRY

(No. B/912) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether her Ministry is in presence of a complaint filed, on or about 17 October 2013, against one Mr L. S., Probation Officer, and if so, state if an internal inquiry has been carried thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in mid October 2013, I was informed by my Public Relations Officer that a lady came at the Ministry and reported that one officer of the Probation and After Care Service had harassed her in his office.

I immediately informed the then Permanent Secretary of my Ministry of the allegations made and requested that an immediate enquiry be conducted thereon by the Commissioner of the Probation and After Care Service. The Commissioner together with the HR Department of my Ministry accordingly conducted an enquiry and reported that Mr L. S. strongly denied the allegations levelled against him.

Mr L. S. averred that he conducted three interviews with the lady applicant at the Probation Office during the month of August and September 2013. He stressed that there were officers present in the office on all the three occasions he had interviewed the applicant. The attendance of these officers on the dates mentioned, were verified by the Probation Office and same was confirmed to be correct. On the basis of these above available information, the report from the Commissioner of the Probation and Aftercare Service does not disclose any offence against the law has been committed. Hence, the responsible officer of my Ministry did not take any further action at this point in time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have also been informed that the lady has reported the case to the Police and in case a Police enquiry is initiated, my Ministry will fully collaborate with the Police.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the Minister aware that there was such a case against the same officer some time ago?

Mrs Bappoo: I am not aware. I have to enquire, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

FOYER TROCHETIA - CENTRE FOR SEVERELY DISABLED OLD PERSONS

(No. B/913) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Centre for the Severely Disabled Elderly Persons at Pointe aux Sables, she will state the name of the Non Government Organisation responsible for the management thereof, indicating the terms and conditions of the agreement in relation thereto.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Foyer Trochetia, a Centre for Severely Disabled Old Persons was opened in 2008. Given the specificities of the proposed services to be provided, my Ministry opted for the Public Private Partnership (PPP) concept for the management of the Centre.

In this connection, NGOs were invited on 28 April 2008 through the Press to submit 'Expression of Interest' for the joint management of the Centre and the only NGO which responded was the Arya Sabha Mauritius. Procurement procedures were followed for award of the contract as my Ministry was fully satisfied with the excellent track record of Arya Sabha on

the running and managing of Homes for vulnerable groups namely the Gayasingh Ashram for the past 75 years and Balgobin Ashram for the past 17 years amongst others.

Since 2008 to date there is for the past five years, the Arya Sabha has served the Foyer with full dedication and has shown an unflinching support in uplifting the cause of these severely disabled elderly residents. My Ministry is fully satisfied with the good partnership established with the Arya Sabha in Mauritius in the running of the Centre.

My Ministry provides for necessary logistic support as well as medical and paramedical staff including occupational therapists, physiotherapists as well as trained carers while the Arya Sabha manages the Centre.

It is to be noted, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Arya Sabha Mauritius in August 2008 and reviewed in October 2013. I am tabling a copy of the MoU which provides for all terms and conditions of the agreement between my Ministry and the Arya Sabha.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would wish here to invite hon. Members to visit the Centre, which is unique in its kind in Mauritius in providing quality service to persons with severe disabilities. It is a model in the region.

I am tabling the copy of the MoU with conditions, etc.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the services which were to be included, as per Audit Report, that is, maintenance, cleaning, gardening are being included? Because this was the issue, and since the Ministry has spent some Rs10.5 m. above the agreed price for this contract, has this been reviewed to avoid such situation?

Mrs Bappoo: Already done, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Director of Audit did make mention about it, because one clause in the MoU was not respected, that is, maintenance, cleaning, gardening, security services, general upkeep activities of the building. So, then, we were advised by the Director of Audit himself in his report to review the MoU. This MoU has been reviewed in 2013, and this part, that is, the maintenance, cleaning, gardening etc., has been taken up by the Ministry of Social Security itself. Taking care of the carers in their day to day programme, this is the part for the Arya Sabha, and this is explained in the MoU that I have just been tabling.

SCHOOLS - ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUBJECT - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/914) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the introduction of entrepreneurship as a subject in schools, he will state the progress achieved as at to date, in particular, in respect of the school year 2014.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, as Mauritius moves into the new era of knowledge economy, it becomes essential to equip learners with 21st century skills that will enable them to constantly be innovative, creative, flexible, and responsive to emerging challenges. Entrepreneurship is one of the new basic skills which several advanced economies have already integrated in their education programmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Entrepreneurship Education was introduced at the beginning of the 2nd term of 2013, that is this year, in 17 secondary schools (both state and private) at Form I level on a pilot basis, including one school in Rodrigues. I am tabling a list of those pilot schools.

Textbooks and teacher's guides, developed by the Mauritius Institute of Education, were provided free to all pupils and teachers in the pilot schools. Continuous teacher training was carried out by the MIE staff during the year 2013 with the educators concerned. Moreover, the writing panel and officers of my Ministry carried out regular follow-up and visits to the pilot schools for monitoring.

From a pedagogical perspective, piloting the project offered enough time for the materials to be tested, refined, and provided for capacity building for educators. Now that the project has proved its worth, it will be extended to all secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues in Form I next year, and will be a standalone subject. The students of the 17 pilot schools will continue to study the subject, of course, at Form II level, and then Form III, etc.

Following feedback from educators and continuous panel evaluation, a final version of the textbook for Form I has been produced by the MIE. The "Entrepreneurship Education – Form I" textbook will be available for sale in bookshops for academic year 2014, when the subject will be extended to all schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues. For effective teaching, a teacher's guide will also be made available for the educators. Moreover, workshops for educators will be carried out by MIE in November 2013, that is, in the days to come.

Mr Speaker, Sir, schools in Rodrigues will certainly, of course, be taken on board for this new initiative.

Mr François: I thank the hon. Minister for this answer. In that context, may I ask the hon. Minister under what Department will this new subject lie? Will it be under the Sociology Department, or within the Accounting or Business Department? Because it is not quite clear under which Department it will lie in schools.

Dr. Bunwaree: It is going to be a standalone subject. It is going to be one subject which will be taught in Forms I, II and III.

ICTA - MR S. G. --TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

(No. B/915) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to Mr S. G., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information and Communications Technology Authority, information as to if an agreement has been reached following the termination of contract thereof with the Authority and, if so, indicate the terms and conditions thereof.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, in fact, an agreement was reached following a case which was lodged in December 2007 by Mr S. G. before the Supreme Court.

In October 2009, the ICT Authority appointed a conciliator to reach conciliation between Mr S. G. and the Authority. On 08 May 2012, an agreement was reached between Mr S. G. and the ICT Authority, following which Mr S. G. withdrew the case from the Supreme Court.

The agreement reached between the two parties contained a non-disclosure clause, which prevents the terms and conditions thereof to be disclosed.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, since we are talking of public money, can we know the amount that was paid to Mr S. G. as compensation?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned...

(Interruptions)

I don't know why we have to make it a big issue, because you know...

(*Interruptions*)

Let me...

(*Interruptions*)

Can I answer the question, Mr Speaker, Sir?

(*Interruptions*)

If, in this particular case, the hon. Member thinks that this is a case that has to be brought before the Assembly today...

(*Interruptions*)

but in fact, the same thing happened with Mr Bocus...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Wait a minute! Hon. Jhugroo, I have been patient enough with you! Don't raise your voice like this in this House! Proceed, hon. Minister!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir,...

(*Interruptions*)

Si on veut faire de cela une question de principe, pourquoi l'honorable membre ne fait pas référence au cas de Monsieur M. A. B....

Mr Speaker: Don't mention name!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Monsieur M. A. B....

Mr Speaker: Don't mention name!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I am not mentioning the name. I am only stating the initials, so that people can know. In this particular case, he was the Director of Legal Affairs, his services were also terminated, and he was not agreeable to it. He went to the Supreme Court, and then, subsequently, there was conciliation! In his case also, compensation was paid in accordance with the terms on conditions of the contract, and the agreement contained a non-disclosure clause!

(*Interruptions*)

If for him, it is okay, why for the other one it cannot be done?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Lesjongard: The hon. Minister is replying the way he is replying. *Mais, allons rendre tout public! Il n'y a aucun problème!*

(*Interruptions*)

Les fonds publics ! On n'a aucune objection !

(*Interruptions*)

In both cases, please make it public. We want to know the amount of compensation paid to that gentleman!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, *en droit, les parties sont les meilleurs arbitres de leurs intérêts.*

(*Interruptions*)

S'ils ont choisi de faire de cela une question qui ne va pas être disclosed, je n'y peux rien !

(*Interruptions*)

Un agreement c'est la loi des parties. Et...

(*Interruptions*)

il faut aussi prendre en ligne de compte, en 2002, M. le président...

(*Interruptions*)

le gouvernement MMM/MSM avait aboli le poste qu'un certain B. B. avait occupé. Là-bas aussi il y avait payment of compensation which has not been disclosed!

(*Interruptions*)

So, when it comes to you, you can do so, and when it comes to this Government, we can't do it!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister just informed the House, the country and the nation, people who pay the television fees that Mr S. G. removed his case. Can the Minister inform the House whether the decision for Mr S. G. to remove his case, after he crossed the floor and became the Special Advisor of the Prime Minister, he left one party, the MSM, and crossed the floor and became a *transfuge*, that was the deal with the Prime Minister?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Well, wait a minute. I have said that each Member who puts a question and makes allegation has to take his responsibility.

(*Interruptions*)

And this is a general remark!

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, hon. Minister, do you wish to answer?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Roopun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister does not want to disclose the amount for which the case has been settled. Can I know from the hon. Minister what was the original claim made by this gentleman before the Supreme Court?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: No! You will be surprised. Following the termination of his contract, there was a case which was lodged before the Supreme Court in December 2007. In October 2009, a long time before he took office - as my friend has just mentioned – it was in October 2009, ICTA appointed a conciliator to look into that aspect of the case. What happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? They took some time and, finally, they settled the case in May 2012.

Mr Roopun: I wanted to have details about the original claim before the Court. What amount was claimed initially and which eventually led to a sudden settlement which the Minister does not want to disclose, but what was the original claim before the Court?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should know better, being a lawyer himself. Once we lodge a case before the Court, it becomes public, the claim...

(Interruptions)

I don't have the figure in my file, but if the hon. Member wants to know what it is all about, he can still look into the file of the Court and he will have the figure.

Mr Ganoo: Since the question has been asked by hon. Lesjongard who made public the golden handshake in the case of Mr S.G. or in the case of Mr B., may I ask the hon. Minister, in this case, we are dealing with ICTA which is an authority, a statutory body and not a private company funded by public funds or a private company which is listed on the Stock Exchange, this is an ICTA, Government authority public funds, Mr Speaker, Sir? This is why for the sake of transparency, we appeal to the hon. Minister in both cases to make it public.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: If, Mr Speaker, Sir, the lawyers who are employed to work for the ICTA has deemed it fit and proper to insert a non-disclosure agreement, what can I do?

(Interruptions)

FLIC EN FLAC – SOCIETE DE LA RESERVE - LETTER OF INTENT -

(No. B/916) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Anna, in Flic en Flac, he will state if a letter of intent has been issued to *Société la Réserve* for the development of a *morcellement* thereat and, if so, indicate when and the terms and conditions thereof.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the “*Société De La Réserve*” submitted an application pertaining to the subdivision of a plot of land of the extent of 50 hectare 525 m² into 524 lots, including green space, at Flic en Flac for residential purposes on 11 December 2012.

The *Morcellement* Board, at its meetings of 05 June and 19 June 2013, considered the application and noted that –

- (i) the proposed development satisfies all the planning requirements, and

- (ii) the subdivision plan makes adequate provision for infrastructural works and green space.

Consequently, after consultation with all stakeholders concerned, a letter of intent was issued to the promoter on 21 June 2013 stipulating conditions for the issue of a *Morcellement* Permit. The main conditions, *inter alia*, include the submission of –

- (i) a Land Conversion Permit;
- (ii) a Traffic Impact Assessment Report;
- (iii) a Parcel Identification Number (known commonly as PIN) in respect of each of the proposed lots;
- (iv) a clearance certificate from the Central Water Authority to the effect that all infrastructural works regarding water supply, including the construction of a reservoir of 2,000 m³ capacity, have been completed;
- (v) a clearance certificate from the Central Electricity Board to the effect that all electricity networks have been completed;
- (vi) a certificate from the District Council and the Road Development Authority regarding the provision of footpaths, street lighting, drainage system and tarring of accesses, and
- (vii) a certificate from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit pertaining to road markings, traffic and highway signs and construction of a roundabout.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that all infrastructural works have to be completed to the satisfaction of the *Morcellement* Board within a period of three years from the date of the letter of intent, that is, by 20 June 2016, at latest.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister for the information provided *et je suis sûre que le ministre ne va pas défendre l'indéfendable*. Can the hon. Minister explain why a letter of intent has been issued to the promoter, *Société De La Réserve*, prior to his obtention of a Land Conversion Permit, of a Traffic Impact Assessment, necessary clearances from the District Council? Because, in the guidelines for application – not for the issue of a letter of intent – for a *morcellement* permit, there is a checklist and it is said there, that, “application

shall be accepted only if the submission is complete as per checklist”, and the checklist includes a Land Conversion Permit, the checklist includes a Traffic Impact Assessment Report. So, can I know from the hon. Minister why – not the application. I am talking of a letter of intent which has already been issued without prior obtention of these permits.

Dr. Kasenally: Don’t judge me – that I will defend the *indéfendable*. These are the rules and regulations. It is a *Morcellement* Board which comprises all the other stakeholders, which have decided upon that. I am not in a position to say that they have gone wrong but, certainly, I will ask question and see whether there has been any *entorse aux procédures*.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say why the *Morcellement* Board has considered this application exceptionally on a fast-track basis? The Ministry of Housing and Lands issued a letter on 03 June to all Members of the *Morcellement* Board, wherein the EIA Licence was included, and asked the Members of their Board to submit urgently their views so that the letter of intent can be approved at the next meeting of the *Morcellement* Board. The letter issued from the Ministry of Housing and Lands on 03 June and the *Morcellement* Board was to meet on 05 June. This is an exceptional fast-track procedure. Can the hon. Minister say why the *Morcellement* Board...

Dr. Kasenally: The application was submitted on 11 December 2012. It was only after six months that the *Morcellement* Board meeting took place – and this is a period of six months. I would not say it is exceptionally but, certainly – you have put the question – I will have also to ask, because this Board is a statutory Board, not only under my Ministry, but there are all other stakeholders into it.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said that the letter of intent was issued on 21 June. Can the hon. Minister say why this letter of intent has been issued, despite the fact that the District Council of Black River stated in a letter dated 14 June, that is, before the letter of intent was issued, that it cannot recommend the application in its present form in view of serious *manquement* in the application?

Dr. Kasenally: As you can see this is not the end of the matter. The conditions attached to it – you must have seen – are very strict and it cannot go further without these conditions being made, which are about seven of them and this is conditional. I don’t think it will even be

able to invest or whatever it is, to get money out of it. First of all, it has to spend and I think they have good reasons to do it and I'll have to check what it is all about.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 5 July, the District Council again drew the attention of the Morcellement Board to the fact that it has reservations on certain aspects of the application and that amendments should be brought to the Letter of Intent, which has not been done. Can the hon. Minister say why?

Dr. Kasenally: The hon. Member seems to have all the information which is in the confidential file of my Ministry. Now, the environment impact assessment ...

(Interruptions)

No, it is something very serious. I have to look at it and I promise that I will look into it. I will look at each and every aspect of what the hon. Member has said and report back to the House.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Can I just raise the following point. A Letter of Intent has been issued. I take the words of the Minister that he is going to have a full enquiry and report back. But, in the meantime, is he aware that for this Letter of Intent money is being collected from ordinary people. Now, we have just gone through how many Ponzi schemes. People putting their money in the hope that - and in this case, for this Letter of Intent money is being collected. Will the hon. Minister see to it that this is stopped?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, an amendment has just been put in the Finance Act to stop the speculation and as soon as I leave here, I will ensure that an enquiry is started.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, continuing from where the hon. Leader of the Opposition just left. The hon. Minister has said that there is now going to be an amendment, but already under the existing legislation, you cannot, based on a Letter of Intent, go, market and sell land which has not got a full *Morcellement* approval and his Ministry has the power to take legal sanctions. So, may I ask the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, whether he will give instructions to his officer to go to the Police and to have a full Police enquiry in this case?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will do what is within the purview of the law and if there is any *maldonne*, I think serious action will have to be taken.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: M. le président, avec toutes ces lacunes, le *Morcellement Board* a donné un *Letter of Intent* qui est une carte blanche qui permet au promoteur d'extorquer de l'argent du public et le public a payé des millions sur cette *Letter of Intent*. I think it is much more than an internal enquiry. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can ask ICAC to enquire into what the Morcellement Board has done and come up? Because if tomorrow...

Mr Speaker: Okay, you have put your question. You may answer hon. Minister!

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take my responsibility and take whatever action needs to be done within the law.

Mr Jhugroo: Will the hon. Minister consider taking immediate action by issuing a *communiqué* as from today either on radio or television to ask the people to stop investing in that company immediately?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already said what I need to do and I will do it.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has just informed us that an amendment is coming concerning this *Morcellement*. I think the hon. Minister is wrong. It is not the amendment coming for small people. Small people will need bank guarantee to sell 5 or 10 lots. Here, we are having affair with a *gros requin*. A big crook! So, can the hon. Minister, at least go directly to the Police first and then act accordingly?

Dr. Kasenally: I repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will take my responsibility and do whatever needs to be done to safeguard the interests of the public.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQs B/921, B/922, B/925, B/928, B/933, B/937, B/938 have been withdrawn.

VEGETABLES (FRESH) – PESTICIDE – TESTS

(No. B/917) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the fresh vegetables sold on the market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the authorities concerned therewith, including the Agricultural Research Unit and the Food

Laboratory, information as to if tests are carried out on a regular basis to determine the pesticide levels in the residues thereof and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker Sir, the determination of pesticide residue in fresh vegetables involves two main steps, namely the sampling of vegetables which are carried out by the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) and the chemical analysis of pesticide residue by the National Food Technology Laboratory. Moreover, AREU also carries out sensitisation campaigns for planters on the judicious use of pesticides and monitors closely food crop plantations where higher than normally recommended minimum levels of pesticides have been detected.

Tests to determine the pesticide residue level on fresh vegetables are being carried out since 1995 by my Ministry. From 1995 to December 2009, samples were being collected from markets by the Agricultural Chemistry Division of my Ministry for analysis of pesticide residues. However, since January 2010 samples are being collected at farm gate level instead of market level by the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit to ensure traceability.

On an average only 3.3% of the total samples were found to have pesticide residues above the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) established by the FAO Codex Alimentarius. This has been validated through independent testing by accredited laboratories in South Africa.

There is a general perception in Mauritius that the pesticide residue level is very high but the results show that our pesticide residue level compares favourably with that of developed countries such as the European Union. The House may wish to note that in developed countries such as the European Union, the Codex Maximum Residue Level detected in fruits and vegetables ranges from 3.5% to 5.5%.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that the last test carried out in 2011 has shown that the pesticide residues are present at very high levels and in certain cases, it exceeds the acceptable level by more than 13%. In the case of tomatoes, in the case of the Chinese cabbage and a series of others, the amount of pesticide residues is extremely high. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware about this and what actions have been taken by his Ministry?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, I have given in my answer, the average is 3.3%. I must say again that there is a long list of measures which the Ministry is taking, firstly, as I said, previously samples were taken at market level, we are taking at farm gate level so that we can trace back to the planter whose vegetables is being questioned. This is one.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, previously, I must say again, between 2003 and 2006, there were absolutely no test carried out whatsoever. The second thing is that previously there were only 7 vegetables which were being monitored for pesticide residues. Today, we have increased it to 61. The number of pesticides which were being detected for stood at 10 before, today it has gone up to 23, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have 152 planters where their vegetables were found to contain pesticides level above the required level. They were contacted by AREU and they are being monitored and followed quite closely. Since 2010, 4,200 small planters have been trained on good agricultural practices, the judicious use of pesticides.

We have also, together with the Dangerous Chemicals Control Board (DCCB), banned around 75 highly toxic pesticides which were being used, but we have banned them since because they appeared to contain carcinogenic properties.

We have again worked with DCCB and there are about seven more pesticides which are going to be banned. We have restricted use of pesticides; one is paraquat which is there for quite some time now. We are promoting the use of bio pesticides There is an amount which has been voted in the Budget for next year to encourage the use of bio pesticides. We are also promoting alternative production systems; hydroponics and sheltered farming so that less use of pesticides is made. We are also promoting ecological agriculture, Mr Speaker, Sir, but this is not going to change overnight. It's a long process. As I said, at all levels we are trying our best to see to it that judicious use of pesticide is made.

Mr Jugnauth: One of the objectives of setting up the food lab was precisely to carry out such kind of tests. May I know if, as at today, the food lab is, in fact, carrying out such tests and how many tests have been carried out, let's say, for the past one year?

Mr Faugoo: This is what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the average there were only 150 tests being carried out previously on samples of vegetables for pesticides. Today, on the average, it is about 500. I also said the range of vegetables from 23 today is 61 and the type of

pesticides is from 10 to 23. So, it is evident from the figures that the lab is carrying out tests. So far the total number of samples analysed is about 4,000 for the past five to six years.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that the test is now carried out at farm level and not at market level. But for the last test carried out in 2011, the market level amount of residue was 39% whereas at the farm level it was 23.5%. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of that and of the fact that no follow-up action is taken by the AREU? In fact, the AREU carries out sensitisation campaigns, but no follow-up action is carried out and the farmers are not monitored and the high level of residue is simply due to the fact that growers do not follow recommendations, do not keep the time interval between the spraying and the harvesting. And all this is being done without proper monitoring from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

Mr Faugoo: It used to be worse, Mr Speaker, Sir. Four years or five years ago, it was worse. I just mentioned all the measures that we have taken so far. The measures we are proposing to take. So, it will take time. It's a question of aptitude. Shifting from pesticides to bio pesticides, it will take time, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are encouraging the planters to use bio pesticides, but it's a question of habit also. There is a difference - the hon. Lady's word - between the result at market basket level and farm gate level. As far as follow-up is concerned, I said there are 152 planters whose vegetables were questioned and they are being followed up.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not think that it will be necessary to review legislations and to ensure that people who do not follow recommendations may be prosecuted or taken to task by paying fines?

Mr Faugoo: It can be considered, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/923 and B/924 have been withdrawn. Time is over for questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)**

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

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(4.25 p.m.)

STATEMENT BY MINISTER**BUDGET 2014 - IMPLEMENTATION TIME TABLE**

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am circulating the implementation time table for the 341 Budget measures as announced at paragraph 581 in the 2014 Budget Speech and annex. (**APPENDIX**)

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIV of 2013) was read a first time.

Mr Speaker: This is a proper time to break. I break for half an hour.

At 4.27 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.10 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in Chair.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(No. XXIII of 2013)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2014) Bill (No. XXIII of 2013)

Question again proposed.

Mr J. C. Léopold (First Member for Rodrigues): Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, allow me from the very outset to congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the Budget presented to this House on the 08 November last.

To a very humble point of view, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a work done with the people, for the people. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget contains several social and economic measures for empowering the poor and vulnerable segments of our society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and his team have done their best being given the actual economic situation. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given the economic crisis that prevails worldwide and the outcome experienced here and given the social situation in Europe, the United States and Asia, they have struck the right balance for the welfare of the *ti dimounes*. They have fought through the social dimension of the Mauritian economy so as to precisely guarantee job creation and economic growth namely in the SME sector with regard to access to finance and the ease of doing business. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a known fact that stability, fiscal consolidation, reforms are not a name in themselves, but instruments to create wellbeing and jobs. This is why I welcome the philosophy of this Budget as its objectives are in a sense social since employment is the social dimension *par excellence*.

En effet, M. le président, c'est un budget à fort accent social qui vient tendre une main vers les plus démunis de notre société et vient redonner non seulement l'espoir mais les outils nécessaires pour affronter les aléas de la vie. Avoir un toit décent, M. le président, ne devrait pas être un luxe en 2013 car chaque famille devrait vivre la fraternité, la convivialité et l'amour dans un environnement salubre. On ne devrait plus dormir à la belle étoile, M. le président, mais force est de constater que nombreux sont ceux qui n'arrivent pas à joindre les deux bouts dans notre société surtout en ce qu'il s'agit de se pourvoir un abri décent pour abriter les siens. Paradoxalement, M. le président, certains parlent de maisons principales, maisons secondaires,

campements, chalets et autres. Pourtant la famille est la base de notre société, M. le président. Un foyer cimente la famille et préserve l'esprit familial. C'est ainsi que la transmission des valeurs ancestrales et familiales peut être assurée et bien des négativités de notre société pourraient être facilement épargnées.

L'éducation de base commence dans la famille et c'est là que sont inculqués les principes fondamentaux de la vie telle la tolérance, le pardon, la compassion, l'estime de soi et tant d'autres, donc le savoir-vivre, M. le président. Comment peut-on parler de l'*equal chance* et l'*equal opportunities* si dès le départ une frange de notre société est marginalisée. Si l'enfant qui va à l'école n'a pas les matériaux scolaires ou les uniformes adéquats et si le soir en rentrant, il va dormir le ventre vide et que malgré sa bonne volonté, il n'y a ni table, ni électricité et ni l'eau courante, M. le président. Le gouvernement n'est pas resté insensible à cette démarche. Bien au contraire, ce budget donne les outils pour combattre la pauvreté sous toutes ces formes notamment à travers son social *executive arm*, la NEF. Car comme on le dit si bien –

«La politique est la science de faire le plus de bien possible avec le moins de peine possible »

Et je me souscris totalement à cet adage, M. le président. C'est pourquoi je salue avec vigueur les mesures énoncées du paragraphe 468 à 487 concernant le *social housing*.

At paragraph 482, provisions for, I quote –

“A major social house Construction Programme is being launched in 2014”

And it goes further, at paragraph 483 to say –

“Through this programme, 1,765 families will benefit (...)"

And that –

« provision is also made at paragraph 486 for an additional 450 social housing units to vulnerable families through the National Empowerment Foundation in 2014. »

Ces mesures ne sont que le sommet de l'iceberg comme on dit, M. le président, compte tenu des autres mesures, les unes les plus alléchantes que les autres toujours pour assurer le bien-être des plus vulnérables. Je suis convaincu que certains trouveront dans ces mesures de l'assistanat.

Mais moi je les qualifie de main tendue aux pauvres et aux démunis car ‘*actions speak louder than words*’. Gageons que ceux là mêmes parlent de maisons principales, maisons secondaires et campements, donc il faut bien que quelqu’un joue au bon samaritain pour les pauvres et c’est précisément une des responsabilités de l’Etat, à savoir garantir l’équilibre social. Donc, il y a des limites à ne pas être hypocrites et de jouer sur le malheur des autres pour des gains politiques. Je trouve cela grotesque et pitoyable, M. le président.

Cependant, parlant de logement social et du bien être des pauvres, M. le président, je ne peux pas passer sous silence le sort des compatriotes venant de Rodrigues à Maurice, dans notre chère patrie. Tout récemment, M. le président, il y a eu des rebondissements dans la presse et en tant qu’élue de Rodrigues, il est de mon devoir de m’exprimer surtout lorsqu’on aborde le social.

M. le président, il faut voir la réalité des choses et comprendre que les Rodriguais viennent à Maurice pour diverses raisons. Il y a ceux qui viennent pour travailler comme les trois ici présents à l’Assemblée Nationale, ceux venant pour les affaires, d’autres pour recevoir des soins médicaux non-disponibles au pays, il y a aussi ceux qui viennent en vacances. Je pense aussi, en ce moment, à cette cohorte d’enfants venus pour une tournée éducative et finalement il y a la grande majorité qui vient pour trouver de quoi se nourrir avec l’espoir d’assurer un meilleur lendemain à leurs familles. Et, je m’intéresserai, M. le président, particulièrement à cette catégorie dans la suite de mon discours.

Cette dernière catégorie, M. le président, croyant que l’herbe est plus verte, ici, malheureusement, ‘*sape dans poêlon tombe dans difé*’. Peu importe leur niveau d’éducation, peu importe leur statut social, leur religion, ou leur orientation sexuelle, si on veut, loin de vouloir désigner quiconque responsable ou la raison de leur Emigration avec un ‘E’ majuscule, M. le président. Pour moi ce ne sont ni plus ni moins que des enfants de la République au même titre que ceux vivant à Grand’ Baie, Floréal, Curepipe ou Port Louis. Des enfants de la République, M. le président! Notre République ! Cet état océan avec l’île principale: l’île Maurice. Il y a ensuite Rodrigues, Agaléga, St Brandon et autres. Ils ont la carte d’identité mauricienne, la nationalité mauricienne, acte de naissance et passeport mauriciens et tout en bonne et due forme.

M. le président, je fais un appel à tout un chacun, à tous les citoyens de notre République d’éviter de stéréotyper ou de stigmatiser ces enfants de la République quel que soit notre lieu de naissance, classe sociale ou autres. Que nos démarches soient plus franches et agréables sans

toucher la sensibilité de qui que ce soit et que nos actions et nos propos reflètent l'intégration, la compréhension et la compassion, si besoin est. On gagnerait beaucoup à parler le langage de l'unité, de fraternité et d'amour, M. le président. Je crois personnellement à l'unité, à la persistance, à la logique, à l'adhésion d'hier avec demain, M. le président. C'est pourquoi dans un souci de tendre davantage la main à ceux de nos îles satellites, venir s'échouer ici sur le *mainland Mauritius* en raison de la force des choses, comme on le dit si bien en bon créole Rodriguais – ‘*a koz la beze et in arriv kot pa koner*’, je voudrais faire les quelques quatre propositions suivantes. –

D'abord, Rodrigues, M. le président faisant partie intégrante de la République de Maurice et malgré son éloignement, notre île partage une histoire commune et lié à son île mère. C'est un fait que de plus en plus le fossé se creuse entre nos deux îles. Tout le monde sait que l'union fait la force et en tant que gouvernement responsable, nous devons faire en sorte que les Rodriguais se sentent citoyens à part entière de la République. Donc, ma première proposition, M. le président et que des natifs de Rodrigues ayant satisfait les critères requis, ont davantage de facilité d'accès au terrain de l'état pour un logement ou pour monter une entreprise.

Deuxièmement, M. le président, la création d'un véritable *Rodrigues Desk* qui soit moins exigu et plus accessible, donc plus accueillant. Déjà la personne se sent écrasée par le poids de la misère, le dépaysement, l'isolement, et l'aliénation dans bien des cas en raison de ses origines, lui demander de grimper dans un bâtiment à la recherche d'un petit bureau, c'est un peu trop. C'est contraignant. Tout comme c'est le cas du comptoir de Rodrigues à l'aéroport car la perception veut beaucoup dire. Il ne faut surtout pas ghettoiser. Ce desk doit être *welcoming* tout en offrant un service efficace pour faciliter et rendre moins pénible les démarches de ces malheureux.

Troisièmement, M. le président, au même titre que les *Citizens Advice Bureaux* ici à Maurice, il est temps d'avoir un lieu convenable, et j'insiste sur le côté accessible pour que n'importe quel élu de Rodrigues, de passage à Maurice, puisse recevoir dignement les natifs de l'île, et ceci bien évidemment pour les élus de l'Assemblée nationale et régionale. C'est ainsi qu'on sera en mesure de donner un meilleur service dans cette même logique de ‘*putting people first*’, et cette fois-ci, pour une fois, ‘*putting Rodriguan born citizens first*’.

Quatrièmement, M. le président, il faudrait mettre plus d'accent sur les grandes mesures qui donneraient un coup de pouce à l'économie rodriguaise, qui se trouve actuellement dans un état comateux. A Rodrigues, on dit que l'île est dans l'*ICU*, M. le président. J'ai en tête ici les grandes mesures telles que la construction d'un nouvel aéroport, d'une université, et l'agrandissement du port. Ces infrastructures permettront aux Rodriguais de trouver de l'emploi, et aura un effet multiplicateur sur l'économie de l'île et, par extension, de la République.

Donc, M. le président, je suis d'avis, surtout en voyant le massacre actuel à l'Assemblée régionale, que ces mesures ne doivent pas être seulement l'affaire de l'Assemblée régionale, mais doit faire partie d'une volonté nationale à faire décoller Rodrigues. Dans bien des cas, il faut bousculer certaines mentalités, et de ne pas laisser le pays à l'agonie et aux caprices de certains. Sans pour autant, M. le président, s'immiscer dans le *day-to-day running* du *RRA*, et dans le respect de l'autonomie, l'État ne doit pas laisser Rodrigues à elle-même car Rodrigues ne pourra pas vivre cette appartenance à la République seulement et seulement si elle se sent traiter sur le même pied d'égalité.

C'est pourquoi je tiens à féliciter ma collègue, l'honorable Madame Perraud, qui a initié une étude sur la situation des immigrants Rodriguais à Maurice, sous l'égide de la NESCI. Si nous voulons apporter des solutions aux problèmes des Rodriguais, il faut mieux comprendre leur vécu, leurs difficultés, leur aspirations et autres, M. le président.

Dans un tout autre registre, M. le président, je voudrais dire quelques mots sur le secteur de la pêche, car cela concerne le ministère auquel je suis attaché. Concerning fisheries sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I welcome the measures spelt out from paragraphs 253 to 262, namely for artisanal fishing and aquaculture. These measures constitute *une véritable bouffée d'air frais* for the fisheries sector, namely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the provisions made for the taking off of marine aquaculture on an industrial scale. Rightly so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at a time when fishers are called upon to live decently out of a job, and now that there are several fishers joining cooperatives, no doubt their future seems to become brighter. It is high time for a change of mindset of considering fishing as an activity for the poor and the marginalised.

Fishing is actually contributing to the tune of 1.5 % of GDP, with a turnover of around Rs21 billion. It cannot, in any way, be considered as a negligible sector. I believe, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir, that, being surrounded by ocean, fishers should be encouraged to take advantage of all what Mother Nature offers us.

Il nous faudrait, M. le président, viser à créer une véritable industrie de la pêche, et non pas se contenter uniquement de la pêche artisanale léguée par nos ancêtres. C'est dépassé ce concept, M. le président. La mer nourricière n'est plus ce qu'elle fut jadis, dans les années 20 et 30. Cela demande toute une réorganisation, de formation, et l'adoption de nouvelles méthodes et de stratégies plus rodées par tous ceux concernés par le métier de la mer, comme c'est le cas pour l'élevage et l'agriculture, d'où l'entrée en scène du *fish farming* et de l'aquaculture.

By definition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, aquaculture is fish farming. A more accurate definition would be the farming of fish, shellfish and aquatic plants in fresh or salt water. Today, as the demand for high-value marine finfish is increasing, to meet the demand, several countries in the Asian region, mainly China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Norway, Chile and Greece are involved in the farming of marine finfish. The annual production of marine finfish in the Far East is estimated at around 550,000 metric tonnes, and the bulk of the production, 85%, comes from the marine cage culture. More than 50 species of fish are currently cultured, including sea bass, sea bream, groupers, red drum, cobia, amber jack, etc, and this is spelt out in the report of FAO 2012, whose title is 'State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture.'

In Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a very recent report of the Board of Investment, it is found that pressure on marine resources is rising with consumer demand, and eventually signs of overexploitation are becoming evident. In this regard, there is no choice than doing marine ranching and aquaculture to provide a worthwhile means to sustain the marine resources in Mauritius. It goes further, saying that the potential for such endeavour in the interest of the fishers' community exists. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the species targeted for marine ranching are *cordonnier, gueule pavée, crabes et camarons*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our adventure in aquaculture dates far back in the 1970s, more precisely 1972, when a fresh prawn brood stock was introduced from Hawaii, followed by the introduction of three Chinese and Indian carp species for freshwater aquaculture in 1975. Yet for some others, aquaculture practices date back to French colonisation period.

C'est que le ministère de la Pêche est en train de faire en ce moment, M. le président, est une continuité des pratiques existantes, mais sur une base plus méthodique et scientifique. C'est

pourquoi je ne comprends pas cette résistance dans certains quartiers, à l'instar de Rodrigues, alors que nous voulons révolutionner la pêche en donnant aux pêcheurs les techniques et moyens matériels modernes pour sortir de la misère. J'aurais tendance à penser, M. le président, que certaines personnes font tout pour disséminer de mauvaises information aux pêcheurs, car à leurs yeux, les garder dans la misère et en maintenant le contrôle sur ces derniers constituera un *voting stock* pour les élections.

C'est malheureux de le dire, car ceci n'arrange pas le quotidien des pêcheurs. Cependant, ceux ayant compris que le ministère de la Pêche est un allié sur qui compter, et emboîtent le pas de la modernité, ont déjà des résultats plus que prometteurs. Ce n'est pas un hasard si on a pris la peine d'organiser les Assises de la pêche il y a deux ans.

De même, le récent *océan dialogue* sous l'égide du bureau du Premier ministre est un autre exemple. C'est ainsi, M. le président que provision a été faite dans ce présent budget, au paragraphe 256, à hauteur de R 8 millions, pour l'achat des cages flottantes. Les preuves sont là, M. le président. C'est une technique qui marche, avec des résultats *well above expectations*. C'est pourquoi, M. le président, j'ai du mal à me souscrire à ceux se prétendant être les plus grands défenseurs de la communauté des pêcheurs, au point de les encourager à tourner le dos à leur avenir et celui de leurs enfants. C'est mesquin et malsain. La pêche est comme le sport. Il ne faudrait pas y mettre de la politique de bassesse partout.

D'ailleurs, M. le président, c'est la première fois que la pêche à un ministère de tutelle *full-fledged*, dont je remercie vivement le Premier ministre pour cette vision avant-gardiste, Maurice étant un État océan.

Ceci m'amène à m'interroger aussi sur le rôle exact de certains soi-disant représentants des pêcheurs qui passent plus de temps dans les manifestations, les grèves de la faim. Mais, bon sang, quand est-ce qu'ils vont à la pêche ? Que je sache, M. le président, la pêche artisanale se pratique en mer, et pas dans les hôtels ! Franchement !

En effet, M. le président, comme disait Victor Hugo dans 'l'Extrait Des actes et des paroles', au ministère de la Pêche, nous croyons fermement que le vrai secours aux pauvres et vulnérables c'est l'abolition de la misère, et c'est précisément ce que nous sommes en train de faire en donnant de l'*empowerment* aux pêcheurs. Mais chacun doit y mettre du sien, M. le président, comme chacun doit assumer sa responsabilité. Donc, il ne suffit pas que certains

viennent dire ici que les pêcheurs sont les parents pauvres du budget. Il faudrait aussi les encourager à prendre avantage de toute la panoplie de mesures que l'Etat met à leur disposition. Car, *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a common Japanese proverb that says: vision without action is daydream. Action without vision is nightmare.* Nous, nous avons la volonté, la vision des choses, et nous passons à l'action.

Au paragraphe 257, l'honorable ministre des Finances fait provision de R 5 millions pour le repeuplement du lagon, c'est ce qu'on appelle dans notre jargon du 'marine ranching'. Pour l'année 2012 ceci a été pratiqué notamment dans les régions de Blue Bay, Pointe d'Esny, l'estuaire de Bel Eau à Albion, Poste Lafayette, Trou d'Eau Douce, Grand Gaube et dans la réserve marine de Petite Rivière. Les espèces concernées sont, évidemment, les cordonniers, les gueules pavé, les crabes et les camarons. C'est encore une véritable révolution qui demande un changement de *mindset* sans précédent. M. le président, alors que les pêcheurs sont habitués à tout prélever de la mer, maintenant on les apprend à 'semer' en mer pour plus tard. Nous visons le bien-être du pêcheur, pas tout de suite, mais dans cinq ans, dans dix ans, dans 20 ans. Ceci conformément avec le principe de l'Île Maurice Durable et du *sustainable development*. C'est cela d'être avant-gardiste et viser loin, M. le président. *As in this famous saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir –*

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

This is precisely what we are doing at the Ministry of Fishing.

Donc, je suis convaincu, M. le président, que suivant la mise en chantier de toutes ces mesures énoncées dans ce budget le secteur de la pêche va être définitivement révolutionné et, que dans un futur proche on ne viendra plus dire que les pêcheurs sont les parents pauvres du budget et du pays. Mais il faudrait que chacun joue son rôle pleinement.

M. le président, je vais compléter mon intervention en disant quelques mots sur ma circonscription : Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I warmly welcome the present measures for Rodrigues, namely the extension of a Special Holiday Package to the tune of Rs50 m., the subsidising containerised

and general cargo to Rodrigues, the rehabilitation of a Synthetic Track at Camp du Roi Stadium and for the increase in internet capacity in the island.

Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tourism is the lung of Rodrigues. By extending the Special Holiday Package we are ensuring that all the economic activities which are directly and indirectly concerned by the tourist industry will benefit and that more and more visitors, namely from Mauritius, would be encouraged to travel to Rodrigues. As a result, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are expecting many sectors, particularly the SMEs to be able to cope with the difficult conditions prevailing there. I have in mind those engaged in our agro-industry, handicraft, those offering accommodations and car rental facilities, amongst others. I hope, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that these measures will be extended further next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning subsidising containerised and general cargo to Rodrigues, I find this measure coming at the very right time since it is known fact that one of the most highest freight tariffs in the world, if not the highest, is between Rodrigues and Mauritius. It was such that many SMEs and businesses were threatened to close. The situation was so acute, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that *le panier de la ménagère* was much higher in Rodrigues than in Mauritius to a point that the price of some commodities was almost double.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these measures announced will surely give a relief to not only human consumption, but also for the construction industry where the price difference was more significant. Now that freight is being subsidised, I hope that those engaged in the above sectors, will take advantage of these measures and bring up a boost of our fragile economy.

Cependant, M. le président, c'est avec beaucoup de tristesse que je constate que le pays est comme, je dirai, mis en veilleuse, mettre en mode 'pause'. En effet, M. le président, depuis 2012, la morosité n'a fait que s'accentuer dans l'île. Ce n'est pas un hasard qu'il n'y a jamais eu autant de départ, pour ne plus revenir dans l'île que pendant ces deux dernières années. Les statistiques sont là pour me donner raison. M. le président, dans un rapport du *Statistics Mauritius*, datant du 04 juillet 2013, il est écrit que –

“Population of Rodrigues below 15 years was around 29% while for Mauritius, it was 20%.”

C'est-à-dire, en pourcentage des enfants, il y en a beaucoup plus à Rodrigues qu'à Maurice.

“Age 15 to 59, for Rodrigues was 60% and for Mauritius around 67%.”

And for those –

“60+, for Rodrigues around 10% and for Mauritius it was around 13%.

Je n’invente pas ces chiffres, M. le président. C’est dans les *Statistics Mauritius*. The author concluded by – I quote –

“Median age rose for Rodrigues increase from 23 to 28 years indicating that the population is gradually aging.”

Dans ce même rapport il est indiqué que la longévité a augmenté de même que le taux de naissance. Ceci montre clairement, M. le président, que le vieillissement de notre petite population qui, selon le même rapport, est comparable à celui de Moka, peut être imputé au départ massif des jeunes Rodriguais vers Maurice, avec les conséquences qu’on connaît. Ce qui m’inquiète le plus, M. le président, est que ceux actuellement au pouvoir à Rodrigues banalisent cet état de chose. Cependant c’est grave, et méga grave, M. le président. L’arrogance du pouvoir fait qu’ils ne se rendent même pas compte que le profil des émigrés a radicalement changé, passant du père de famille venant tenter l’aventure à Maurice pour ensuite faire venir la famille, à celui, malheureusement, où toute la famille claque la porte de leur maison à Rodrigues pour venir habiter des *longères* et des taudis, ici, à Maurice. C’est vous dire comment le pouvoir peut être aussi aveuglant en un clin d’œil, M. le président !

Pourtant un autre rapport signé de Yasmin Cassimally, rendu public le même jour, et discuté en grande pompe à l’hôtel Mourouk Ebony, en juillet de cette année, indique, je cite –

“Rodriguans in the island of Mauritius are more likely to be an employee, but less likely to be an own-account worker.”

Nous savons très bien la définition de ‘*employee*’ relative aux Rodriguais à Maurice ; c’est à coup sûr ‘aide-maçons’ ou ‘aide-chauffeurs’ sur camion, communément appelé ‘enflé camion’.

M. le président, si seulement vous saviez combien de commerce ont mis la clé sous le paillasson depuis 2012 et combien d’autres personnes ont été privées d’un *job* par représailles politiques. C’est immonde, M. le président ! La seule faute qu’ils ont commis, qui soit un gros péché capital aux yeux de certains, c’est d’avoir une opinion politique différente. Il n’y a pas

qu'en Afrique qu'on a des tyrans, M. le président ; des fois c'est beaucoup plus proche qu'on pourrait penser.

(*Interruptions*)

Atann to tour papa!

(*Interruptions*)

To exciter! Pas exciter! Calmer! To pou gayne le temps reponn la. C'est cela la démocratie.

Quand on parle de l'appauprissement constant de Rodrigues, on oublie de mentionner que cette situation ne s'applique pas à quelques protégés. C'est le *talk of the town* à Rodrigues que certains, avec le changement du pouvoir en 2012, ont carrément installé, non pas des 'dalos' - des gouttières - mais des aspirateurs de puissance en mégawatt directement depuis la caisse de l'Assemblée régionale. Eux, qui dénonçaient jadis la politique des petits copains et patati et patata. Aller voir, M. le président, c'est nettement pire ! En voilà des donneurs de leçons pris dans à leur propre piège et se doivent montrer leur vraie face de magouilleur, de bassesse et de protection sélective ! Je dirais même très sélective, M. le président, et en plus incompétent ! En effet, Rodrigues vit les moments les plus sales et corrompus de son histoire, M. le président.

M. le président, je vous donne un exemple. Des doubles lignes jaunes ont été systématiquement placées en 2012 devant les portes de la quasi-totalité des commerces à Port Mathurin. J'ai bien dit quasi-totalité, sauf un – devinez qui, M. le président ? Ils trouvent une autre parade et appellent cela faire de la politique autrement. Autrement pour qui, M. le président? Autrement pourquoi?

(*Interruptions*)

Autrement? Tu parles!

Aujourd'hui, la majorité des fonctionnaires songent à plier bagages, M. le président. Nombreux sont ceux qui se sont déjà installés au Canada et en Australie. Ainsi la capacité de l'Assemblée Régionale dans l'exécution des travaux publics a considérablement baissé au point que *year-in and year-out money earmarked for development is refunded back*. On appelle cela de la politique bon enfant, M. le président. En fait, cela démontre clairement l'incompétence flagrante de ceux qui sont au pouvoir à Rodrigues. C'est devenu alarmant, M. le président, voire invivable sauf, bien sûr, pour les jouisseurs.

Evidemment, M. le président, connaissez-vous l'histoire de faire de sens interdit en plein Port Mathurin pour favoriser un gros petit copain ? Allez vous renseigner, M. le président. On dit que c'est Rodrigues ça ; même la police est sous contrôle; apparemment sous l'hypnose. C'est malsain et vilain pour la démocratie ! Quelle image, M. le président ! M. le président, je vais conclure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what we need in the Republic of Mauritius is not division. What we need in the Republic of Mauritius is not hatred. What we need in the Republic of Mauritius is not violence, is not lawlessness. But, it is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, love and wisdom, and compassion towards one and another and a feeling of justice towards those who still suffer in our country.

(Interruptions)

those, at the bottom of the social and economic ladder, whether they live in Rose Hill, Floreal, Baie du Tombeau, Roche Bois, *en bas la rivière*, Port Mathurin or whatever. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the very justice must be done and seen to be done so that each and every citizen of the Republic of Mauritius, of whatever locality and whatever community, feels this strong sense of belonging and patriotism towards our Republic. This has to be the dream and motto of every responsible citizen of our Republic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We can do it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Yes, we can! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would invite each and every one here to meditate on the following two famous statements, the first one being that of Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, and I quote –

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”

And the second one is no less than from Mahatma Gandhi, and I quote –

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(5.43 p.m.)

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has

presented on Friday 08 November the 8th Budget of the Government of the Labour Party/PMSD led by the Prime Minister, hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

We have listened to him carefully. It was quite a long Speech. But, unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, except for the next 24 hours which followed, the weekend, where the press was more or less a bit interested in that Budget, it has been a non-event.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the nation at large has remained indifferent to that Budget. They have been used by now after 8 years of this Government of Budget Speeches which contain hopes and aspiration, but which have remained mostly unfulfilled. This is why I said that they complain for the next 24 hours, they are used to the fact that as the Budget Speech ends here, all the prices which have to go up will go up, but, unfortunately, those which have to come down take weeks or months or even never come down.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this year's Budget is no indifferent. But what is revealing in that long Speech to which we listened on the 8th is that there are so many self-incriminating statements against the Government in that Budget. So many self-incriminating! My hon. friend who has spoken before me has highlighted certain. But what is clear is that after having been in power for 8 consecutive years now, this Government with Dr. hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam as Prime Minister has failed on the fundamentals. Be it on economic growth, they have failed. What they have forecast, they have failed. Be it on the fight against poverty...

(Interruptions)

Today we are learning. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in that Budget...

(Interruptions)

They have to listen...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry!

Mr Baloomoody: I will give to you, of course, but I will give them...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody I am on my feet; please, resume your seat!

(*Interruptions*)

I would like to remind the hon. Members that we should allow the hon. Member to make his intervention without interruption!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

With regard to the fight against poverty...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Baloomoody: Now, we are learning that 5,000 people cannot even pay for their electricity. After 8 years in power, we are going to give them smart *grater payer*. You scratch the card, you get the number, you clock, you get electricity. 8 years in power! They have failed on poverty! They have failed even in sports, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. 8 years in power, they have not been able to solve the problem of football. And, today what do they tell us at paragraph 442? “Return to old football teams”. This is the heading! Old football teams! We know who the old football teams are! All these football teams which had a communal connotation and which have been abolished now after 25 years; so, we are going back 25 years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and they tell us they are a Government *de vision*? *Gouvernement de l'avenir*? When we are going 25 years back in sports, bringing all the old football teams with the communal connotation and we know what happened to this country, to the towns, to so many people! I live at Curepipe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I was young and the matches were played in Curepipe, all the shops and businesses had to be closed. People were afraid to go out especially before and after football matches. Is this what we want again in this country? 8 years after being in power, 8 years of being at the Head of the Ministry of Youth and Sports they could not solve that problem? And now, they want us to go back 25 years?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on education, my hon. Friend, of course, will come on it. After 8 years in power, the hon. Minister of Education now who was the Minister of Finance when the first time the 9-year schooling was mentioned, there was a clan in the Labour Party and we know who led it. They were all dead against! There was another clan in the 2005 elections. We know, I

was a candidate in Quatre Bornes how the campaign was done. “MMM/MSM *inn tire elite* we have to come back to the elite”. Our people cannot go! Our people!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Ms Deepalsing is saying: ‘not me’, but if the hat fits you, you take it!

(*Interruptions*)

Going to the campaign in certain community in Quatre Bornes, in Sodnac and telling the people there: “*pe empêche nu zenfans ale dans l'école elite ale Queen Elizabeth, ale Royal Curepipe, ale Royal Port Louis!* Do not bother vote for us we will introduce the elite system”. And they did it with their A+ and we know they want to protect the elite and we know the result, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And today, after 8 years in power, after 8 years of failure in the education system, we go backward again to the first programme which was presented by Pillay and others! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it’s clear that this Government is coming to its end. I will come to that later.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me talk on a few institutions which I feel need concern. Institutions which are important for the good running of our democratic State, but which, unfortunately, people out there people have the perception that either they are being tampered with or they are politically bias or I will go further, taking instructions from political leaders. This is dangerous, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is serious and this is what I intend to address this House today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me start by an institution which is under much pressure, now at the time I am talking. I will take this first because I hope that urgent action will be taken. It is the prison service. The prison service, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is already overcrowded, is already understaffed and there is already pressure between the staff themselves. You know – we read the papers yesterday – there is the Intelligence Unit which has been put there and which is apparently competing with Prison Officers. There is a conflict between the members of the Intelligence Unit and the Prison Officers. This is creating a tension in itself.

Now, what is worse is the introduction of the Somalian pirates in the prison. They are in that prison and this is why when I was addressing the House when the Bill was discussed, the hon. Prime Minister did not want to listen. He walked out on his own Bill when I talking about the Bill to try the Somalian in Mauritius. We wanted to ask questions about where they are

going to be lodged? Who will look after them? Who will cook their food? What security will be provided in the court when they come to the Court? What security, therefore, for our citizens when they travel from Beau Bassin to come to the Court House? These are questions we wanted to ask the hon. Prime Minister, but he walked out. I could not put that question to him and today, we are finding the result. There is big pressure in the prison. The Somalian pirates are not happy where they are. They are complaining in the prison. They don't get the food they need. There is no interpreter. They can't communicate. When the Somalian pirates come to Court, last time the case was called in Court, the Court had to raise Court because they were complaining about the situation. The Magistrate could not handle the situation. Forty to fifty SSU Officers had to invade the Courthouse, making pressure on ordinary citizens who had come to Court, it becomes as a *Caserne*.

This is what's happening today and, you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the weekend there had been a fight in the prison. One of the pirates got seriously injured in his eyes. And today, when the case was called, the case had to be postponed. He could not attend Court. From the information I have, if decision is not taken, serious things can happen in the prison. This is why I raise this issue, not to do politics, but to ensure that the right decision, drastic decision is taken now so that our Mauritian prisoners do not become a victim of the Somalian pirates in the prison there and even in the Courthouses.

Now, let me come to another issue which is of concern to me and I am sure it is an important institution in a democratic State. It is the Judiciary. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will agree with me that in a modern Constitutional State, the principle of an independent Judiciary has its origin in the theory of separation of powers whereby the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary form three separate branches of Government. This is a material system for checks and balances aiming at preventing abuses of power to the detriment of a free society.

These three institutions are important and the Judiciary has to be independent. It is only an independent Judiciary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which will be able to render justice impartially on the basis of the law and thereby, also protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual. For this to be fulfilled, for that institution to be able to protect the citizens of this country and their basic human rights, the public must have full confidence in the Judiciary. And, let me pose now, as a practising Barrister, I have full confidence in our Judiciary.

But, unfortunately, recent events have created some doubts; have made the members of the public ask us questions about the ability of the Judiciary to carry its functions independently. I am not going to give way.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. It is not a question of giving way. It is on a point of order.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the perception out there. People have asked questions...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, the hon. Minister has got a point of order. Let us listen to his point of order first.

Mr Mohamed: Now, as far as the point of order I wanted to raise is concerned, it is a matter of right and I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to give me the right to raise it. It is Standing Order 40, paragraph 5, where it clearly states that -

“The conduct of certain people including the President, including the Judges or any other persons engaged in the Administration of justice shall not be raised in any way whatsoever except (...)"

(Interruptions)

I haven't finished! I haven't finished!

“(...) except by way of substantive motion.”

Now, the reason why there is this particular Standing Order is because we cannot, in any way try, by hook or by crook, directly or indirectly - like the hon. Member has just tried to do - to attack the Judiciary or to bring the Judiciary into disrepute. And the fact that he has said that he has confidence in the Judiciary does not debar us from the fact that he is doing exactly that; undermining confidence in the Judiciary and going against Standing Order 40 and paragraph 5. And he has to do it by substantive motion, not in the roundabout way that he is doing. That goes against Standing Orders.

Mr Baloomoody: May I continue?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you. Now, that independent Judiciary, I maintain is important.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The Standing Order the hon. Minister is referring to refers to the officers who are responsible for the legal institutions. I don't think the hon. Member is referring to any Judges or any responsible officer of the legal institutions. Nevertheless, as the hon. Member, himself, said that he has got full confidence in the system, I would ask him not to cast any aspersion on the system.

Mr Baloomoody: I will be the last person to cast aspersion on the Judge because the justice system, this is where I practice every day and this is the place where I earn my living.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Like I said, I hope that certain nomination will come for permanent purposes very soon, that this whole thing will be behind us. The question which the members of the public were asking: why Mr X was not nominated or why Mr Y. was not appointed will be behind us, because this, unfortunately, get certain people to start thinking and talking about the Judiciary.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, true it is that the judiciary should be independent, independent from Government, independent from the Executive.

(Interruptions)

But this does not prevent them from being accountable and this is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in last year's Budget, we were informed by the then Attorney General that Government is coming with a new Bill whereby we will get Judges to deliver judgment in a reasonable time and, in his speech, the hon. Attorney General did clearly state that the Bill is more or less ready and we shall come forward with it. But unfortunately, up to now, neither the hon. Attorney General is here nor the Bill has been presented. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when saying so last year, there was a recognition by the Government that we have to address that issue; that issue in delay in judgment. It is about time that we make Judges accountable to certain things. You know in South Africa, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Judges are impeached if there is a long delay in delivering judgment. I was reading a newspaper from South Africa, a judgment in Namibia took nine years to be delivered and you know what were the comments - "if this would have happened

in South Africa, that Judge would have been impeached”. That is where it is important that we should come with that Bill to ensure that Judges are accountable.

What is more important with regard to accountability? In the UK, the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 gives the Law Chief Justice powers to suspend holders of Judicial Office. He can also make regulations dealing with misconduct by judicial office holders and this year a High Court Judge was publicly reprimanded for unacceptable delay in handing down a judgment. The Lordship there is even considering of having – what they call – judicial inspectorate. The inspectorate which would be a small team of Judges would be able to carry out routine and unannounced visit to court without the necessary having a complaint. Even without a complaint! Very often you hear complaints from the members of the public, even Barristers that the way they have been treated by the Judiciary, by the Magistrate, witnesses. But again, we must have an institution which will make members of judicial accountable as we have in South Africa and England and how they are planning to do in other places.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me not repeat that. Every year we repeat the same thing about the state of the courts. Today Souillac court is sitting in Riambel in a residence, Bambous court is in a commercial premise, witnesses are made to wait outside in certain courts, no judicial recording, when it rains the files get wet, your case is postponed, *prélarts* on certain District courts. There is a need to put the money where our mouth is. If we are defending the judiciary today, is that the Budget should provide for sufficient funds so as to ensure that the members of public are treated properly when they enter a court. Even the new Court House took them two years to repair a lift. It has just been repaired now. There was only one lift for six storeys in the new Court House.

(Interruptions)

You have not been there for a long time. Very soon probably! We understand that there was a Court Administrator, where is he? I have never seen him. The Master of Registrar is still the one who is dealing with administration of court, the toilet has to be repaired there, a gardener has to be sent there. This has to be done. Let's have a proper Court Administrator so that, at least, our court is more welcoming when it comes to the members of the public. This is what I have said on the Judiciary.

I must say about the Bail and Remand Court. Again, *on a renversé tout ce que* MacKay said with regard to Bail and Remand Court. What did we ask for a Bail and Remand court? A Bail and Remand Court with a camera, why? It is in order not to transfer prisoners from prison, get them to court where they will be in contact with their relatives and friends and they will take things which are not allowed in the prisons, like drugs, mobile phones and other things. The idea was to have a remand court to judge so that we don't have to move them to and back from Court. Today what has happened? All the Bail cases around the island are being heard, even those who are in police cell. This is creating a backlog. Today, if you go and ask a date for a bail hearing - it is somebody who is presumed to be innocent, has not been found guilty - they give you in 15 days, 10 days at best. If he is in a police cell, you get seven days, but if he is on remand: 15 days, the date to hear the motion and the Magistrate, of course, will have to take two or three days, so he has spent already 20 days without being tried. Again, we have to look at this issue with regard to the Bail and Remand Court. Let me stop here as regards the Judiciary.

Let me come to another institution which I hope I will be allowed to say what I have to say. It is the Police and my friend hon. Mohamed, I am sure will allow me because he, himself complained recently by the acts of doing of the Police when one of his - let's say it - brother was arrested.

(Interruptions)

Let me turn to the Police Force. I am tempted to say the Police Forces because we get the impression and I have witnessed certain kind of enquiry carried out where if the one who is suspected is close to the Labour Party or to somebody in power, there is a different treatment. But if the one who is suspected is on this side of the House or has a political opinion with anyone on this side of the House, there is another treatment. It is a fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. People know me as a Barrister. I appear for people who are sometimes very close to the other side and sometimes very close to this side. But the first thing the Police officer will tell you, if my client is on the Government side - "Maître, on peut avoir un rendez-vous? Regardez votre agenda, vous allez me dire quand est-ce qu'on peut fixer - un après midi quand vous êtes libre. Ça va! Pas de problème. Prenez votre client vous venez quand vous êtes libre, maître »

But, if it is somebody on this side, '*nou bizin li tout de suite*. Maître *nou bizin li tout de suite*', and then he had that phrase which is the most dangerous one. '*C'est préférable pour vous*

de venir tôt le matin. Mais pourquoi? Parski nu pou pass li la cour caution avant, après ou va donn l'enquête.' Pass ou la cour, caution, après donn l'enquête!

You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me take a few examples. I am saying facts as they happen! Mr Ananda Rajoo, *rédacteur en chef* of *Le Militant*. They wanted him one morning. So, I accompanied him. Let me say my interest in this case. I was his lawyer. There is no case against him now. I accompanied him. All the officers of the Central CID were on him as we parked our car. They were all down. *Pran li aller, pran li aller, pran li aller, pran li aller!* I said 'what happen? I have brought him for enquiry. He has not given his statement, or he has got further statement to give. Listen! See whether you have a case.' '*Non, non, non, inn gayne instructions depi la haut bizin amenn li aller.*' They would even refuse him to enter my car to go back. But you know me! Ananda Rajoo will not go in the Police car! So, I managed to drive him to the Court House, and he was bailed out. After three or four weeks, there was no charge. Can you imagine that!

Same thing was done with Dr. Joomye. The Prime Minister made a declaration of false and malicious; it is his right, he can do it. But, then, the way Dr. Joomye was handed! *Vini, vini, vini!* Arrested, bailed out, then he gave his statement! This is another procedure. A new procedure in our text.

In the case of hon. Soodhun, it was worse! Worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Hon. Soodhun was supposed to have made a false statement on 01 July. This is the information which was lodged. Hon. Soodhun was on bail already for another case - I don't know which one, but he was on bail. The date of his alleged wrongful act was on 01 July, that he has conspired with Jumeirah Hossenally, Issa Joomye to fabricate false facts, etc, etc. Now, the Commissioner of Police! What a coincidence! And you want us to believe it is a coincidence? On 04 July 2001 – the same year - the Commissioner of Police issued a circular, telling all the Divisional Commanders that if somebody is already on bail, they should object, and that the latter should not be allowed bail again for any offence. Who will believe this is a coincidence? On bail, not tried, not found guilty; he is on bail! Fortunately, there was a Magistrate strong enough to *manze avek* the Police and get them to say 'give your reason', and she did not agree to that reason, and hon. Soodhun was released on that day. Otherwise, he would have spent, not the weekend, but eight days, at least, to get a motion for bail. This is the example which we have.

Hon. Jugnauth, arrested on 03 January; they would not even give him time to...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! Please remain silent.

(*Interruptions*)

I am going to talk to them as well. I want the hon. Member to intervene uninterrupted. So, this applies to you people, and to the people on that side as well. So, please, I want some order.

Mr Baloomoody: Hon. Jugnauth arrested; there was so much urgency. The next day after Christmas, on the 26th, he should be there. And on the 26th, he had to go there. He has not finished his statement. They come and arrest him at his place, whilst he was having his lunch on 03 January. I know he was having his lunch because at the time I learnt about it, I was having my lunch as well. The 03 January, having his lunch with his family, he was taken in a Police car to Line Barracks, for 16 hours, and then released; no charge! Then, he could go home. Where was the urgency? But when the ex-Prime Minister, the ex-President of the country - whether you like him or not, this is another issue, but the law should be equal for everybody - makes a declaration of false and malicious denunciation against hon. Ms Nita Deepalsing, has she been arrested? Has she been bailed out? Hon. Ms Deepalsing has given her statement three or four weeks after, at her convenience, of course, and that of his lawyer - the case of false and malicious. So, it is clear that there is a *politique* of *deux poids deux mesures*. You can't blame people out there if they say so!

Dr. Rama Sithanen; the way he was arrested! Again! He is not my friend, but when it comes to principle, I will fight for it. He was arrested, taken to Court, bailed out, then after a few weeks, no case. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, same thing! Bailed out for one year; on bail, not allowed to travel, objection to leave the country! Then, no case! Where are we going? But, when it comes to ...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth and hon. Dayal, please!

Mr Baloomoody: When it comes to those who were involved in the Ponzi Scheme! You know, the basic principle in a Police enquiry is that you don't release the person until the enquiry is completed. In the Ponzi Scheme, such a complicated case, where millions and millions of

rupees are involved, where hundreds of people have to be questioned, Madam ‘*Cabas*’ is released within days! And the basic idea is that you should not release some people because they are going to tamper with evidence! They are going to speak with witnesses. Witnesses have not been called! Witnesses were not heard, but she was released, and so many of them who were involved in that Scheme were released. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a problem, and if people start not to trust the Police, this will be a very dangerous situation.

I can go on and on citing examples, but there is one which I would like to repeat, and I will repeat it, because it is a *symbole* in itself. It is where a young boy of my Constituency, of Cité Richelieu, was arrested last Friday. I tried my best to get him released. He is a minor. The answer last Friday was that there is no Magistrate; Port Louis Court, no Magistrate. ‘Sorry, we could not do it.’ So, I tried to explain to the family. Sorry, we can’t do it; there is no Magistrate. Then, I was at home. I listened to the radio. I learnt that, on the same day, the ex-President of Mauritius Shopping Paradise - I won’t give his name - ex-candidate of the Labour party, has been arrested and released on bail. For him, there was a Magistrate. For him, there was a Court sitting. For him, there was a Prosecutor. For him, there was the one to draft the Information, but for that little young boy who was in the *cité*, he had to spend one night. At that time, I had to take my phone to phone the public radio to state on radio what has happened in the morning and afternoon. Then, early morning the next day, a Police car went to look for the father and tell him: “Come, I will take you to the station, you can take your boy back.” So, he had to spend one night in a Police cell, because he lives in a *cité*, he does not have any contact, his lawyer who probably is from the Opposition or not a Member of the Labour Party. This is how it is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Even when I read today’s paper, I don’t know what is happening in the way enquiry is being conducted. People who go and denounce, who can make declarations are becoming victims, they are being released on bail. We heard from the ex-Attorney General – not the ex, the ex-ex –

(Interruptions)

Mr Valayden - that there is a conspiracy to attack certain lawyers. He knows what he is talking about, because he was Attorney General, he was involved with the Police at a certain time and

himself as an Attorney General, he did interfere. But things are becoming serious. We must not take it *à la légèreté*, it is serious and it is a matter of concern.

It is the first time - I have been practising at the Bar for 30 years next year - continuously – that I come across an affidavit sworn before the Supreme Court, where a mother comes and says:

“I have got things to say with regard to my son’s arrest. I have got things to say with regard to the involvement of the Commissioner of Police. I have got things to say with regard to the discussion I had with the Commissioner of Police regarding a case, but I don’t trust the Police. I want an independent body.”

Look at the last phrase –

“Since any Police officer would have to report to his chief and same being the Commissioner of Police, I have no faith whatsoever that my statement will be treated fairly and that any enquiry will be independent.”

All this in a sworn affidavit before the Master, Mr Woo Show Wing, Senior Registrar of the Supreme Court! This is the level where our Police Force has come. When we are talking about all these, let me refer to a Judgment - where it is revealing, again - of the Intermediate Court, that of a case of Police v/s Toorabally. The accused was supposed to have given a statement, he was supposed to be at his place of residence when the Police came, and he was supposed to have admitted his statement. And when the case came to Court, do you know what they found out? That at the time that the Police searched the house of Toorabally, he was – thanks God – at the Area Health Centre of Goodlands being examined by a doctor! And, according to the Police, he was in their company! Look at what the learned Magistrate has to say about the case of Police v/s Toorabally, cause No. 6862012, - it sounds like a telephone number - 2013 Intermediate Court 61. I quote –

“In the present matter, the disturbing features highlighted above depict a picture of an unfair enquiry as well as some real elements of unprofessionalism to say the least on the part of the enquiring officers.”

This boy has been punished for so many years. But what has happened to the Police officers? What action has been taken against them? Who will take action and where do we take action?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we voted the amendment to the law. There was the Police Complaint Bureau which was at Rose Hill – it was a farce, a joke, because it would mean Police enquiring against Police and it did not work. Up to now! Have you ever heard of a case where a Police has been convicted for beating a detainee in a Police cell, assault upon him? Never! And these acts are happening, not every day, but quite often. We voted the law in 2012. In July 2012, we voted the Protection of Human Rights Amendment Act, where we were supposed to have an independent Division where we could tackle complaints from the Police.

Up to to date, the members of this Commission have been appointed. But what is worse, since the passing of this Act, Police officers are not recording any Police complaints or at best they take a statement from you, that's all, they tell you they will send you to that Board - a Board which does not exist. For the last two years, there is no institution whatsoever investigating upon Police brutality and abuse of human rights, and this is of serious concern, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, what I am saying is very important and we should ensure that, at least, complaints against Police officers are investigated into. So, when we have a *climat* where people are living in fear, the Police is being challenged, are we going to introduce the old teams for football, reviving the communal feelings in our country in such a *climat*?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is some concern as well with regard to the Commission which has been set up for complaints, i.e. the Equal Opportunity Commission. We have voted the Equal Opportunity Commission. The Tribunal has just been set up but, unfortunately we have heard or we have learned from the President, Mr Brian Glover, that things are as they are, he cannot investigate cases of the PSC.

Why should Government, which is an employer of nearly 80,000 people, shield itself under the Civil Service Tribunal, and say “No, you cannot investigate the PSC.” These people work under the PSC rules and regulations. What do they have to hide? The Tribunal is here to look if there has been unfair promotion, if the rights of officers have been *lésés*. Here, we are talking about discrimination, or racial discrimination. Two different things! So, if we need to amend the law to ensure that the Tribunal at the Commission can investigate cases, hear cases under the PSC, we should do so.

Let me conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by saying that, this morning, we heard that that the Commissioner of Police never talks, he never communicates, he takes instructions and

adheres strictly to instructions. I have tried to get him for the last 4 or 5 years, but I have never been able. He always sends you to his assistant. In fact, if I see him in front of me, I will not recognise him! If he does not put his badge and his name, I will not recognise him.

(Interruptions)

And he left the country! The only time he came to the nation, he created a *psychose* in the country, informing us now that there is a commando with cagoule operating on the island!

(Interruptions)

The fear of a crime, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is greater than the crime itself! Do you know what *psychose* he has caused? Instead of coming here to reassure people that action is being taken, he tells us: “We know them; we know who they are; they have been with us in the Police cells; we know their mode of operation; we know with whom they go around; their whereabouts are being traced.” And, up to today, nothing! It is unfortunate with the same Prime Minister. When he left office in 2000, he left behind the *escadron de la mort* and today history is repeating itself. When he will go soon, very soon, we will inherit on this side of the House now the commando with cagoule.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me conclude. I have seen many of my hon. friends here on both sides of the House quoting many *écrivains*, many people like Victor Hugo, Molière, Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Obama, but, I will quote somebody in this House itself. Why go far?

(Interruptions)

Why travel so far?

(Interruptions)

Let me quote what was said in this House in 2000 or 2001, after we got the election, I quote –

“Mr Speaker, has the House forgotten the four and a half years of Navinraaj whose creation was AMCOL, his or ours? He will never use the word ‘mine’, the naked dance party.”

(Interruptions)

All of us have spoken on that.

“The employment of a Countess at Clarisse House with princely salaries; the chaotic situation in the Police; the Gorah Issac case and the horrible Amicale tragedy where for the first time in our country helpless mothers and children lost their lives. Navin Ramgoolam has forgotten all these. Riots in 1999, when the country was at the brink of an ethnic war and when he disappeared for 72 hours to reappear again to say that he had everything under control.”

(Interruptions)

Who was responsible for the chaotic situation prevailing in the hospital?

(Interruptions)

These are things that people will never forget and, in fact, we will never forget!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Deepalsing, please!

Mr Baloomoody: ...even women and old people who were spared were scared.

(Interruptions)

All these occurred...

(Interruptions)

Is our memory so short to forget the fracas of one Satish Faugoo?

(Interruptions)

Have we forgotten what we had done in this country?

(Interruptions)

It is a shame for the Labour Party!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Deepalsing, please! Hon. Bhagwan, please! Allow the hon. Member to conclude and I would like to know from the hon. Member who is he quoting.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: I'll have to read it again unfortunately.

(*Interruptions*)

“Riots in 1999 when the country was at the brink of an ethnic war and when he disappeared for 72 hours to reappear again to say that he has everything under control. Who was responsible for the chaotic situation prevailing in hospitals? Those things that people will never forget! Under whose Prime Ministership did a Minister take the liberty of asking a kickback of Rs10 for *molleton*?

(*Interruptions*)

Even women and old aged people were not spared. All these things occurred. Is our memory so short as to forget the fracas of one Satish Faugoo? Have we forgotten what he has done to this country? It is a shame for the Labour Party.”

This was said in this very House.

(*Interruptions*)

at 3.25 p.m. in 2000, when we were having the first Budget Speech of the MMM/MSM Government. Do you know who said so? Hon. Anil Bachoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Do you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(*Interruptions*)

who was the one to lead the *tape la table* when these phrases were said? His good friend, hon. Choonee!

(*Interruptions*)

I have done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order, now!

(*Interruptions*)

Okay it is over now. Allow the hon. Minister to intervene!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, hon. Bhagwan and hon. Ms Deepalsing, please!

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Minister please start!

(6.36 p.m.)

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

I never disturb anybody and I think I will be allowed to give my views on the Budget Speech of this year.

First, I will congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the excellent - I say 'excellent' - third Budget presented to this House with the blessings of our Prime Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I move on to measures being announced in the Budget; I will start by commenting on some of the points put forward by hon. Baloomoody.

To start with, I will say that we do not have any lessons to learn from people who benefited to the optimum themselves and their relatives from the State when they were in power! We do not have any lessons to learn from them. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not going to comment...

(Interruptions)

on the Judiciary because I am not a legal person. However, let me make some observations on the first point raised by hon. Baloomoody. He said that the Budget presented by our good friend, the Vice-Prime Minister is a non-event. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if that was a non-event; he should not have intervened, to start with. Secondly, if that non-event, which according to the Opposition is supposed to be one, just imagine the Budget was presented on 08 November of this year. Today we are the 19 November, the hon. Minister of Finance circulates in the House to every Member the Implementation Timetable of the Budget 2014 where 341 measures have been

announced. How do you call that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Either somebody is blind or he refuses to see or pretends to be blind, which is worst!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an implementation timetable for a Budget with so many announcements and it is not *l'effet d'annonce*. Had it been *l'effet d'annonce*, this would not have come up! It is there to prove that we are serious. We want to deliver. We believe in results. We are achievers!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Baloomoody mentioned that those eight years of Labour Government have been a failure! But does he not realize that within those 8 years, we have had an election? Does he not realise that every five years in this democracy we have elections? And who did the people of this Republic choose in 2005 when we had elections? When the elections came, the people of Mauritius, using their intelligence, chose the Labour Party/PMSD and some others to come and govern because they knew they can trust the hon. Prime Minister who is one of the best leaders this country has ever had.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not a failed State, 2005 to 2010 - am I right - 2010 to 2015. And let me inform this House with total confidence that the second decade of the twenty-first century, the whole of it, will be the Labour Government's regime throughout up to 2020. There is no stopping there. They have got to stop dreaming. How can you dream?

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Choonee: There is no tax on dreams. So, you better be careful. Hon. Baloomoody made some comments on the reintroduction of football. I think this will be taken care of by my good friend, the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports. He will be addressing the House at a later stage, but I would also like to comment on what hon. Baloomoody said on the Somalian pirates. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Somalian pirates are not our guests in this country. They are not tourists in this country. They are prisoners and pirates; they have to be treated as prisoners, as pirates and they can never get the treatment he expects them to get. Whenever they move from

the prisons to the Court, they got to be accompanied because of high security reasons. So, he has to be careful when he mentions about the pirates.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, mention was made about the Equal Opportunities Commission. Again there, I won't venture. However, I believe hon. V. Baloomoody, being a legal person - he, himself, mentioned that he has been there for 34 year - should know that if one door, one institution, cannot make an enquiry, there are other avenues, Mauritian rules, Mauritian laws which are there for injustice to be cleared. So, I believe the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment could have been considered. The law permits them to go to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and get their case settled or make their case, at least, because this is the Ministry that caters for all workers in the country including civil servants.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I won't go longer on commenting on hon. V. Baloomoody. However, let me come to my topic or to my speech.

(Interruptions)

Mo bizin bann contes aussi dans film la! Taler mo dir twa kifer.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, allow the hon. Minister to intervene.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's look at what the world is witnessing today. if we look at what happened in Philippines; a typhoon hitting Philippines, taking the lives of thousands of people and making hundreds of thousands of people and families homeless, that is one. We express our heartfelt sympathy to the people of Philippines. There are earthquakes in Europe, tsunami in the Indian Ocean, fire in Sydney, in Australia, in California, violent volcanic eruptions in Indonesia, floods everywhere, unexpected ones. Let's term these as natural disasters or terrible calamities. But then, the other image of the world - and my colleague, hon. Aimée, is right when he mentions about financial crisis. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we think of the conflicts in Syria, Egypt, Turkey, name it, when you think of instability in Greece, in Libya, in Sudan, in Nigeria, when you think of how unsafe it is to be a journalist. We have journalists

here. There were two French journalists who lost their lives, kidnapped and murdered. And when you think of the world today, the image of the world again, there are terrorist activities in so many countries, escalation of nuclear arms arsenal, Iran's latest drone. Isn't it? There is tension between the two Koreas.

When you think of all that's happening in the world, have you ever asked yourself the question: how about Mauritius in all this mess? How about our lovely country in all this mess? We don't need masks. I was in Beijing some weeks ago. People use masks there because the level of pollution is so high that you can't even get fresh to air to breathe. Here, Mauritius is the second cleanest country in the world. The Minister of Environment and the Minister of health are here, they can confirm it. Here, Mauritius is the second cleanest country in the world. You can drink water from the tap. Tap water is potable, hon. Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure you have travelled to other countries; most of us have done so. There are some countries where you can hardly see the moon and the stars when you look up. I have been to a country for four years, serving there. I have been wondering when I will see the sky which is clear with stars. This is the country, any corner of Mauritius you are, you will see blue, clear sky with stars, you will see the moon and the sun is not red. But in some places because of the amount of dust and pollution around, even the sun is not clearly seen.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, think of our blue lagoon, our beaches, the indigenous forests and the magnificent mountains, our rich flora and fauna. Such a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, without natural resources, yet spared by God. Heaven on earth and this is Mauritius proving Mark Twain right. Mauritius first and then, heaven! I consider us, Mauritians, to be lucky, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Further to that, our freedom fighters, our visionaries, our founding fathers, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, his aides, his friends and his colleagues brought to this country the Westministerian democracy and rule of law. They brought to this country, separation of powers and independence of the Judiciary.

Mauritius is today one of the World's rarest Welfare States providing free health, free education, social aid and pension without any contribution. I wonder whether we have it any other country of the world that once you are 60, it is your right to get your pension though you

have never contributed for the pension. Everywhere else you have to contribute and then you get back.

The Deputy Minister: Address the Chair, hon. Minister!

Mr Choonee: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Our founding fathers have helped us through multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation and relations. They have had treaties signed whether it is DTAs or FTAs. They made Mauritius become a member of the now African Union, previously OAU where others were against. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was the one to go there and get Mauritius to become a member and host the OAU summit in Mauritius. Today, as an African country, proud to be African, proud to be an African State of the 54 States, now we belong to the regional grouping: SADC, COMESA, African Union, East African community call it by any name, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The right decision was taken because they were visionaries. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today we are also member of IOR- ARC. We are also member of the Indian Ocean Commission and we have a vibrant and diversified democratic economy. We have our voice heard in all these organisations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the mono-crop economy, today we have so many pillars; tourism, textiles, financial services, sea food, ICT and sugar. Modern Mauritius, contemporary Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is led by our actual Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. He is nurturing democracy, re-engineering Mauritius, its people, its welfare and facing the challenges of modernity. He is also consolidating the Welfare State and softly steering the boat in troubled waters while charting away to surf on the waves of prosperity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today the world over, Mauritius enjoys the reputation of goodwill which I wonder any other African country enjoys. Mauritius in the World Economic Forum is referred to the most competitive economy. Mo Ibrahim Index. Moody's Rating, World Bank doing business report, less taxes, World Street Journal Heritage Foundation and the Fraser Institute are some of the many institutions I am mentioning that recognize the credibility of Mauritius and how good we have been everywhere. I must also mention that because of our taxes being low we are having tens of thousands of French nationals who are coming to Mauritius due to heavy tax there. They are settling in Mauritius. Just to tell what is the feel good factor that we have in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, something about this Budget now. In these circumstances though we happen to be the best, if not among the best in Africa, in these circumstances do we remain idle in view of the terrible challenges or should we come up with a Budget which promotes social empowerment and makes of the Mauritian a smarter Mauritian? Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will continue to work for the country under the undisputed and clairvoyant leadership of our Prime Minister. We have a caring Government which is fully conscious of its responsibilities and its duties towards the nation. Budget 2014, unlike what some may say is geared towards moving Mauritius safely towards the higher revenue. *De par le monde, M. le président, on reconnaît nos mérites, et les progrès accomplis par ce gouvernement.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to the culture and the concept of Mauritius as a Cultural Island City. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, arts and culture are not only the cement and building blocks for creating and maintaining cohesive, sustainable and a happy society. They are also catalysts for peace, stability and the consolidation of national unity. I would like, before I go on further on culture to quote Laurent Fabius *dans son discours à l'UNESCO, jeudi 07 Nov 2013, je cite –*

“La culture est un facteur de liberté, de démocratie et de développement durable parce qu’elle relie les sociétés à leur histoire et à leur territoire, parce qu’elle les libère, parce qu’elle les éclaire sur le choix qu’elles ont à faire »

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because of the way we look at culture in Mauritius now, I would like to inform the House that culture is no more what is used to be. Culture has the potential, the power to develop into a creative industry and a pillar of the economy. My good friend the hon. Minister of Finance rightly pointed out that if we were to promote just one aspect of culture. Film, the film industry could easily become a pillar of the economy. I will come to films later; however, I would like to say that culture and the creative art industry are knowledge-oriented. They are there to serve, to give us innovative ideas and culture has the potential to be definitely an engine for economic development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it takes time for arts and culture to become a pillar. A pillar of the economy, it does not come as a stroke of a pen and as the saying goes: “Rome was not built in a day”. Similarly our objectives to make our vibrant cultural and creative economy needs time and systematically we are organising events and accompanying artists with a view to putting arts

and culture in the mainstream of our life. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are coming up with a White Paper on creative arts sector. The White Paper is being finalised. We are giving a new direction to arts and culture and I would like to add here that we have been a bit late in coming up with the White Paper. Why late? Though it was ready by 2012, we had to present it to many stakeholders.

However, some stakeholders were not seeing themselves in the White Paper - some of them. We had further consultations, including consultations with UNESCO and many artists. We had an *Assises de la culture* at Conservatoire François Mitterrand, where we met more than 200 artists and officers from different quarters, and today, we know that this White Paper will put things in the right perspective. We know that it will be our duty, altogether in Mauritius, to nurture culture as our duty.

As the hon. Prime Minister often says, conscious that there is no future without culture, yes, the future is culture, and we are committed to the cause of the artists.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Arts and Culture celebrates many events year in year out. For the past three years, I feel the country has been bubbling with cultural activities. Any part of the country, any weekend, any public holiday, any day of the week. Something or the other happens in the field of arts and culture in Mauritius.

However, today, I am not going to highlight all those activities and events, but I will focus on one very, very important activity, a national one; our 45th Anniversary of Independence, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I believe that our 45th Anniversary, our National Day celebrations, or this year's celebration has become a benchmark for open-air shows. It was monitored all along by the hon. Prime Minister, and the results we had were unbelievable. It is the first time. That's why some people say its *inédit, c'est du jamais vu*, and so many positive comments have been made about the celebrations this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know of any other event in Mauritius, in the 45 years of our independence, where communiqués had to be issued to tell people "please don't come to the function." We always issue communiqués to ask people "please come, you are invited. Entrance is free! There will be so-and-so artists there." This was the first time ever where people came with their families. The crowd was so large! We had about 60,000 people inside Anjalay Stadium, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir. Announcements were made "please stay home, watch TV,

watch the show on TV, because there is no room for you here.” That shows *l'esprit d'appartenance à la nation, au mauricianisme*. The patriotic fervour; it was effervescent. People moved to the stadium because they had a sense of belonging to the nation hat, yes, it is our National Day; it’s the 45th Anniversary of Mauritius, we are proud to be Mauritians.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all through the programme, people showed their enthusiasm for the motherland. We had, for the first time, 500 plus local artists, more than 500 local artists, and each Mauritian could identify himself, irrespective of his age, sex, religion, politics or residence in the programme that was presented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the standard of the show, the display, the total participation of the public was simply extraordinary. Our chief guest, who came from India, was so impressed that he stood up. And when he stood up, of course, the whole nation had to stand up. We had standing ovation for the performance by our artists, and I am sure such an *élan de solidarité mauricienne* is another way of saying how much we have evolved, that we had matured in 45 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not going to go into more details about the celebrations we have, but as you are aware, we celebrate many activities, national, regional, at the level of municipalities and district councils, at the level of the Ministry of Gender Equality, the Ministry of Social Security, the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Ministry of Education has been a partner with us throughout, because we use their premises, we use their talents. We train them, and that is why I have to make a comment on the measure announced by hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, on the grant of Rs100,000 per school for musical instruments. It was a dream for us; a dream come true. We spoke about it both of us, hon. Dr. Bunwaree and myself. How can we unleash the talents within children? How can we help them? How can we say tomorrow that schools are not killing creativity? How can we say tomorrow that schools, actually, are helping us create, giving our children the chance to develop and to show to the country how talented they are?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the creative potential of our youth, the previous system of education did not nurture but rather suppressed creativity. Today, we are proud, and I have to congratulate my good friend, Dr. the hon. Bunwaree and, of course, Minister Xavier-Luc Duval, Vice-Prime Minister, for this initiative. I believe in it. It’s better late than never. The nine-year schooling system is the best system ever for a country like Mauritius. Gone are the

days when we had to run the rat race. Gone are the days when the competition was not only between children, but between parents as well. Gone are the days when the children were made into robots, competing and not developing all the talents they have. So, a radical rethink was necessary, and the rethink of the school system today allows cultivating creativity, and acknowledging multiple types of intelligence.

Previously, it was just literature, academic. Today, we say no; it goes beyond, it's creativity and literary faculties being given almost the same status. I am proud that we followed the Finish system, we followed Finland, which is the world's best system of education we have as a model, and it is time tested. Our good friend, Dr. hon. Vasant Bunwaree, visited Finland and UNESCO. We are also proud that, today - and we have to thank him again - Mauritius is an executive member of UNESCO. We sit on the Board of UNESCO, and definitely that will help us follow all the dossiers closely, and we will definitely improve on what all we have been doing so far.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming again to education linked to the promotion of ancestral languages. We have at my Ministry already ten Speaking Unions: Creole, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese – I include Chinese as Mandarin - Arabic coming, and English.

Today in the Budget Speech, the hon. Minister of Finance announced that we will soon have the Sanskrit-Speaking Union and, of course, the French-Speaking Union will be made operational on the same line as the English-Speaking Union. We will come with the Bill in Parliament and, of course, we won't forget the two languages which are so close to our religions – Arabic and Sanskrit which are all included.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these Speaking Unions and, of course, the cultural centres - about six of them - Tamil, Telugu, Marathi Cultural Centres, the Nelson Mandela for African and Creole Culture, the Islamic Cultural Centre and we also have the Mauritian Cultural Centre which is not operational yet. We have requests from some Mauritians; hon. Dr. Bunwaree and hon. Vice-Prime Minister Bachoo and Mrs Bappoo will confirm it. We have a committee where we have been asked firstly to see whether the need is there for one more cultural centres at the request of some organisations. We are studying the possibility of having one more cultural centre because they say they have been missed out in the process. So, that is another cultural centre that

may come up in the near future. That would lead to seven cultural centres, but all of them promote inter-cultural and inter-linguistic understanding and harmony throughout the exchange, sharing and participation in joint projects.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now it will come to something important. It concerns, both of us in Government and the Opposition. It concerns the film industry. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has, so far, been a shooting destination for some parts of films. It could be a song, it could be one particular role, it has never been a 100% feature film produced in Mauritius - full-fledged film. I think it has never been there. Bulk of it could have been there in some films, but ultimately the final product is mixed with some shots in other countries and, of course, without any support from the State. Films producers from India, South Africa, France and UK and even the States have come to shoot in Mauritius without any privilege, any additional facility from the State and more than 250 films have been shot in this country. Only from India, we have 200 films.

As I said, not all of them, are fully shot. Parts of the films are shot and we have so many films shot from other countries as well. But, today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we, as a responsible Government, as a Government that identifies projects, identifies investment, we are coming up with something very interesting for film producers from around the world.

My good friend, the Vice-Prime Minister, had a parliamentary question today. Well, it was to me and then it was transferred to him, which he was to reply concerning the number of films that have been shot recently, which have got the rebate. What is the Rebate Scheme actually? The Film Rebate Scheme is a grant of 30% on expenses that we call qualifying production expenditure incurred in Mauritius. What are the qualifying production expenditures? They include transport for the movement of the artists, shooting destination sites if ever they have to hire a site, transfer and hire of equipment, catering and even the pool of talents they have to take from Mauritius. All these are classified as the qualifying production expenditures to be incurred in Mauritius and 30% of rebate is being given to all producers irrespective of the country of origin, including Mauritians, who want to produce films and I am happy to learn, everybody is happy to learn, though some people are not happy about the proposal made by the Vice-Prime Minister about three new TV channels to be introduced in Mauritius which will

broadcast films, entertainment and sports activities. I believe if Mauritians take it very positively this could become a very, very important industry in the near future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is good that when we talk of the Film Rebate Scheme, it does not concern only the feature films. It also concerns documentaries, TV serials, animations and even advertisement clips, which means all these can be shot in the country and the one who shoots, who produces, gets a rebate of 30%. Highly competitive though some other countries are also offering similar facilities. Some are offering even more like, for example, Fiji. They say they can give up to 50% of grant, but then when the producers come to meet me, I often say to them: "Agreed, Fiji is given you 50% of grant, but can you go to Fiji and come back safe and be free and enjoy the harmony, the peace that you enjoy in Mauritius. Can you go to any other country and get the same facilities? Can you get the beaches as we have here? Can you get all these locations for free? Can you get a panorama that we have in Mauritius, a climate that changes every 5 or 10 kilometres? Can you experience a rainbow? Do you think you can get all that in one country, a nice sunset, a nice sunrise, a clear sky?

(Interruptions)

We are talking of the Members of the Opposition, please, we need them because the producers told me they need actors in the negative role as well.

(Interruptions)

Il y en a plein! Alors à Maurice, tout le monde est un acteur, 1.3 millions acteurs. On n'a pas de problème, on n'en manque pas.

(Interruptions)

I welcome my colleague – another actor – the best actor!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also informing the House that we have been marketing this project internationally through targeted presentations and this is done by the executive arm of Government, the Board of Investment, which falls under the Ministry of Finance. We have been marketing the project in India, UK, France and South Africa and we also participated in the 63rd International Festival in Berlin with a view to presenting the scheme to professionals of the industry. This year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with 30% grant, we have got 7 films shots in this country. Next year, we are targeting at least 20 films shots in the country. We are targeting at

least 20 producers coming to Mauritius to shoot and we have already done some marketing in India and China and, of course, we expect many more producers to come and make Mauritius visible all out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come now to the Assistance to Artists Scheme. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have at least three important schemes for artists. One is that any artist, for any production, whether it is a CD, a book or any other publication pertaining to arts and culture, whether it is an art exhibition, a *pièce de théâtre* or any other cultural activity, the artist is given from Rs15,000 last year to Rs30,000 which we have increased this year. So, as from 2013, they are getting Rs30,000 for any of their exhibitions or productions.

(Interruptions)

They have been given a rebate with no tax at all!

(Interruptions)

No entertainment tax is charged by the Local Council. Even for movies, for films also there is no tax.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we also give international exposure to our artists. These are things that people do not know much about. At least 70 artists have obtained financial assistance under this scheme. We also have 25 artists who benefitted from funding under the International Development Scheme. The International Grant Scheme goes to an extent of Rs250,000, which means we want our artists to go abroad, learn, get exposure, showcase Mauritius, but, at the same time, interact with others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we, very often, have complaints about cultural infrastructure and focus is often on Plaza Theatre and the *Théâtre de Port Louis*. It is true that these two theatres have to be renovated and made operational. We are very happy that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has given us a second loan of Rs40 m. for Plaza Theatre, which means, once we invest and get the Theatre renovated, at least part of the Plaza Theatre will be made operational. We will request the Municipality to at least get it to generate revenue. If it does not generate revenue, then again we will have problems in repairing and maintaining the Plaza Theatre. We are sorry for the *Théâtre de Port Louis*, however, we

have had consultations with the French Authorities. A consultant came and he advised us on the way forward for *le Théâtre de Port Louis*.

Over and above that, I personally feel we are not short at all of cultural infrastructure. The Serge Constantin...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I will go faster. The Serge Constantin Auditorium is one of the auditoriums which is booked for the whole year. It falls under the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Serge Constantin Auditorium is booked in advance. The auditorium at MGI, if you try your luck, you will hardly get a day this year; I am sure you will not get the chance of having it.

(Interruptions)

Plaza monn dire là, monn dire li en Anglais. Mo dir li en Kreol? Plaza!

(Interruptions)

Forum?

(Interruptions)

We have got Rs50 m. to repair the forum. We have got Rs12 m. now to improve Serge Constantin Auditorium so that we do not get any problem there as well. We also have other infrastructures which are often used by many people. It is an open air theatre at Pointe Canon, Mahebourg - is not it - used very regularly.

(Interruptions)

We also have the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) which falls under the High Commission of India which is used often. So, we are not that short of venues. We also have the Grand' Baie Conference Centre and of course, SVICC for bigger meetings and high level performances. Private auditoriums are also being used to their optimum.

But the good news is - hon. Minister Dr. Jeetah is not here, I would like to thank him and, of course, the hon. Prime Minister for helping us - the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Mauritius Film Development Corporation - we are getting from the Tertiary Education Minister, that took over the old MBC building at Forest Side, the building that has been taken over by the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, they have agreed to put that

at the disposal of the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the MFDC the studio that was there, which means that the studio of the former MBC is being vested with our Ministry and this is where we can produce films, clips and train our students and, of course, get all our Mauritians to become actors and actresses for future films to be made in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will just give you the topics. I will ask hon. Members who are interested, especially members of the media, to consult our website. They will get all the details. But let me tell you...

(Interruptions)

We have...

(Interruptions)

Let me give you some views on cultural exchange programme with friendly countries. Many troops come and go - we enrich ourselves. We have also *Centre de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* (CELPAC). We have 22 of them scattered throughout the island and in Rodrigues and we do *l'animation culturelle* in all those centres. We train our children; we get them to build national unity and to produce plays and perform slams. We also participated in *les Jeux de la Francophonie* recently at Nice in at least nine disciplines. We also organised slam competitions.

A word on the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, just to tell you that the Beekramsing Ramlallah Interpretation Centre (BRIC) will be made operational in March 2014. This project aims at developing a display area on site which displays the way the Indentured Labourers had to go through before we came to modern Mauritius. We also have a Slave Route Monument at Le Morne and soon we will be having a Slave Museum in the region and...

(Interruptions)

hon. Minister Aimée will help us in locating the site for us to have the...

(Interruptions)

Slave Museum.

(Interruptions)

As far as the National Heritage is concerned,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is good that I mention something very important since hon. Prime Minister mentioned that. He mentioned that Mgr Piat met him and made a request concerning Tombeau Père Laval. It is good that we inform the House that Government has voted Rs10 m. for the renovation works at Tombeau Père Laval. For the past three years, we have been together, the different Ministries such as the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Gender Equality, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Arts and Culture have been working there and seen to it that the pilgrimage runs smoothly. Every year, it has gone very well and now, of course, with the investment of Rs10 m., we will be in a position to provide more facilities to the pilgrims.

I am not going to talk about the parastatal bodies of my Ministry. But it is good that you know, the National Library, Archives, 4 *centres de formation artistique*, 9 museums, Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund, Nelson Mandela I mentioned, Le Morne Cultural Landscape, 12 Speaking Unions, 6 Cultural Centres, Basdeo Bissoondoyal Trust Fund, Malcolm de Chazal Trust Fund, Conservatoire Francois Mitterand and its eight branches. These are some of the institutions that fall under my Ministry. We have hectic schedules, we do lots of work, but we are not visible to that extent but we are not interested that much in visibility but more on work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know you are waiting for the last paragraph, my conclusion. To conclude, after 45 years of maturing democracy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to understand the genius of our society. It is educated, energised, active, vigorous and vibrant. Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, everything is connected to everything. Hon. Minister Pillay Chedumbrum will not deny me there! Everything is connected to everything! Countries and economies are interdependent and interlocked. They are deeply interconnected. No State acts alone independently. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all nations should pursue what we call 'soft power promotion'. I repeat the term 'soft power promotion'.

What is soft power, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Soft power is the ability of a country to attract others in its natural environment, to share its culture with the world through food, music, technology, films, festivals, architecture, history, archives and artistic forms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we, in Mauritius, have the edge. We celebrate diversity. We live as a plural nation and Mauritius, I believe, has the power to influence the world's hearts and minds.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

(*Interruptions*)

(7.31 p.m.)

Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while listening to my good friend, hon. Choonee, I don't know what to do; whether I should laugh or have pity for him. In his speech, he mentioned that the civil servants are bound to go for any complaint to the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. I don't think so. It is clear that the parastatal bodies and the private sector workers can go there if they have any complaints, but we have got for the Civil Service a full-fledged Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and well established procedures for any complaints from civil servants.

Secondly, I was very sad to hear from him about his time of service in India, in a big motherland, a big country for four years where my father, forefather, your forefather and the forefathers of many hon. Members in this House came from. He mentioned in his speech that he was working as High Commissioner in India for four years, representing Mauritius, and he has not been able to see the moon, even the sun compared to Mauritius. I think it is a bad comparison to be done. It's also a pity for somebody who is responsible for Arts and Culture to make any comparison with a great country as India. We always take examples. Mauritius took examples and that is a mistake on the part of my hon. Colleague.

As the hon. Minister just mentioned, he praised the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Thank God, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - I am a hon. Member of this august Assembly, nearly six mandates now - I have never crossed the floor nor am I a *transfuge*. But, I do respect the principle and I have my views. Nevertheless wherever I am, I am loyal and sincere. I have worked in many Governments with different Parties, and I have always worked together and had respect for our partner in the Government. We are committed, our commitment

which we took in an Alliance and I also follow the path of Sir Anerood Jugnauth and today, Pravind Jugnauth.

I don't know whether it's a joke. I am just going to mention what has been said in the Budget Speech of 2005 by my good friend, hon. Minister of Arts and Culture. I quote -

"Mr Speaker, Sir, this Budget is the first from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr Pravind Jugnauth, and it sends a clear signal that every Mauritian will benefit from the wealth of the country. A signal that Government cares for the well-being of all its citizens."

I am not going through all, but I just conclusion. He concluded -

"Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to congratulate the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for this very laudable exercise. This exercise has put Mauritius on the move where hon. Pravind Jugnauth will go in history as the architect of change..."

(Interruptions)

"...as the one who paved the way for this millennium for a very bright future."

We heard a hon. Member talk about Gandhi and Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, but had Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam been here today, he would have been the first one to say: Bravo Paul, bravo Pravind, for the good work you are doing for having led this country into the new millennium with so much seriousness and vision.

(Interruptions)

Anyway! I said that he is a very good actor.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gungah, mind your language, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I never disturbed hon. Hossen and I want that this be respected.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, carry on!

Mr Soodhun: If they provoke me, they will get it. I have listened carefully and I have not ...

(*Interruptions*)

I hope this hon. Member will bear with me.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, please address the Chair.

Mr Soodhun: Yes, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I again say that my good friend is a very good actor and there has been shooting of the movie, Souten 2 ...

(*Interruptions*)

No. I am not going to tell hon. Bachoo on that. Don't worry! But, he tried to be an actor in this shooting and I wish him good luck on this. He is a good actor. We have to agree with that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my hon. colleagues from both sides of the House have already elaborated lengthily on the Budget. Thus, my intervention will be short, but to the point due to the fact that many of my colleagues want to have dinner. I will not take too much time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, words like revolutionary Budget, modern Budget, Budget bringing economic growth, a visionary Budget and so many glorifying terms have been used by hon. Members of the Government to describe the Budget of 2014. Whereas for me, while listening to my friends on the other side, I come to this anecdote: the Budget is like a bottle of Coca Cola. Once opened, it does not last long. A few days later, it has lost all its fizz. It has become a total non event instead of creating a hype and a hope.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like also to express my personal observation on the Budget. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must be very frank to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development who presented this Budget. I have listened carefully to him. He has not been arrogant and I have to congratulate him for that. He has not been arrogant at all nor displayed overexcitement. I can feel that he has good intention, but they have put, as we use to say – “*la peau banane enbas so li pied*”.

(*Interruptions*)

This is time to time. “*line glisser inpe*”

(*Interruptions*)

I believe that we should look at the reality. This Budget of this Government has disappointed me. It failed to secure the best deal and vision for the country and for the population. We need to remind ourselves of the challenges that our country is facing due to the global economic crisis and due to the lack of leadership in the Government. This is a fact. One of the major issues today is the law and order problems. I doubt that any hon. Member of either side of this House can reasonably deny this. This morning we have debated a lot. A lot has been said from both sides of the House. No one can say that actually there is law and order in this country. This is a fact. Maybe there are thousands of reasons, but this is what we are facing today. Who we should blame? The first to be blamed is the Government except those with political blinkers will tell you so. Today, crime is so spread in Mauritius that it has become '*un fait divers*'. The Mauritian Police Force website has the following as definition for crime:

“A crime is any unlawful or antisocial act or act which gives rise to public irritation and which interferes with the quality of life of citizens; not just killing”

This is what has been said on the Police Force website. Every day when you open the newspaper, you are bound to find some news about killing, a robbery, a rape or some other crimes. Not only the number of crimes, but *violence sauvage*, the degree of crimes is increasing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleagues from my Constituency, hon. Dr. Hawoldar and hon. Patrick Assirvaden...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hawoldar and hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Soodhun: Hon. Hawoldar and hon. Assirvaden, firstly they are our friends and secondly they are hon. Members. They will agree with me. We witnessed a crime in our Constituency of an old lady of more than 83 years old. She was raped by a boy of 20 years old at Hermitage. It was really a pity. Very sad! Such type of crimes, we only not just say that a crime is to kill, but the way the people behave, it's something new, they are not scared about what will happen to them. A young man of 20 years old!

(Interruptions)

He is going to be jailed, jail is made for the man! He will be going for 20 years, 30 years, he will come back. Government will be feeding these people and their family. This is what is happening, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for all the people, not only for the Government side. All the

people, all the Mauritians are suffering psychologically and are scared. It is in the newspaper, on the internet, around the world, people are blaming, saying that it was a country which was safe for tourism and today, even on the international newspapers, they publish the crimes which have been committed in our country. In high security places like IRS, one million dollars! IRS, they pay for one million dollars. Recently we have witnessed the case of robbery in an IRS villa. Even the Clarisse House, the hon. Prime Minister's official residence has been broken into. If such a high security area is broken into what about the common man's residence? No wonder that there is a climate of utter insecurity and fear in this country. Everybody is scared! I am scared. I don't know what can happen to my family. Everybody! You also you are scared! We don't know what can happen. Everybody, all the people! Even the policemen are scared when they are working at night.

(Interruptions)

I know in the past we have witnessed hon. Members who have been faced with such problems. I was the first person to condemn this. I have to say— « *non, on doit condamner cette affaire!* » This is why I say that every people in this House can't say that they are free from this.

(Interruptions)

Even with Rolex watches. Don't wear it! Put it in the safe! Don't wear a Rolex! This morning we have discussed about the Commandos. What is happening in this country? Commandos! Everybody knows, the newspapers know, but only the Police Department does not know about these commandos!

Now what happened with these Commandos? These people are well armed. What do the policemen have with them? *Un batône!* What will happen to the policemen working on the second or last shift walking in the streets and the commandos coming around with their sophisticated guns? These policemen walking with their sticks on the street, what will they do? This is the problem that we have.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, also we have debated the problem of drug consumption. This is also increasing alarmingly. Drug problem, today, has spread over the whole island. Let me tell you, even in Triolet, every corner you go, in Fond du Sac, in the north, in Petit Raffray, there is 'black mamba'.

(Interruptions)

This was started at Petit Raffray. Do you imagine where this country is today? Now we have the Nova, black mamba, blue magic and what not!

(Interruptions)

Young addicts have set their sights on these new products. It is very easily accessible. There is an easy access to the parallel markets today and yet, this Government is telling that crimes are decreasing in the country. The hon. Prime Minister said it this morning.

Again and again they are saying that crime is decreasing, but they are cheating themselves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Why crime is increasing in this country? Why is the consequences of it not a main worry for some people? The frightening increase in robbery and assault reveal the failure of the law and order policy of this present Government, and it is visible.

It was mentioned by hon. Baloomoody that, as far as the Commissioner of Police is concerned, even if the Minister wants to talk to the Commissioner of Police it is impossible. It is impossible. Am I right? Hon. Bachoo, the Vice-Prime Minister says yes. He is right. It is very difficult. How people are asking whether we have a Commissioner of Police or the Prime Minister is the Commissioner of Police? People are asking who the Commissioner of Police is. We don't know him. If there is a question in the CPE examination, I think all the children will fail. This is what will happen. What is happening to the Police today? They are not being supported. There is a lot of frustration. Recently there has been promotion exercise. An handicapped Police officer has been promoted and the Police officers, who are working and have long years of service, have not been promoted. This is the problem that we have and it is not only at the level of the Police.

(Interruptions)

If he is handicapped, he should retire, but not to promote the guy and the one who is working hard, they don't promote him and we say that policemen are going to expose their life. How can that happen? This is the first time that this has happened and everybody knows who the man is. He has well defined the role of certain Police officers. When you are very close to the power, what type of treatment? It has been well defined by my colleague.

The problem that we have today is that our international reputation has been tarnished. This is the big problem and the Government in action again has raised the alarm abroad with these sad examples as we have recently witnessed the case of Michaela Harte murder. Hit man hiding in the country! Nobody cares about it!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the main route cause of law and order problem is the social unrest. We live in a society of inequality and increasing poverty. But, the Government says the opposite; that is no surprise when they are sitting in an ivory tower. Definitely, they will not see.

This is what is happening today. The standard of living has deteriorated, and more people are falling under the poverty line or are right on the edge. These people are being crushed by the unfair system which has been set by this Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have visited two months ago, some places in a village together with hon. Pravind Jugnauth and hon. Nandkumar Bodha

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Hervé Aimée!

Mr Soodhun: You can't imagine today how people are living in misery. I entered a house where 13 people are living in - *la cage tolle*. There is no door, there is plastic. When you enter the house you get the smell of as if you have just gone to *la cage la mort*. You get this smell and people are living inside. These people don't have hope.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Mohamed, please!

Mr Soodhun: This is why today I say that the standard of living has deteriorated. Do you know what the grandfather told us? In all there are 13 people living in the house and he explained to us how two granddaughters have been raped. This is pity. This is inhuman.

(Interruptions)

This is what they say! One day when this will happen to their close one then they are going to realise because we are all human beings. Whether we are Ministers, MPs, rich or poor, we are all human beings. We will be judged one day. What are the responsibilities that God has given us? This is what it is. This might make them laugh, but they should not forget where they come from and where they have reached today. They should not forget this.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today there is a problem of unemployment. Unemployment is another contributor of the unrest. Today, after years of Labour Party's mismanagement, the magnitude of unemployment problem has expanded and has been inadequately addressed. Let me give the figure. We now have some more than 50,000 unemployed Mauritians of which 42% are below the age of 25 years. This is official figure. Some 31,600 of unemployed Mauritians are women. More shocking, some 8,300 unemployed are from household that do not have a single working person. While around 4,700 unemployed are the heads of household. This is the situation where we are today. Nearly we are going back to 1980s. These are the very compelling figures, a gloomy Mauritian reality.

Nearly, all sectors of the Mauritian economy are facing issues. Probably, the only one which is well is that of the manufacturing and installation of burglar bars - *antivol*. This is the only one industry which is working very well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like here sincerely to thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for acknowledging one of the visions achieved of 2000/2005 MSM/MMM Government by stating in his Budget speech that: one of the fastest growing sector of our economy that has been creating job for the youth at a rapid pace is the ICT-BPO. I thank him. It accounts for 6.4% of GDP and provides employment to 18,800 people and this sector, as we all know, has been kick-started with the construction of the Ébène Cybercity in November 2001 and it has today contributed to a low unemployment among the youth.

Another sector of the vision of the MSM/MMM Government is the sea food sector with tuna canning so much so that this sector is now exporting its expertise to other countries like Gabon. Recently, the President of Gabon came to Mauritius and he made a request that this factory comes to his country.

The financial sector has evolved substantially with the 2000 MMM/MSM Government. We have brought in the new legal and institutional frameworks for the non-banking financial sector - financial reporting, corporate governance and anti-money laundering with the establishment of the Financial Services Commission, the Financial Reporting Council and the Financial Intelligent Unit. We have set up all these. These have provided unprecedented trust to the international financial operators which are now employing thousands of people in Mauritius.

These achievements have provided jobs to hundreds of thousands of Mauritians and helped the economy to boom.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, employment creation should be an essential aim of any Government. The Government policy, as mentioned, will actually create unemployment, deliberately butchering industry and services, destroying not only individual lives and families, but devastating entire communities leading directly to the social misery and unrest in our society.

The Government wants to increase the number of occupational permits - this is very important – from 4,200 to 5,000 in the short-term and 10,000 in the medium term. But the services of foreign professionals should be encouraged only in the scarcity area. This is the policy that even in 2000/2005 we had set up, otherwise it will be to the detriment of our young graduates.

Sir, today, we have 50,000 students in tertiary education to graduate soon. The young Mauritians are faced with dire prospect of getting a job with a solid career after all the sacrifices made by the parents - you know it, we know it. It is not easy to send a child abroad, especially nowadays. It costs a lot - hon. Minister Bachoo knows this - to send children abroad to study, but our parents did it, they sacrificed a lot. But, what is happening today? After all the sacrifices made by parents to pay for courses, be it at a University like Mauras in Mauritius, EIILM, etc., you think that the degrees will be valid? We know what is happening - today, a newspaper has mentioned a lot about it.

The vision of the Government is to have one graduate per household. The vision is good, the intention is good. But, by the look of things, it will be one unemployed by house, *au moins un chômeur par famille*. This is the vision of hon. Dr. Jeetah's government! This is what he always said: *un gradué par famille*". *Ce sera au moins un gradué chômeur par famille ! Cela, c'est sûr !*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is this Government milking the Mauritians? Is this Government making the Mauritians carry the burden of the incompetency, such as the hedging saga? Let me come to the hedging saga. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know about the hedging saga, the Betamax, but we don't know so much. Maybe some people in the Government side know. The hedging saga, we call it a crime.

Today, our hon. friend gave some details about how much money we have lost. Rs5.9 billion! This is a fact. I am not just creating this. When this hedging saga started, the day the Minister signed the agreement, there had been no decision from the Cabinet. No decision from the Prime Minister! In the absence of the approval of the Board of STC, the following day of the agreement, STC approved, even without consultation with the State Law Office. The technicians informed the then Minister: “Be careful, things can be changed.” The Deputy Prime Minister knows what I am telling. The only person who has said something on that issue is the Deputy Prime Minister, because the Prime Minister was not in the country. The Deputy Prime Minister was acting Prime Minister. Nobody said anything! Rs5.9 billions!

(Interruptions)

Today, I think the Minister confirmed. The same thing happened, *trois cargaisons d'huile lourde – R 350 m. of contaminated oil!*

(Interruptions)

Yes, this came in for Mauritius, but they returned it and they sold it in Singapore. The same product is declared contaminated in Mauritius, but they sold it in Singapore! As someone mentioned this morning, we have to take our responsibility – it is not an accusation, it is a fact and can be checked in the file of the Ministry. What a pity to have cheated this House! They said that the case had been referred to a Court in UK. Unfortunately, they never referred the case to the UK and we did not get one cent. Rs350 m. gone! The former Minister, hon. Dr. Jeetah, knows it very well. So, this is the way when we call the saga, because it hurts us, because we are Mauritians, because it is Mauritians money.

(Interruptions)

It might be! Yesterday, he was my friend, but today he is still Minister. This hurts us when you go through that.

Same thing happened with the STCM, Rs80 m. to buy *la grain gros pois!* Nothing for Rs80 m.! *Fini!* Rs236 m. for Amul milk! When I became Minister, Amul Milk was still laying in the go-down there.

(Interruptions)

We had to take a decision and send it to Mare Chicose immediately. Rs236 m. gone!

(*Interruptions*)

Today, people are complaining that they do not have houses...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, how much more time will you take to end off your intervention?

Mr Soodhun: I don't think that I will be long. I will take at least 20 to 25 minutes to end.

The Deputy Speaker: If you will take 20 to 25 minutes, I prefer to round off...

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I'll take 15 minutes then.

The Deputy Speaker: 15 minutes then.

Mr Soodhun: I mentioned that I am not going to repeat what has been said, but I am going to tell things that, maybe, you have not gone through.

This morning, we had a PNQ on the petroleum product. Do you know what we are today contributing? We are saying that there is a housing problem. Just imagine that you took the Rs6 billion and you spent it on housing. I told my good friend, hon. Dr. Kasenally this: "You take the Rs6 billion and let us build houses for the poor". Nearly 20,000 families could have got a low-cost house; this would have solved the problem of 20,000 people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to say that today we have not been able to go in details about this petroleum product. The hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out that the price has gone down. Let us take three examples. Premium – the price at international level *baisser*; freight *baisser*. For insurance also, there is a reduction. Today, we are paying per litre Rs23.82 as a tax on petroleum. Rs15.10 tax on diesel. On top of that Rs1.50 subsidy on rice, flour and domestic gas; 30 cents on *Maurice Ile Durable*; Rs1.80 for Road Development Authority and R1 for free transport. So, when we add all this, the contribution from the customers is very high. We said that it is high time to cut down the price of petroleum.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now talk about the water problem. I do respect the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and it is a pity today that we have spent Rs33.4 m. only on the Singaporean experts. The results that we have got are only that recommendations have been made to merge the Central Water Authority, Wastewater Management Authority and the

Irrigation Authority. This is what the experts have said. Even after the floods of March, the same group came here and spent a lot of money. Nothing has been done.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to show you a picture work. Again my two colleagues will agree with me. There is a village called Belle Rive. They have not known potable water in their life.

(Interruptions)

Belle Rive yes. Potable water. *De l'eau robinet.* My good friend will agree with me. I will make an appeal to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy, I will give the picture to him to show how people are collecting water from roofs of houses. They don't know the taste of potable water at all. My two friends will agree with me.

(Interruptions)

I think that the Singaporeans must go to this village.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Do not indulge in a conversation, please! Allow the hon. Member to continue with his intervention!

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: If I get the money that you have spent in your Constituency...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, address the Chair!

Mr Soodhun: What I want to say if any hon. Member goes to Flacq, he will see everywhere people are complaining of this. They put handrails and pavement at the cemetery of Pointe des Lascars, Rivière du Rempart. And people are not getting water! But in the cemetery you have put water, and you are not giving drinking water to people who deserve. Don't tell me silly things!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, there is no conversation!

Mr Soodhun: In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the people are expecting from Government is security, their children get a good education and they deserve a comfortable

house. There is a saying – when the population is looking for a job, we, MPs, Ministers, should be proud of them - ‘A job is a dignity of human being’. You are not making a favour when you are giving a job to somebody. This is not what the population is looking for; the population is looking for security, bread, *habiller convenablement, on veut travailler et on veut vivre en paix et en harmonie*. So, this is what the people are looking for and this Government is not able to give. The only one, the remake, is going to give it, the remake has done it and the remake is the only Government that can fulfil all the needs of the population.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I will suspend the sitting for one hour 15 minutes for dinner.

At 8.17 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.31 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. M. le président, honorables membres, c'est toujours un plaisir de se mettre debout pour participer aux débats budgétaires après la présentation du budget par l'honorable ministre des finances et de parler de nouveau, au nom de Rodrigues, au sein de cette auguste assemblée.

Je félicite le ministre des finances pour son discours et tous les orateurs qui m'ont précédé de deux cotés la Chambre.

M. le président, mon intervention ce soir se repose sur trois axes: l'engagement au service du peuple et le pays, la responsabilité à travers l'*Empowerment* et l'exigence de l'autonomie de Rodrigues au sein de la République.

Si, l'ambition pour le progrès, le sérieux et la justice sociale sont palpables, à travers les propositions énoncées dans ce présent budget, toute la nation doit pouvoir en profiter.

Mais face aux réalités, il importe de trouver un juste équilibre et c'est là le défi et d'où la nécessité de démontrer de l'imagination, de l'engagement et de l'innovation dans les actions que nous devons entreprendre pour le pays avant tout et la population.

Le budget n'est pas que de la fiscalité, mais une recherche de l'utilisation judicieuse de nos ressources. C'est une question de choix et d'équilibrer les priorités selon nos moyens. Un budget parfait ça n'existe pas, M. le président.

Quand j'ai écouté les différents orateurs, il y a ceux qui plébiscitent le budget, d'autres qui soulèvent dans un esprit démocratique, les faiblesses et forces de ce budget par des analyses socio-politico-économique, d'autres qui interviennent sous un angle purement politique et de règlement de comptes. Je dois dire, qu'on assiste aussi à un certain folklore de notre système politique.

Je ne veux pas entrer dans les analyses de performance micro et macro économique et de mesures fiscales du budget, qui ont, je crois, été suffisamment débattues.

M. le président, ceci dit, je me demande si ce n'est pas le moment de révolutionner le traditionnel exercice budgétaire.

Il s'agit donc de ne plus simplement commenter qu'il s'agisse d'un bon ou mauvais budget, mais plutôt de rechercher à concilier nos efforts pour faire progresser la nation mauricienne.

Chaque année, je constate que si les grandes idées sont concertées et mises ensemble, la lumière jaillira davantage pour le pays et pour chaque citoyen.

M. le président, j'aime le thème multidimensionnel de ce budget 2014 qui met l'emphase sur *l'empowerment*.

Et cet *empowerment* qui correspond aussi à la vision de l'OPR dans un précédent budget régionale de 2006/2007 à Rodrigues, mais avec moins de moyens.

Je note que le grand argentier souligne la nécessité d'éliminer la pauvreté absolue dans notre République.

M. le président, j'allais donc parler de l'avenir, et d'appuyer les démarches visant à créer une société débarrassée des fléaux de la pauvreté et de la marginalisation économique.

Notre terre, Maurice, Rodrigues, Agaléga, Chagos, Tromelin et St Brandon doivent devenir des terres sans pauvretés et durables. C'est un rêve. Ce rêve pour nos îles est à notre portée. Mais comment le réussir? Pour réussir, nous devons prendre certaines décisions difficiles

et changer notre façon de travailler ensemble. Je voudrais donc faire un vif appel dans ce sens dans le cadre de ce budget 2014.

M. le président, maintenant je vais parler sur quelques mesures du budget. Le changement climatique est une menace fondamentale au développement économique et la lutte contre la pauvreté. C'est encourageant de voir que Maurice prend les dispositions nécessaires en prévoyance de ce phénomène.

C'est à juste titre que le budget 2014 prévoit l'opération d'un National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre. Le fonctionnement de ce centre doit aussi inclure Rodrigues et Agaléga.

M. le président, ce budget 2014, apporte des bonnes nouvelles pour l'investissement visant à la création d'emploi surtout pour les petites et moyennes entreprises.

Le *Loan Scheme* pour les PME sans garantie, est une mesure phare de ce budget. Une mesure très bien accueillie à Rodrigues aussi et qui dirige vers une nouvelle culture de l'entrepreneuriat.

M. le président, il est bon de mentionner qu'au niveau des PME - avec le concours *Enterprise Mauritius* - les foires internationales à Mozambique, Afrique du Sud, Allemagne, la Réunion, Rodrigues commencent à s'ouvrir petit à petit vers le monde dans le domaine du *Business*. Ecoutez-bien, l'honorable Léopold !

M. le président, reconnaissant la disproportion entre le nombre de jeunes gradués et non gradués face à l'emploi, l'effort pour aider les jeunes d'acquérir des expériences de travail à travers le programme *Service to Mauritius Scheme*, mérite d'être renforcé.

Le *STM Scheme*, que je demanderai au ministre des finances de permettre à Rodrigues d'avoir une plus grande manœuvre concernant les filières prioritaires et le besoin d'expertise et de professionnels dans certains domaines.

Le *Youth Employment Programme* continue dans la prochaine année financière. Mais par contre les jeunes de Rodrigues ne bénéficient pas assez de ce programme vu le nombre restreint des entreprises. Il y en a besoin d'adaptation pour Rodrigues.

Le sport reste l'élément clé qui soude la nation mauricienne. Le sport dirige vers la professionnalisation, mais en même temps le sport doit devenir une culture dans la nation. Si le

ministère de la santé tire la sonnette d'alarme sur les maladies comme le diabète et le cancer, une des solutions c'est de créer une nation sportive à travers le sport de masse.

Je salue l'initiative d'étendre la culture du sport à nos handicapés.

M. le président, j'ai vu la richesse et la capacité des nos handicapés lors du dernier Grand Trail de Rodrigues de 38 km, avec la participation des handicapés de Rodrigues ensemble avec ceux du *Run Handy Sport* de la Réunion. C'est extraordinaire. J'approuve les mesures annoncées dans le domaine du sport, mais j'ai vu que la relance du football mauricien fait débats.

Je fais un appel à toute la population, la nation mauricienne pour que le sport n'ait pas de couleur politique, de race ou de communauté à l'exemple de Rodrigues.

Qui n'a pas vibré en voyant un de nos compatriotes au sommet du monde, à l'exemple des champions comme James Agathe, Jackson Perrine.

Qui n'a pas exprimé son élan de patriotisme et de solidarité lors des derniers Jeux des Iles de l'océan Indien soutenant l'équipe mauricienne, avec notre fameux slogan: Allez Maurice !

Avec le projet pour semi-professionnaliser le football, je souhaite que le gouvernement soutient également les équipes au niveau régionale qui, à coup sûr, servira de pépinière pour les équipes dites semi-professionnelles ici à Maurice.

Dans le même élan, avec l'approche des Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien 2015 et l'intégration des équipes féminines de football, lors de ces jeux, je propose que certains éléments soient considérés. Par exemple, la mise en place de deux présélections de football à Rodrigues, la révision des aides financières aux équipes régionales et faciliter des centres d'entraînement nationaux de sport à Rodrigues. Nous saluons aussi la réfection du stade de Camp du Roi au coup de R 24 millions ou R 25 millions comme mentionné.

Mais, parlant des Jeux des Iles, M. le président, je soutiens la démarche des sportifs et de l'autorité Rodriguaise pour que Rodrigues participe en tant qu'île aux Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien au même titre que Mayotte et Réunion. Ce sera une avancée sur le plan d'une égalité insulaire pour Rodrigues au sein de la République de Maurice et dans la région du sud-ouest de l'Océan Indien. M. le président, faisons du sport ce catalyseur et grand rassembleur de notre peuple.

La sécurité sociale - M. le président, c'est important de la consolider pour son service qui protège et qui responsabilise les personnes vulnérables. Le programme de *Medical Domiciliary Visit* pour nos aînées, doit faire preuve d'un service efficace. L'idée de R 6,000 n'est pas mauvaise, mais il faut bien examiner le système de fonctionnement. L'argent ne doit pas venir fragiliser l'accès à ce service pour nos aînées et entraîner de la maltraitance.

Permettez-moi de souligner mon appréciation suite aux visites du ministre de la sécurité sociale à Rodrigues, l'honorable Bappoo, dans cet esprit de partenariat avec la Commission de la Sécurité Sociale à Rodrigues.

Des confusions, M. le président, ont été dissipées et la lumière a été faite sur les campagnes infectes et irresponsables des politiciens de l'Opposition Rodriguaise avec leur slogans, '*l'opération coupe ti-pension malereu*' alors que la loi et les critères d'éligibilités sont bien définis.

M. le président, permettez-moi de prendre quelques secondes de la Chambre en citant l'hebdomadaire de l'Opposition de Rodrigues datant le samedi 25 août 2012, dans un article, où est écrit et je cite -

«L'opération coupe ti pension. *Serge Clair in dir pou coupe la paye.* Et pas plus tard qu'au cours de la semaine écoulée, Serge Clair a fait comprendre à l'honorable Sheila Bappoo qu'il n'est pas d'accord avec '*sa zafer donn la paye la.*
Pe fer Rodrigues vinn enn peuple assister»

Et il continue, je cite -

« Pas plus tard que vendredi, nous avons appris que l'opération coupe la paye continue de plus belle, même pendant la présence du ministre de tutelle »

Plus amusant, M. le président, ils ironisent l'honorable ministre et je cite -

« Le commissaire...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt you! Are you going to read the whole newspaper here?

Mr François: Il faut mentionner cela, M. le président! C'est très important.

Mr Speaker: Oui il faut mentionner, mais ne répétez pas! Vous lisez tout le journal!
This is not allowed!

Mr François: *Sure I will not.* Mais il faut mentionner, M. le président parce qu'il a des campagnes infectes au niveau de la sécurité sociale à Rodrigues.

M. le président, disant ceci, c'est un exemple concret pour démontrer pourquoi certains politiciens et partis politiques ne peuvent pas diriger Rodrigues et ne dirigeront jamais Rodrigues de par leur politique mensongère et irresponsable. *«zot place li trouv dans karo pikan loulou»* voilà le message!

(Interruptions)

parce que la misère ou la pauvreté, n'a pas de couleur politique, on ne fait pas la politique sur la misère des personnes...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member!

Mr François: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Try to refine your language!

Mr François: *«Pikan loulou»* c'est....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said, continue!

Mr François: Okay. M. le président, afin de lutter contre la violence domestique et la maltraitance à l'égard des enfants, un travail immense se fait pour la prévention à ce niveau suivant la convention des droits de l'enfant à Rodrigues aussi bien qu'à Maurice.

Je constate que ce secteur a besoin plus de ressources humaines avec les nombreux cas dont nous sommes tous témoins chaque jour que ce soit ici, à Maurice et à Rodrigues. Il est bon de noter qu'une campagne de prévention est en place à Rodrigues et le 25 novembre prochain il y aura le lancement officiel d'un plan d'action avec l'aide du UN Women.

M. le président, investir dans le service de la santé pour un peuple, c'est synonyme de bonne gouvernance. Je salue l'augmentation de l'assistance pour les patients inopérables à Maurice, passant de R 500,000 à R 800,000. C'est un grand soulagement. Comme exemple, j'ai

un Rodriguais qui bénéficie actuellement de ce *grant* de R 500,000 pour une opération en Inde, mais le diagnostic de l'hôpital en Inde réclame des soins et un traitement additionnel, résultant en des dépenses additionnelles de plus de R 200,000 que la dite famille de dispose pas. Ma question est: qu'adviendra-t-il de ce patient dans ce cas où le coût des soins s'avère être supérieur au montant de la subvention? C'est là que cette nouvelle mesure viendra vraiment soulager de nombreux frères et sœurs malades, et je pense que le ministère de la santé doit créer aussi un *Contingency Fund* pour les cas extrêmes.

Terre de l'état : ici, à Maurice, M. le président, 90% ou 80% des terres sont de terres à titre de propriété privée et 10% des terres de l'État, contrairement à Rodrigues avec 90% des terres de l'État et 10% des terres privées.

Le ministère du logement prévoit des amendements pour l'achat des terrains à R 2,000 aux 17,000 familles. C'est une bonne mesure, mais qui, avec beaucoup de précautions, je dirai, ne peut être applicable à Rodrigues. Pourquoi? Parce qu'un bail de l'état résidentiel à Rodrigues sur une superficie allant de 400 m² à 600 m² est alloué pour une durée de 60 ans renouvelable pour R 100 par an, même pas R10 par mois pour une famille vulnérable. C'est un cadeau. Disposer d'un bail de 60 ans, c'est quasiment être propriétaire de la dite portion de terre. Le détenteur jouit de tous les droits sur le terrain mais ne peut le vendre an aucun cas.

Au niveau de l'OPR, nous voulons que l'État reste le garant de l'accès à la terre qui permet de n'exclure personne. Connaissant les gros et petits requins qui attendent, après ce qu'on a vu entre 2006 à 2012 par rapport à la gestion des terres de l'État à Rodrigues, les spéculations foncières à outrance que j'ai évoquées ici, M. le président, 36 lettres d'intention octroyées pour des projets d'hôtel et dont rien n'est sorti de la terre et la dilapidation est certaine l'honorable membre parlait de corruption de l'actuelle gouvernement régionale.

M. le président, je réitère, l'OPR croit dans la politique de protection des plus faibles et veut que l'État reste le garant du droit à l'accès à la propriété. C'est une source de protection pour les plus faibles.

Logement: chaque citoyen a droit à un toit. Les différentes mesures énoncées sont de bonnes mesures. M. le président, le coût actuel de construction est très élevé surtout pour l'acquisition du foncier. Un mètre carré de terrain constructible coute en moyenne entre R 1,200 à R 3,500 si mes chiffres sont bons, et c'est très cher pour un petit État insulaire comme Maurice

sur un plan comparatif. A Calodyne, ça couté environ R 2,500 m²; à Cap Malheureux R 3,500 m² mais quand même je constate que le gouvernement central fait un effort, par les mesures comme exemption de registration duty, land transfer tax and others. Mais, M. le président, un toit pour chaque citoyen c'est aussi de la dignité humaine pour chacun. Ceci forme partie de cette vision de faire de notre République une République sans pauvreté.

M. le président, je parle de quelque chose de très sensible, l'État a la responsabilité de régler le sort des squatters que l'honorable membre de Rodrigues a évoqué à sa manière, quitte à faire respecter les lois en vigueur concernant l'occupation illégale des terres. Nous sommes en face d'une situation sociale pour laquelle nous sommes tous responsables et il faut trouver les solutions de ces enfants de la République.

Education: M. le président, notre système d'éducation a de toute évidence besoin de réforme ou d'ajustement. Si notre système ou modèle de l'éducation n'est plus cohérent aux besoins de notre société actuelle, l'heure est à la réforme. Mais quelle réforme? Quel type d'éducation, quel type de citoyen de demain veut-on former ou créer pour notre République dans un monde en pleine mutation? Ces questions - que j'espère - ont été discutées aux Assises de l'Éducation. Les bourses additionnelles de l'État, M. le président, à travers le ministre de l'Éducation: TIC, Sports et autres comme annoncées, sont nécessaires.

Mais nous pouvons aller encore plus loin car ceux qui ont bénéficié de l'Éducation tertiaire à travers une bourse de l'État, ont aussi un devoir de contribuer à l'éducation des autres et au financement des études d'un certain nombre d'étudiants. M. le président, ceci étant dit, je fais un appel pour que tous les boursiers d'État - c'est important - qui travaillent ou ont déjà complété leurs études contribuent volontairement ou obligatoirement à un fonds d'aide spéciale bourse d'Études. Je demanderai en premier lieu, aux parlementaires ici présents dans cette Chambre, déjà boursiers, à l'exemple de l'honorable Léopold, moi-même et je ne sais pas s'il y en a d'autres. Il me semble qu'il y en a d'autres encore - l'honorable Steve Obeegadoo.

M. le président, nous devons donner l'exemple et je demanderai à ces parlementaires de se joindre à moi pour mettre en place cette solidarité. Si nous voulons donner un signal fort à la population qui nous a mandatés d'être ici, je voudrais faire une deuxième proposition, c'est que chaque parlementaire ici, contribue au moins 1% de notre salaire global à un fonds destiné aux enfants nécessiteux de notre République, M. le président.

J'ai une pensée spéciale pour ces enfants de Rodrigues intelligents mais qui ne peuvent trouver R 20,000 pour leur tournée éducative à Maurice, en ce moment. J'avais demandé au ministre des finances d'amender les CSR guidelines pour pouvoir aider ces enfants. Mais il faut le faire.

M. le président, le débat sur le *nine-year schooling* est lancé, mais je fais un appel au ministre de l'éducation de concerter davantage les autorités Rodriguaises, même si c'est une mesure nationale pour voir l'implication de ce projet à Rodrigues avec toutes les limites existantes.

Certaines mesures nationales ne sont pas nécessairement applicables à Rodrigues. Il ne faut pas répéter l'erreur d'imposer la décision de Prevoc I dans les collèges, qui a été source d'opposition à Rodrigues sur une question pratique de manque de place dans les collèges.

M. le président, l'éducation pré-primaire sera gratuite à Rodrigues à partir de janvier 2014. Mais comme annoncé par le bureau des statistiques, Rodrigues est une région défavorisée de la République. Ma question est : est-ce que les 25 écoles maternelles de Rodrigues seront considérées pour recevoir ce *grant* de R125,000 étant donné la situation socio-économique de l'île.

Parlant des infrastructures du *Building Mauritius Plan*, M. le président, le transport aérien, le nouvel aéroport international de Plaisance parle de lui-même. Des développements sont annoncés afin de faire un pôle de développement. Par contre, le voyage aérien vers Maurice est beaucoup plus cher aux kilomètres parcourus. Faut-il avoir de la concurrence non-discriminatoire et libéraliser de plus sur le marché du transport aérien pour une réduction équitable et acceptable du prix des billets d'avion sur la route Maurice que ce soit domestique ou international.

C'est encore plus cher sur la route domestique de Rodrigues-Maurice. Je repose la question : pourquoi toutes ces taxes sur le billet d'avion pour un citoyen de la République ? Pourquoi appliquer des frais excessifs sur un passager sur cette route ? Mais, par contre, M. le président, je salue le maintien du *Stimulus Package Fund* pour Rodrigues par rapport aux touristes qui vont à Rodrigues au coût de R5,400 le billet ; un billet qui est très bénéfique pour l'industrie touristique à Rodrigues. Je salue cette mesure.

Mais comme mentionné dans le discours, attendons l'étude indépendante pour des recommandations pour des tarifications plus compétitives sur les lignes vers Maurice y compris vers Rodrigues.

Emploi vert – M. le président, Maurice est ambitieux avec son projet d'emploi vert placé sous le programme de Maurice Ile Durable mais il y a un chiffre qui m'échappe. Combien d'emplois verts seront créés en parallèle avec la lutte aux changements climatiques?

La fonction publique - après le rapport du PRB, les différents rapports de l'Audit - nécessite une révolution, une réforme et une transformation pour devenir une institution respectée et qui répond aux besoins publics.

M. le président, je me souviens à Rodrigues de la vision de Rodriguanisation de Rodrigues par Serge Clair qui avait lutté pour une baisse en qualification pour permettre à nos jeunes d'intégrer la fonction publique. Pourquoi ? Aujourd'hui, la fonction publique à Rodrigues a besoin davantage de fonctionnaires ce qui ne diminue en aucunement notre volonté de créer un secteur privé solide et une culture entrepreneuriale chez les Rodriguais que prône l'OPR depuis toujours.

C'est bien qu'aujourd'hui on a le *Service to Mauritius Programme* avec le concours du ministère des finances, nombreux sont nos jeunes sous ce programme dont 14 à Rodrigues. Seulement 14, M. le président.

Rodrigues a besoin de professionnels dans des secteurs tels que *food technology, sanitary health, marketing, engineering and others*. Dans ce contexte le *schema* nécessite des ajustements, mais je suis ravi quand même que l'Assemblée Régionale soit satisfait de la contribution des STM actuels. Je voulais les féliciter d'ailleurs parce qu'ils apportent une nouvelle culture au sein de la fonction publique à Rodrigues.

La MBC, M. le président, notre TV national, diffuse 17 chaînes à Maurice et 4 à Rodrigues. A Rodrigues, avec le changement au niveau de la MBC chaîne 1, l'accès à la télévision pour l'*entertainment* n'est plus le même. Les 4 chaînes sont des chaînes de nouvelles surtout pour ceux qui n'ont pas accès à des bouquets satellitaires privés. Je fais un appel au Premier ministre pour que la MBC accède à ma demande, réitérée à plusieurs reprises, d'augmenter le nombre de chaînes pour les abonnés de Rodrigues et aussi de régler les

problèmes de mauvaise réception et la qualité de l'image dans certaines régions telles que Graviers, Batatrand et Mont Chéri.

L'eau, c'est la vie M. le président. Maurice a besoin d'une sécurité des ressources en eau. Maurice a un sérieux problème de planification face à la sécurisation en eau, avec une production instable et une augmentation exponentielle en demande. Le captage d'eau de pluie, tant au niveau national que domestique est une politique à développer davantage afin d'assurer cette sécurisation. La sécurité de l'eau M. le président. Il faut amender les *building permit regulations* pour inclure que chaque construction inclut dans leur plan un réservoir soit en béton ou fibre pour capter l'eau de pluie. L'expérience Rodriguaise peut être utile dans ce sens, M. le président, et Agaléga aussi. L'eau devient de moins en moins un cadeau de la nature. C'est un produit manufacturé et en même temps un service avec des coûts énormes.

Le service d'ordre, M. le président : la police a besoin de continuer à gagner la confiance de la population. Le budget prévoit le recrutement de 700 constables supplémentaire, d'autres attendent une promotion mais, comme toujours, je fais la requête au Premier ministre pour un bon nombre de Rodriguais, comme j'ai demandé ce matin pour de nouveaux *coast guards* d'être recrutés dans le service d'ordre.

A Rodrigues, je souligne la confiance que la police veut établir avec la population à travers le *community policing* tenu régulièrement dans les communautés villageoises avec la participation record des villageois M. le président. Extraordinaire ! Record !

L'électricité, M. le président: le CEB, à travers ce budget, prend une dimension sociale importante auprès des vulnérables. Les familles vulnérables n'auront plus le souci de dormir *dan maree nwar* avec ce système de service prépayé. Mais la réalité reste l'implication financière pour payer le service. On connaît la situation de nombreuses familles piégées dans la spirale de l'endettement et la misère, M. le président.

M. le président, maintenant je vais m'exprimer en quelques mots spécifiquement sur Rodrigues et aussi donner quelques répliques à ces détracteurs concernant la bonne gouvernance à Rodrigues sous la gestion du gouvernement l'OPR. Je n'allais pas être long, mais ce matin l'honorable membre de Rodrigues a ouvert la porte et m'a excité, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

J'ai le devoir de dire en large la vérité à la Chambre au cours de mon intervention. Je commencerai en disant ceci, je cite -

«La différence - écoutez bien l'honorable Aimée - entre un vendeur de rêve, un flatteur, un vrai politicien n'est synonyme en aucun cas d'un feuilleton de Tintin au pays des merveilles.»

Deuxièmement, quand une petite pirogue se croit être un paquebot, c'est au moment de chavirer ou être en train de couler que l'équipage réalise la dure réalité de leur situation, M. le président.

M. le président, Rodrigues, dans sa réalité actuelle, subit la pression de mobiliser davantage des ressources pour des investissements conséquents pour ses besoins en infrastructure de développement comme dans des domaines tels que l'éducation, la santé, l'administration, l'aéroport, le port et la technologie de l'information.

Il faut souligner que Rodrigues ne doit pas d'une certaine façon subir les conséquences du progrès socio-économique de Maurice. Si la disparité de développement est là aujourd'hui, Rodrigues mérite continuellement un regard différent en terme de ses besoins.

Tout n'a pas changé, mais beaucoup a changé, M. le président, et bien des choses sont nécessaires pour être en phase avec ces changements. L'OPR, mon parti, sous le leadership de Serge Clair, entouré aujourd'hui d'une équipe de jeunes politiciens remplis de bonne volonté et intègres, accomplit ce devoir de faire progresser Rodrigues, mais pas à la mesure comme, je dirais, calomnier l'honorable membre de Rodrigues ce matin. Surtout quand vous avez en face de vous des politiciens qui veulent tout déconstruire, avec pour un seul but la reconquête du pouvoir, ce sera une tâche très, très difficile pour eux plus le temps avance, M. le président.

L'Opposition Rodriguaise qualifie, selon l'honorable membre, Rodrigues de morose, de massacre, de comateux et j'en passe, mais, M. le président, l'honorable membre de Rodrigues doit être aveugle or sourd pour ne pas se rendre compte que personne n'a confiance dans ces propos surtout à Rodrigues. Allez demander aux pêcheurs qui prétendaient être leur électorat !

Le gouvernement régional OPR a rétabli une nouvelle confiance au sein de la communauté des pêcheurs à Rodrigues, M. le président. Le gouvernement sortant MR n'a pas payé les pêcheurs leurs augmentations annuelles de *bad weather allowance* depuis 2008, qui est

graduellement passé de R 200 à R 249 à ce jour. Les pêcheurs sont en colère pour avoir été bernés par ce parti politique - *peser mem pe vir le dos ek zot*, M. le président.

M. le président, je voudrais aussi féliciter le gouvernement régional OPR pour la décision de continuer avec la fermeture de la pêche à l'ourite pour permettre au repeuplement de notre lagon et protéger l'ourite. On a des résultats scientifiques et tangibles. Ce n'est pas du *pé batte batter ou pé essayer*, M. le président. Ce sont des résultats scientifiques. On pêche des ourites à 4, 5 ou 6 kilos aujourd'hui mais il y a deux mois de cela, ils pêchaient de petites ourites à 100 grammes.

Concernant les projets aquacultures à Rodrigues, il n'y a pas de résistance, M. le président, comme il est mentionné ici. Il s'agit tout simplement d'agir dans la vision écologique de Rodrigues. Comment aller de l'avant avec un tel projet alors que le syndicat des pêcheurs, même ici, disait - il faut que je cite cela, M. le président. Dans le Défi Plus de 9-15 novembre 2013, Judex Ramphul, président syndicat des pêcheurs dit ceci -

“Le syndicat des pêcheurs dit : ‘Il est toutefois d'avis que le ministère des Finances fait fausse route avec l'aquaculture. L'aquaculture est synonyme de pollution marine. Il faut investir cet argent dans la surveillance de nos lagons et dans(...) des braconniers’.”

Moi, je ne rentre pas dans la politique interne de la pêche au niveau de Maurice, mais c'est dit dans la presse, M. le président, pour faire allusion à ce qui a été mentionné ce matin concernant l'aquaculture à Rodrigues

Je soutiens également, M. le président, la décision de Rodrigues, de l'Assemblée régionale et du gouvernement OPR - mon parti - que l'année prochaine le ministère de la pêche va décider d'étendre la pêche à la senne pour dix jours de plus pendant la période de reproduction de poissons, Rodrigues ne va pas aller de l'avant et faire n'importe quoi au détriment de nos ressources marines, quitte à trouver une juste entente avec les pêcheurs pour qu'ils ne soient pas pénalisés en terme de compensation pendant ces dix jours d'extension si jamais cela se fait l'année prochaine.

M. le président, nous ne voulons pas revoir la répétition de disparition de nos biodiversités marines comme cela a été fait avec les concombres de mer dit ‘barbaras’.

Commentant la situation de Rodrigues, selon l'honorable membre qui parle d'incompétence, je me demande pourquoi ils ont été bannis hors du pouvoir en 2012 à Rodrigues. Qu'ont-ils fait avec Rodrigues pendant les six dernières années au pouvoir? Pourquoi tous ces rapports accablants du Directeur de l'Audit de 2007 à 2011?

C'est une honte pour la gouvernance de Rodrigues. On n'a pas lutté pour l'autonomie de Rodrigues au sein de la République pour voir ce que le MR a fait avec Rodrigues - dont nous subissons encore les conséquences - où des décisions draconiennes ont dû être prises pour mettre de l'ordre et de la discipline dans ce pays, à l'exemple du dossier de 243 travailleurs, que même leur conseiller légal a dû renoncer, mais je ne vais pas commenter, vu que le dossier est encore au tribunal.

En matière de bonne gouvernance, ce n'est pas un parti politique comme le MR qui viendra nous donner des leçons, comme a dit ce matin, M. le président, je ne voulais pas prendre le temps de la Chambre.

(Interruptions)

L'honorable membre parle de la caisse de l'Etat, je ne sais pas d'où sortent les allégations. *I challenge the hon. Member to go to ICAC or to the Police* s'il y a malversation au niveau du Finance, au niveau de la gestion financière de l'administration régionale à Rodrigues. *I challenge him to go to the ICAC or to the Police.*

Par contre, aller demander pourquoi la disparition de certains dossiers dans les Commissions de l'Assemblée régionale juste avant l'arrivée de l'OPR au pouvoir en 2012 ! *Dossier vinn fantôme dans tiroir, M. le président !*

L'Opposition Rodriguaise doit avoir le courage, l'honnêteté morale, intellectuelle de pouvoir dire à la population : *ki zott inn faner* quand elle était au pouvoir.

M. le président, à Rodrigues, on assiste au fonctionnement – pour conclure – d'une Opposition déboussolée, sans *leadership* comme j'ai toujours dit ici.

Permettez-moi de rafraîchir la mémoire et d'informer la Chambre sur le développement de Rodrigues en quelques lignes. Malheureusement, il faut que je le dise à la Chambre de ce qui est en train de se faire.

On a parlé de morosité ce matin. L'OPR a comme thème budgétaire au niveau régional pour 2014 : “*Anou solidaire, A nou créer enn leconomie solide ek dirab*”. Les grands axes de ce budget c'est de –

- Relever les défis du développement durable de Rodrigues à travers le renforcement du développement économique;
- Poursuivre le développement des infrastructures, la route, les écoles;
- Développer le secteur des TIC avec l'appui du ministère Pillay-Chedumbrum et le Premier ministre – je vais venir là-dessus tout à l'heure ;
- Faire de l'écologie un pilier du développement, et
- Promouvoir un développement social au niveau de Rodrigues.

Mais cela ne peut pas se réaliser sans le soutien du gouvernement central, qui alloue aujourd’hui au total des dépenses de l’ordre de plus de R 3 milliards pour Rodrigues R 3 milliards pour Rodrigues, d’où un montant de R 1.95 milliards pour l’Assemblée régionale, inclut R 400 millions pour le budget de développement pour 2014.

Je suis de près le développement de Rodrigues, mais il y a encore des incompréhensions au niveau des besoins de Rodrigues, M. le président.

Comment pallier le problème d'eau, par exemple, quand il faut trouver plus de R 100 millions dans un budget de R 390 millions pour un projet de 4 unités de dessalement de l'eau de mer pour produire 4,000 m³ d'eau par jour visant à atteindre les 12,000 m³ qu'on a besoin, parce qu'on n'a que 4,000m³ en ce moment, M. le président.

Par contre, nous continuons à encourager le captage d'eau de pluie au niveau des familles avec la construction des bassins de 2m³, un projet qui reçoit R 12 millions du ministère des Energies renouvelables et des Services publics que le *Deputy Prime Minister*, Dr. Beebeejaun, tient à cœur.

M. le président, il est très important de mentionner ici, que l'île Rodrigues est un pays en développement, donc une autre catégorie socio-économique que Maurice. La réalité de nos besoins est différente et urgente.

Par exemple, le service public à Rodrigues doit être renforcé. Je dis cela parce qu'il est important de souligner que, au niveau de la Commission de la Sécurité Sociale, il n'y a que onze

officiers pour gérer 5,960 bénéficiaires au niveau de la Sécurité sociale, dont un officier pour 550 bénéficiaires avec tous les manquements existants. A Maurice, le ratio est de un officier pour 440 cas.

M. le président, parlant de la *National Empowerment Foundation*, je dirais en toute franchise que, malgré le démarrage tardif du projet, la NEF a approuvé 460 maisons à Rodrigues qui passe de 22 à 31.5 m², au coût de R 190,000 unité, comprenant une salle de bains, cuisine et construire sous la dalle, que l'OPR aussi a promis pour un logement décent au peuple de Rodrigues.

Après quelques disfonctionnements, suite à la visite du ministre Dayal et ses officiers, un Comité de Gestion a été mis en place pour éviter la duplication et coordonner le projet NEF en partenariat avec l'Assemblée régionale, M. le président, et nous saluons cet effort.

M. le président, il faut souligner que le rapport PRB de Manraj de doter Rodrigues recommande une grande autonomie administrative avec la création d'un *Administrative Reforms Committee* qui a été officialisé lors de la visite de l'honorable ministre Moutia à Rodrigues. C'est une autre avancée dans la consolidation de l'autonomie au sein de la République de Maurice - que nous saluons - et il faut souligner cela.

Il faut aussi noter la création. On parle de morosité économique, la création d'un *Rodrigues Export and Development Committee* au niveau du Bureau du Premier ministre, M. le président. Un comité très fondamental qui permet à Rodrigues de bénéficier de mesures économiques nationales pour faciliter les *businesses* à Rodrigues ; de renforcer un partenariat avec les institutions nationales pour l'encadrement des entrepreneurs qui aussi concrétise l'augmentation, ce qui a été fait, d'augmenter la connectivité par bande passant de 37 Mb par seconde à 157 Mb par seconde pour l'accès à l'internet, M. le président.

Il y a aussi de grands projets comme l'extension de la piste de Plaine Corail et le projet du câble optique qui sont à un stade avancé. Là, je prendrai quelques secondes sur ce projet du câble optique que certains n'arrivent pas à comprendre. A ce stade, *l'expression of interest* pour le *design* de la piste de Plaine Corail est déjà en cours et le contrat sera alloué sous peu à un consultant, si cela n'est pas déjà fait, M. le président, pendant ma présence ici.

Le câble optique qui est au stade d'étude technique dont le contrat a été déjà alloué au coût de R 10 millions cofinancé par l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) et le gouvernement central - j'espère que l'honorable membre de Rodrigues en prend bonne note au lieu d'aller faire de la démagogie à Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, la technologie de l'informatique devient un autre pilier émergeant de l'économie de Rodrigues. Je souligne le succès du Salon d'Infotech avec le concours du ministère de la TIC, de la NCB, du *Mauritius Telecom* et d'autres partenaires. L'ICT Academy à Camp du Roi est en opération et forme nos jeunes en attendant l'arrivée du câble optique. Quand on forme la population et nos jeunes sur tous les plans, certains parlent *d'overdose* de formation! Vous vous imaginez des personnes responsables, M. le président, *overdose* de formation, l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree ! On parle *d'overdose* de formation!

(Interruptions)

On parle d'incompétence !

M. le président, Rodrigues continue sur son bonhomme de chemin malgré les critiques désespérés d'une Opposition Rodriguaise affaiblie. Je les comprends *parce ki zot karaye chaud* !

(Interruptions)

M. le président, la protection des consommateurs et une réduction du coût de la vie pour nos citoyens préoccupent l'OPR. La mesure de R 25 millions pour amortir le fret des cargos sur Rodrigues mérite d'être saluée. J'ai évoqué ici le problème du fret que le Premier ministre lui-même a soutenu dans ses propos de ne pas avoir deux catégories de citoyens dans la République.

M. le président, savez-vous qu'un conteneur sortant de la Chine vers Maurice coûte environ R 36,000 et un conteneur de Maurice vers Rodrigues coûte R 52,000 ! C'est absurde! C'est absurde ! Cette subvention de R 50 millions est une nouvelle étape dans la lutte contre la vie chère en réduisant l'étranglement économique qu'il faut à tout prix éliminer.

(Interruptions)

Non, non je n'ai pas fini. Je voulais parler de l'éducation mais j'en passe. Mais je voulais dire ceci : nous continuons à changer les choses à Rodrigues avec les entrepreneurs.

(*Interruptions*)

Pour essayer de conclure – avec les fonctionnaires responsables...

(*Interruptions*)

avec les citoyens responsables qui dénoncent ces étrangers sans moralité qui abusent de nos jeunes filles!

(*Interruptions*)

Les citoyens qui dénoncent les trafics de stupéfiants et les cas de blanchiment d'argent par l'achat douteux de ceci et de cela.

(*Interruptions*)

spécialement avec des jeunes responsables.

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, voilà la vérité qu'il faut dire à la nation mauricienne et c'est cela la responsabilité de l'OPR. Le *challenge* pour Rodrigues reste le combat contre la pauvreté, l'emploi, le développement, l'économie et les développements infrastructurels et ce *shift* vers une société de la connaissance.

En terminant sur Rodrigues, je vais citer un proverbe africain, et je cite –

« Si le crocodile a acheté un pantalon, c'est qu'il a trouvé où mettre sa queue.

Le mensonge donne des fleurs mais pas des fruits. »

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, je voulais parler sur Agaléga et Chagos mais j'en passe.

(*Interruptions*)

Je conclus, M. le président, en réaffirmant...

(*Interruptions*)

Non, laissez-moi dire quelque chose sur Chagos et Agaléga.

(*Interruptions*)

Non, mais il faut...

(Interruptions)

Non, non parce que, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: L'honorable membre est excité, voilà !

(Interruptions)

Mr François: M. le président, je réitère notre soutien au peuple de Chagos dans leur lutte de droits humains de pouvoir retourner.

(Interruptions)

La kot zot lombril ine couper...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence ! *Ça c'est sérieux, silence !*

Mr François : Je dirai au peuple Chagossien que l'espoir doit être l'impulsion de leur attente à ce grand jour de libération.

Agaléga aussi, M. le président, veut faire naître une certaine économie pour leur petite île. Selon nos informations, il y a un besoin urgent pour une concertation accrue entre les autorités et les Agaléens dans un souci de créer une nouvelle ère de fonctionnement et de développement. Agaléga a besoin de l'institution d'un vrai conseil économique et social avec pour finalité de faire intégrer et participer pleinement de manière responsable.

Je conclus, M. le président, en réaffirmant que le budget 2014 qualifiée *d'empowerment* qui a été lu en deuxième lecture par le Vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances contribuera vers la construction graduelle de cette République mauricienne prospère que nous rêvons tous de voir. Que chacun apporte sa pierre à l'édifice de la construction de cette nation prospère.

M. le président, je vous remercie pour votre attention. Merci à tous.

(10.18 p.m.)

Mr P. Assirvaden (First Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): M. le président,...

(Interruptions)

Il est 22h18 et c'est assez difficile de s'adresser à la Chambre juste après l'honorable François qui est un orateur hors pair et qui à 22hr19 nous tient tous en haleine.

M. le président, je ne prendrai pas trop le temps de la Chambre. Je serais assez bref.

(Interruptions)

Je ne prendrai qu'une demi-heure du temps de la Chambre.

Permettez-moi, M. le président, de féliciter, après avoir écouté le ministre des Finances vendredi dernier dans son discours très élégant, clair pour certains et moins clair pour d'autres, noir pour certains et encourageant pour d'autres. Je me permets aujourd'hui avec votre permission, de féliciter le ministre des Finances et aussi et surtout le Premier ministre d'avoir donné au pays cette vision, ce temps que depuis 2005 on essaye de faire pour le développement du pays.

Ce budget maintient ce cap entrepris en 2005 vers une économie socialiste, vers un peuple qui demande à être soutenu garantissant aussi et surtout les acquis sociaux. En temps de crise, en temps difficile, dans des temps où le monde passe par des moments difficiles, où l'Ile Maurice n'ayant ni filet de protection, nos terres ne regorgent ni d'or, ni de pétrole, ni de charbon, cette petite Ile Maurice qui aujourd'hui arrive à garantir les acquis sociaux mais aussi et surtout à faire progresser notre peuple et à faire la fierté du monde entier, cette petite Ile Maurice.

Ce budget, M. le président, supporte aussi les plus faibles, les plus vulnérables de notre société, ceux qui ont besoin d'une attention du gouvernement, ceux qui ont besoin d'une attention d'un gouvernement qui non seulement dans la parole se dit socialiste mais aussi dans la pratique et dans la gouvernance quotidienne.

Donc, ce budget, M. le président, est une cohérence, une vision. La vision du Premier ministre, la vision pour un développement dans le pays qui se fait depuis 2005, qui se fait avant, oui, bien sûr, mais qui se fait depuis 2005 de façon ardue, de façon visuelle, qui étonne des fois. Même ici, dans cette Chambre, je me rappelle encore l'honorable Obeegadoo qui est venu dire à la Chambre ici qu'il y a eu un développement sans précédent. Jamais depuis l'indépendance, on

a vu autant de développements, du nord au sud, de l'ouest à l'est, dans ce pays, et un budget qui fait aussi part à l'épanouissement d'un peuple. L'épanouissement de la population à travers des mesures sociales, des supports aux logements, à travers de beaucoup de mesures qui permettent à la population, aux vieux, aux pensionnés et aux handicapés de pouvoir s'épanouir dans cette île Maurice. Ce budget aussi fait la part belle à la démocratisation de l'économie. Entrepris depuis 2005, cher au Premier ministre, dont nous avons vanté les mérites quand nous étions dans l'Opposition et aujourd'hui, depuis 2005 au gouvernement, nous mettons en place cette démocratisation de l'économie. J'en reviendrai.

Donc, M. le président, nous de cette côté de la Chambre sommes fiers. Fiers d'avoir pu aujourd'hui, en 2013, présenter un budget qui répond à l'attente de la population. Je suis sûr que nous, les membres de la Chambre ici - que ce soit de l'Opposition ou du gouvernement - rencontrons les gens, parlons du budget. J'ai été étonné au lendemain du budget en lisant *l'Express* du samedi qui titrait: 'un budget pour les pauvres', 'un budget en faveur des plus démunis de la société mauricienne'. Donc, c'est la vision du Premier ministre qui est en pratique. C'est la vision de cette Alliance du Parti Travailliste et du PMSD qui est en action. Et c'est un peu normal que nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, disons que c'est seulement quand le Parti Travailliste et le PMSD, c'est seulement quand un Premier ministre Travailliste est au pouvoir que les gens de ce pays, les plus faibles de ce pays se sentent en sûreté. Fini le temps, il fût un temps où on voulait faire le ciblage des pensions.

(Interruptions)

Comment? Le ciblage de la pension! Fini ce temps. Donc, aujourd'hui au pouvoir, ce gouvernement, avec ce budget, M. le président, essaye de construire sur des réalisations depuis 2005 du passé. L'aéroport qu'on vient de construire est unique dans l'océan indien, peut-être dans cette partie du monde. Le développement routier entrepris depuis 2005 fait la fierté de ce pays. Combien d'étrangers, combien de familles, qui n'ont pas visité l'île Maurice depuis cinq ans, depuis six ans, en vacances depuis peu, sont étonnés de voir l'état de nos routes à l'île Maurice, l'état de nos bâtiments à l'île Maurice? Si vous sortez de l'aéroport, M. le président, avec un parent ou un ami, quittant l'aéroport avec toute la fierté que ça peut démontrer, arrivé à la hauteur de Shoprite sur votre gauche, admirant le bâtiment *green* de la MCB qui fait que ce

pays permets un développement *green*, un développement soutenu et surtout, une cohérence de la vision du Premier ministre vers le futur.

M. le président, j'ai écouté attentivement certains honorables membres de l'Opposition et si quelqu'un qui n'a pas la chance d'être dans l'hémicycle se demande quel est le niveau de l'Opposition que ce pays aujourd'hui a, il suffit à cette personne de relire le discours de l'honorable Jhugroo. On ne peut pas faire pire et ici, je crois que les honorables Membres de l'Opposition MMM ont leur part de responsabilités en applaudissant l'honorable Jhugroo, en faisant croire à l'honorable Jhugroo qu'il est un génie en disant ces bêtises, en faisant croire à l'honorable Jhugroo et à un degré moindre, à l'honorable Soodhun, qu'il est un génie, qu'il dit des choses terribles. Alors, je l'ai écouté, M. le président, débiter des allégations, faire des allégations sans fondement, sales qui sont dignes du MSM. C'est ça le niveau auquel l'Opposition, aujourd'hui - et on l'a dit à plusieurs reprises - le MSM tire le MMM vers le bas.

J'ai écouté aussi l'honorable Soodhun qui aujourd'hui est le chouchou des gens du MMM. Après le discours de l'honorable Soodhun, les félicitations. En 2010, l'honorable Soodhun, dans cette Chambre, M. le président, parlait dans un discours du budget. Il disait ceci -

“I listened carefully to hon. Bhagwan, whom I do respect as a pioneer Member of this House. He has made his *discours de sortie...*”

Il parle de l'honorable Bhagwan, vous allez rire l'honorable madame Labelle, attendez ! C'est l'honorable Soodhun, qui dit -

“I can see on his face (...)"

En parlant de l'honorable Bhagwan.

“(...) that he looks like a *député fatiguer, déchirer...*”

Vous voyez l'honorable Bhagwan déchiré, vous? C'est l'honorable Soodhun et on l'a arrêté. Il parlait dans ce même discours - c'est important de faire entendre encore une fois - je le dis comme c'est -

“But what they have done in Constituency No.2, nobody will forget”.

Il parle de la Circonscription No. 2, ce qu'on a fait au Dr. Beebejaun aux dernières élections générales.

“I am very sad for a young politician...”

Il parle de l’honorable Reza Uteem.

(*Interruptions*)

“I am very sad for a young politician to start his career on such a very bad note and campaign.”

C’est l’honorable Soodhun qui parle de vous. Et, il continue, ce n’est pas fini. Ecoutez cette dernière phrase -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, *la vérité fait mal*. It is very difficult to listen to the truth - en parlant de vous - Mr Speaker, Sir, il faut qu’ils se mettent debout et se regardent dans un miroir. A ce moment, ils verront leur propre visage et cela qui est important.”

(*Interruptions*)

Et il termine en disant que c’est le dernier règne du MMM. C’est fini! *They will never come back!* Cela est ce que vous soutenez aujourd’hui ! Moi je qualifierai cette opposition d’opposition hypocrite. Hypocrite sur plusieurs thèmes, M. le président. Voyons ce qui c’est passé pour la PNQ du *leader* de l’opposition concernant le *nine-year schooling*. C’est quelque chose dont tout le monde est d’accord. C’est quelque chose dont tout le monde dit que c’est bon pour le pays. Mais le fait que c’est nous, ici au Parti Travailiste-PMSD, qui apportons cette réforme de l’éducation à la population. Vous avez vu le comportement du *leader* de l’opposition lors de la PNQ au courant de la semaine. C’est l’hypocrisie, l’hypocrisie en ce qui concerne le football. Le ministre Ritoo a fait clairement comprendre que les anciens clubs, La Fire Brigade, le Scouts Club, le Racing amèneront la population, les peuples, les gens dans les stades. On a vu l’attitude de l’opposition et quand tout à coup avec raison l’honorable ministre Ritoo est venu dire à l’honorable Quirin – mais quelle hypocrisie! Quand au Racing Club de Maurice pendant que le Fire Brigade, les Cadets, les Scouts jouaient vous étiez là-bas. Quelle hypocrisie! C’est faux. Ce n’est pas le volleyball. Vous noyez le poisson. Quelle hypocrisie!

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, cette hypocrisie de l’opposition sur plusieurs issues. Là c’est avec admiration, c’est avec fierté que le gouvernement a décidé la vente des terres de l’État à plus de 17,000

familles. C'est quelque chose d'extraordinaire. C'est quelque chose dont on est fier au sein du gouvernement. J'ai été étonné ce matin en prenant mon petit déjeuner de lire dans *Le Matinal* -

« La mesure budgétaire concernant la vente de l'État aux particuliers a été favorablement accueillie par le Leader de l'Opposition. Paul Bérenger a souligné qu'il est bon de rappeler que la décision de vendre les maisons de la défunte Central and Housing Corporation à des petites gens, ont été prises par Vishnu Lutchmeenaraaidoo. »

Il fallait chercher loin! Vous avez été au pouvoir pendant cinq ans, 2000 à 2005. Vous aviez une majorité écrasante. Vous dirigiez ce pays et aujourd'hui ce gouvernement travailliste, ce Premier ministre à la tête de ce pays, nous prenons la décision de donner à 17,000 familles - après avoir donné les maisons de CHA - cette terre de l'État. Vous osez dire que c'est 'rasoir' qui avait pris la décision. L'hypocrisie a une limite. C'est l'apogée de l'hypocrisie.

M. le président, j'ai parlé du football, j'ai parlé du *nine-year schooling*. Quelque temps de cela...

(Interruptions)

To koner li pé vini, to koner.

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Mr Assirvaden : Quelque temps de cela, on passait dans cette Chambre l'*Asset Recovery Bill*. L'Opposition applaudissait. L'Opposition était d'accord pour casser les reins aux trafiquants de drogue. L'opposition était d'accord avec le gouvernement pour pouvoir contrôler ces trafiquants de drogue. Des avocats de l'opposition - l'honorable Reza Uteem, l'honorable Veda Baloomoody, Alan Ganoo...

Mr Speaker: L'honorable Alan Ganoo!

Mr Assirvaden: L'honorable Alan Ganoo, l'honorable Obeegadoo, se sont adressés à la Chambre, applaudissaient...

(Interruptions)

Peu importe ! La mémoire est courte ! Ils applaudissaient, ils étaient d'accord. A un moment donné, M. le président, je me demandais comment l'honorable Reza Uteem et l'honorable Baligadoo surtout, applaudissaient à deux mains...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Il n'y a pas de Baligadoo ici ! C'est l'honorable Baloomoody !

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Assirvaden: C'est presque la même chose !

Mr Speaker: Non !

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Assirvaden: Applaudissaient ! S'ils pouvaient ils auraient applaudi avec les pieds aussi ! Quelque temps après, le plus grave, M. le président, quand Jean-Mée Desvaux est venu de l'avant pour démontrer le pourquoi de ce *U-turn*. Le pourquoi de ce retournement de veste. Le pourquoi de cette position du MMM par rapport à *l'Asset Recovery*, c'est qu'un proche du MSM faisait l'objet d'une enquête de la part des institutions du pays. L'hypocrisie au sommet, à l'apogée, simplement pour défendre, pour nettoyer, pour blanchir - et on a écouté l'honorable Veda Baloomoody un peu plutôt. A un moment donné je pensais qu'il s'est trompé. Il n'est pas dans hémicycle. Il est dans une cour de justice avec toutes les enquêtes venant blanchir l'honorable Soodhun, venant blanchir l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. L'honorable membre joue son rôle de *dhobi* de classe pour blanchir. Et on parle de gaspillage. On parle de Betamax. On parle de je ne sais quoi. Vous parlez quand Jean-Mée Desvaux est venu démontrer, on a critiqué ce *deal*, M. le président, depuis les années 2000, 2004, 2005. Qu'est-ce que le Premier ministre – en ce temps la l'honorable Leader de l'Opposition n'a pas dit sur ce deal 'infect' contre la population, au détriment du pays. Qu'est ce qu'on n'avait pas dit ? Aujourd'hui ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: No interruption !

Mr Assirvaden : Il se peut qu'il faille faire un alcootest avec l'honorable membre.

(*Interruptions*)

Dans ce cas, M. le président, ...

Mr Speaker: You will have to withdraw what you have said about alcootest ! Withdraw!

Mr Assirvaden: I withdraw. C'est la vérité.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, en ce qui concerne ce que ...

Mr Speaker: What have you just said hon. Aimée? Could you repeat that? I don't want any interruption! Proceed!

Mr Assirvaden: M. président, je parlais de l'hypocrisie en ce qui concerne le Deal Illovo. C'est pire que l'hypocrisie. Le deal Illovo, M. le président, les honorable membres ici de ce coté de la Chambre osent dire, osent parler de gaspillage, osent parler de corruption.

Alors qu'en 2003, Jean-Mée Desvaux vient dire clairement que R3 milliard changent de main en quelques minutes lors d'une réunion entre les secteurs privés et l'ancien Premier ministre. Et, ici, ils osent pointer du doigt le gouvernement, ils osent nous faire la leçon alors qu'à chaque fois que le gouvernement MMM/MSM a été au pouvoir, la population a perdu. Tout a été fait au détriment de la population.

Dernière petite chose sur ce chapitre, M. le président, avant de changer d'item: les marchants ambulants – mon collègue l'honorable Abdullah Hossen a admirablement démontré l'incompétence du MMM et du MSM dans les municipalités. Je lisais encore, ce matin, avec l'honorable ministre Aimée comment les membres du MMM, pendant qu'ils géraient les municipalités des années de cela, ont eu des maires qui ont duré pendant deux, trois ans et aujourd'hui voyant l'incompétence, non seulement du maire de Port Louis, du maire de Quatre Bornes ou de Rose Hill, l'incompétence ne pouvant même pas faire un simple tirage au sort. Quelques noms dans une boîte, aussi simple que cela ! Donc, c'est de l'hypocrisie et la population n'est pas imbécile.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : No interruption !

Mr Assirvaden: M. le président, on sait que l'honorable Uteem est là, pas la peine de ricaner. M. le président, je crois que cette farce de l'Opposition, cette hypocrisie de l'Opposition

de tout voir en noir, de tout voir que rien n'a été fait, alors que rien n'est au fait du hasard. Chaque arbre dans le jardin de la vie de ce pays a une signification parce que nous avons un Premier ministre qui a une vision. Seul, le sot, l'idiot ne sera jamais satisfait. Mais nous savons où nous allons, nous développons ce pays depuis 2005. La population, en 2010, encore une fois, nous a fait confiance, croit en ce Premier ministre. Ils racontent n'importe quoi. Ils rêvent - je peux comprendre c'est gratuit, heureusement qu'il n'y a pas de taxe dessus - du pouvoir en 2015. Ils en ont rêvé en 2010, ils en ont rêvé en 2005 et la même rengaine, la même chose. Nous savons que la population croit en notre Premier ministre. Le dernier sondage de « L'Express » - de DCDM - produit il y a quelques temps, démontre, encore une fois, que le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam demeure le Premier ministre préféré des mauriciens de ce pays.

(Interruptions)

C'est un fait !

M. le président, permettez-moi d'avoir quelques mots en ce qui concerne le secteur énergétique. Heureusement, j'ai écouté attentivement l'honorable Joe Lesjongard, qui, pour cette fois-ci - heureusement aussi pour le *leader* de l'Opposition - ne crie pas au loup. Chaque année, depuis 2005, l'Opposition crie au *black out*. Chaque année, depuis 2005, l'Opposition crie que le CEB ne pourra pas satisfaire la demande, que nous courrons vers un *black out* dans ce pays alors que depuis 2005 le CEB et le gouvernement jouent leur rôle de facilitateur dans l'économie mauricienne. La demande en réserve, la demande en terme d'énergie, en terme de capacité au CEB est suffisamment là pour pouvoir répondre aux années à venir.

Je suis content de voir que le ministre des finances, le gouvernement a fait provision pour des moteurs de 60 megawatts à St. Louis. C'est d'une bonne chose. Nous vivons dans un monde énergétique qui évolue rapidement, que ce soit à l'île de la Réunion, aux Antilles, en Europe. Les moteurs diesel, *the heavy fuel oil*, comme on dit dans le jargon, ne se font plus. J'en ai parlé au *Deputy Prime Minister* qui est responsable du CEB. Je crois, très sincèrement, que les R3 milliards qui seront investis pour les moteurs de St Louis devraient, à mon avis, être en *dual purpose*, en *heavy fuel oil* et en LNG, the gas.

Il faut, à mon avis, pour le développement de l'île Maurice pour viser les années 2020/2025, que les moteurs que nous allons prendre pour St Louis soient des moteurs qui

peuvent au même moment utiliser l'huile lourde mais utiliser aussi le LNG qui est l'avenir dans le secteur énergétique.

Je salue aussi l'initiative en ce qui concerne la taxe de 15% enlevée sur les panneaux photovoltaïques. L'avenir de ce pays repose sur ce qu'on a de gratuit. L'avenir de ce pays, en termes énergétiques, repose sur le soleil, sur le vent. Je pense que nous avons le potentiel avec le MID. Avec l'incitation donnée par le ministère des finances pour pousser encore pour que notre parc photovoltaïque, qui déjà commence à prendre forme avec notre bouquet énergétique, je pense que nous avons le potentiel d'aller encore plus loin.

M. le président, j'ai écouté l'honorable Lesjongard parler de Hunton and Williams, le fameux rapport sur l'IPP. Ce n'est pas juste de dire que le gouvernement ne veut pas rendre public le rapport de Hunton and Williams. Ce rapport, M. le président, commandité par le gouvernement et le secteur privé, après que le Premier ministre ait négocié avec les sucriers, après de longues et dures négociations, sans le coup de main de l'Opposition, sans le coup de main de cette l'Opposition qui, aujourd'hui, se permet de dire où est le rapport IPP, où est le rapport Hunton and Williams alors qu'on aurait pu, à ce moment précis, quand le Premier ministre menait cette campagne pour revoir les *clauses* de l'IPP, où était l'Opposition ? Où était les donneurs de leçons de l'Opposition en ce qui concerne ce rapport mais c'est le secteur privé, malheureusement, encore une fois, M. le président, qui ne joue pas le jeu.

En ce qui concerne les *pre-paid meters*, j'ai été vraiment déçu de voir les propos de l'honorable Baloomoody. C'est peut-être une méconnaissance des réalités énergétiques. C'est peut-être une ignorance de certaines choses mais les *pre-paid meters*, ce n'est pas une carte à gratter. Cela n'a jamais été une carte à gratter. Les *pre-paid meters* c'est fait pour aider les plus faibles de notre société. Déjà, en 2006, le gouvernement Travalliste/PMSD avait introduit des tarifs à caractère social - l'honorable ministre connaît ce dossier - pour aider les plus pauvres. Donc ces *pre-paid meters*, qui seront introduit prochainement, aideront seulement avec un tarif réduit.

Deuxièmement, j'ai entendu un membre de l'Opposition demander à ce que cette catégorie de consommateurs ne paient pas la licence TV, que le consommateur pauvre - qui est dans le tarif social – ne paie que R 20 pour la MBC et non R 150 comme tout le monde. Donc,

déjà c'est pour vous montrer que c'est un gouvernement qui a du cœur, que c'est un gouvernement qui est *caring*.

(*Interruptions*)

M. le président, les honorables membres ont, comme symbole, un cœur, mais en fin de compte c'est du 'piquant racket' qu'ils ont à la place, pas de cœur. Ce n'est pas de cœur. C'est quand le gouvernement Travailliste est au pouvoir que vous voyez dans l'action ce qu'on fait

La *connection fee*, en ce qui concerne les *pre-paid meters* à R 750, M. le président, sera enlevée pour les plus pauvres. Donc M. le président, je crois que ce gouvernement, avec ce Premier ministre à sa tête, continuera le développement de ce pays. Nous allons continuer à faire l'épanouissement de la population notre priorité, à faire que ce pays devienne un endroit où il fait bon vivre.

La meilleure façon, M. le président, de se comporter en temps de crise c'est d'être brave. Nous avons un Premier ministre qui a dit oui à la carte identité nationale que l'Opposition a critiqué. Nous avons un Premier ministre qui a dit non au chantage d'un parti politique, voulant qu'on arrête l'enquête sur l'affaire Medpoint; nous avons un Premier ministre qui a refusé de faire le voyage pour le Sri Lanka sur une question de principe. Nous avons un Premier ministre qui a dit...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Baloomoody! Right, proceed!

(*Interruptions*)

Silence!

Mr Assirvaden: Je peux comprendre, M. le président, que la vérité fait mal. L'honorable Baloomoody parlait juste avant moi sur la Police, sur deux poids deux mesures, sur ce qui se fait quand on est dans l'opposition, quand on est dans le gouvernement. L'honorable Baloomoody oublie, quand on a voulu fermer l'ECO en espace de 24 heures. Lui, il était avocat, à ce moment-

là, c'est lui qui a fait pression sur la Police quand il était au pouvoir et aujourd'hui, ce genre d'honorable membre essaie de nous faire la leçon, mais...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence! There is a point order.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I be compared as a *genre de personne*? Is that parliamentary?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Baloomoody: To call a person a '*genre de personne*', is that parliamentary?

Mr Speaker: Withdraw!

Mr Assirvaden: Je vais enlever.

Mr Speaker: You withdraw the words "*ce genre de...*". It is an unbecoming expression.

Mr Assirvaden: I withdraw!

Mr Speaker: It is an unbecoming expression according to the Standing Orders. Don't treat Members of this House the way you have done. Proceed!

Mr Assirvaden: Cet honorable membre, M. le président, ce génie de l'honorable Baloomoody. Là, il est content. Ce génie...

(*Interruptions*)

Un César, qui du temps où il était au pouvoir, a voulu fermer l'ECO. Du temps où il était au pouvoir, son partenaire du jour parlait de '*moralité pas rempli ventre*'. Aujourd'hui, il ose...

Mr Speaker: L'honorable membre ...

Mr Assirvaden: Voilà! L'honorable membre ose nous pointer du doigt.

(*Interruptions*)

Pour terminer, M. le président, je dirais que nous savons où nous allons. Nous avons confiance et la population a confiance en notre Premier ministre et nous attendons l'heure, en 2015, encore une fois, pour balayer ce *remake* rassis.

Merci, M. le président.

(10.47 p.m.)

Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Speaker, Sir, thank you for letting me say a few words on this Budget.

Before proceeding I would like to say something about my colleague, hon. Assirvaden. While he was talking, I remember, someone on the radio said -

“Li couma enn personn ki koz dan enn silencieu kinn percer, li fer bokou tapaz.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, he is trying to cook a *briyani* for this House, a *briyani* full of salt and rubbish spices that make all of us, I am sure, sick in this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me, I will just start by saying a few things which hon. Issack said on poverty. I quote –

« Ce que l'Opposition ne doit jamais oublier, c'est que la pauvreté est une décision divine. C'est un choix divin. Dieu a créé les pauvres, il y aura toujours des pauvres et même dans les pays les plus riches. Que ce soit en Arabie Saoudite, aux Etats-Unis ou au Canada (...) »

Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot be indifferent to what hon. Issack said. Poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, was never an almighty action. It is a man-made situation. God never created some poor and some rich. In this world, many poor become rich and many rich become poor of their own doing, not God.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am a Muslim, and he is a Muslim too, but I think he is wrong and I cannot stay indifferent to what he has said. Poor people are human being, rich people are human being. What is between us human being is man-made, not God.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me go directly on the Budget Speech, especially the Health Department to start with. In regard to the health, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister

and Minister of Finance has rightly increased the assistance to patients inoperable in Mauritius, which has gone up to Rs800,000.

My concern, Mr Speaker, Sir, is about those patients who have had brain tumour. Some are operated by our neurosurgeons at the main local hospital. Neurosurgery, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a team work, not as it is presently here. Individual neurosurgeon attempts to operate without a proper trained team in neurosurgery and, secondly, on a trial basis, without knowing their limit. A few patients recently were operated for brain tumour in a local hospital by our neurosurgeons, but had to stop halfway during the operation, because it was beyond their abilities. They then referred for assistance to complete the surgery abroad. The Minister of Health knows how many such cases went to India and other countries. Doctors abroad complain to the families concerned as to why they have operated upon patients and then sent them here for completion. Neurosurgeons should have known with all the investigations that the case or other cases are very difficult ones.

I know of one such case, in which surgery was attempted unsuccessfully, it was an extensive basal brain tumour done by one neurosurgeon at SSR with one anaesthetist not trained for neurosurgery. The end result, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the patient left Mauritius blind to India with cerebral infection. Neurosurgeons in India were adamant that such cases should not have been attempted in Mauritius. I make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Health to look in such cases. Our objective is to improve the health and quality of life not to incapacitate them!

Keep to the bold print word of the Budget: “Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius”, that means no scalpel should be on this patient. The case should be investigated, know your limit and send them if you cannot do it in Mauritius. Inoperable! Do not operate, call for assistance, Mr Speaker, Sir! I am sure hon. Dr. Kasenally knows what I am talking about.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Kasenally knows it very well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Health to create a proper team for brain surgery and to inform neurosurgeons to get away with their ego, not to operate on their own. They are causing a lot of distress to families, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have a suggestion here to the Minister of Health. If not in 2014, at least, start to consider for 2015 one Gamma Knife

equipment. By that, I mean, it is a Gamma Ray apparatus that gets rid of the tumour of the brain without opening the skull, Mr Speaker, Sir. This can be done in one day without operation. They come in, in the morning and they leave at night with a cup of coffee, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is done for specific brain surgery.

With regard to the *Médecine de la Famille*, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Area Health Centres, 40 doctors will be trained. My suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, as we are faced with more chronic diseases of elderly, that training should be in geriatric care, dementia and Alzheimer disease for proper diagnosis and management and also train social professionals.

My next issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, is Rs6,000 per year to those disabled patients at home. It is only Rs500 per month. Here, I honestly think the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development is on the wrong track. Medical professionals and carers should attend to those patients because money may and will be cashed by relatives of their own. The hon. Minister should continue with medical visits at home and in the next Budget consider some ways to subsidise or pay in full their medical prescriptions, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Another suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerns section 418 which talks about domiciliary visit. Doctors of the Medical Unit of the Social Security should be well-trained in elderly care and problems of disabled persons. We must not think in terms of cash money to the disabled persons.

With regard to diabetes, Mr Speaker, Sir, at section 361, coming up with a National Diabetes Register may be a good move, but confidentiality should be strictly observed.

Mention is made of a National Campaign on Prevention of Diabetes which is listed last in section 361. It should have been the first one on the list with major emphasis and objective on prevention to the young ones and to the young generation. But, here, more emphasis is laid on treatment centres. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to make a request to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life to come with regulations for corneal transplant. There is a great need for corneal tissue, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding social aid in respect of carers and special allowance in section 428. Here, raising the family income ceiling to Rs100,000 is not enough because sometimes we need at least two carers to look after someone with Alzheimer and dementia or severely disabled

persons at home. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has not addressed or took any consideration of a few requests of the Ministry of Social Security regarding training carers to be professional carers to look after Alzheimer or dementia patients.

One suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, Unemployed Female to Get Back to Work Programme. Some may be trained as carers to look after old and disabled persons, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In section 433, Rs24 m. is provided to double the accommodation capacity for persons with severe disabilities at Foyer Trochetia. The suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the same breath, is to have a special unit adapted for young persons with mental and physical disabilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding *repas chaud*, I am pleased that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development recognises the difficulty faced. I did mention in the last Budget that I quote myself, I said –

“I pray God that there will not be food poisoning because the project was not well-planned.”

That is what happened last February! If in the last Budget, the hon. Minister came with bread and cheese project first and then *repas chaud* for 2014 in the Second Term, the project would have been well applauded. But it is a pity that some people do it the other way round, *repas chaud* first and finished to follow by bread and cheese. That is what I call management by crisis, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to raise an issue which concerns the Central Procurement Board (CPB). The CPB has misled the House! This concerns the procurement of 65 buses by the NTC this year.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, be careful, you have used the word ‘misled’!

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was about to finish.

Mr Speaker: I am still on my feet.

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, sorry!

Mr Speaker: You have to be careful! You’ll have to rephrase it!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, to my opinion, the documents that I have and which I am going to table, I maintain that the CPB has misled this House, if you will allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No, I will not allow you. You cannot say that. There is no representative of the CPB here! You have to withdraw whatever you have said with regard to the CPB so far!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Sorefan: Yes.

Mr Speaker: So, you withdraw whatever you have said.

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, I do, Mr Speaker, Sir, I withdraw!

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the procurement of 65 buses by the NTC this year, there was a PNQ dated July 2013 by the Leader of the Opposition, hon. Ganoo. He asked the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development as to whether the Rs180 m. estimated cost included maintenance. The hon. Minister replied, and I quote –

“Here, I am provided with information that it is inclusive. It is a fact or it is not a fact, and I am told that it is a fact that it is inclusive.”

There is another question from hon. Alan Ganoo, I quote -

“Yes, but the hon. Vice-Prime Minister does not want to admit the fact that the costs were inflated. The total value was inflated because, I repeat, the cost of maintenance was introduced in the value, in the costs.”

Hon. Duval replied -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious allegation that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is making against CPB!”

In reply to another question, hon. Duval said -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, I’ll ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition again to submit the information that he has. I presume he must have seen some sort of documents.”

The hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development said that he was convinced that it was not inflated. Mr Speaker, Sir, I will table a document that was addressed to the Secretary of the

Central Procurement Board, signed for General Manager by Mr Mallam-Hassam. In that document, it is clearly specified that for 40 buses of 60 to 65 seats, cost Rs2.9 m. each, totalling Rs116 m. Secondly, 25 buses of 34 to 38 seats, Rs2.6 m. Each totalling to Rs65 m. The grand total, Mr Speaker, Sir, comes to Rs181 m. rounded to Rs180 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, this document shows that maintenance is not included in the cost of the bus. So, the House was misled somehow by what the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development reported on that issue, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will table this document, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding bus transport, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development said -

“The accident at Sorèze in May this year was a heart-breaking national tragedy.”

We all agree, but this Government should not get out so easily. Their responsibility and their inaction to replace buses...

(Interruptions)

The responsibility lies with this Government for not coming with the procurement of the 60 buses. Families are still crying for having lost their close relatives. We are crying with them, Mr Speaker, Sir. I, myself, I am shattered to think how I would feel if I lost my close one in this accident. Now, the hon. Minister is proposing a Bus Replacement Mechanism. Today, we have about 3,000 buses, to be exact 2,952 registered buses. In 2002, it was 2,450.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister, in Section 97 of his Budget Speech, he said-

“This Mechanism will provide a subsidy of Rs1 m. per bus, and will be financed through a levy of one rupee per litre on petroleum products.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning, we heard from the hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection who said that there won't be an increase in retail price of petrol. In my opinion and analysis, this Re1. litre will be taken from the saving. I explain myself.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the import price of petrol fell, the rupee exchange rate fell, all other taxes and levies have savings. Therefore, most of the retail prices have gone down. But since it has been maintained, - the price that has been maintained as retail price - it means they are saving at about Rs2.25 per litre. Mr Speaker, Sir, this Rs2.25, actually, should have been taken out of the retail price. They are making a good saving and that's what I think they are going to

take that one rupee litre of petrol that the hon. Minister was mentioning as a levy to finance the bus mechanism.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just come to an issue that the hon. Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection said at Plaine des Papayes on 30 October. The hon. Minister said to the public that Government is subsidising rice, flour and gas to the tune of Rs1.6 billion a year. Does he know that this Rs1.6 billion is a cross subsidisation from charges of Rs1.50 per litre from vehicle owners? And they have the guts to say that 'they are putting people first'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the acquisition of semi low-floor buses is a must for pensioners and old aged passengers. But, do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, when in 2007, new purchases from India, the specifications were for semi low-floor buses but officers of the NTC went to India and changed the specifications. No action has been taken as per the report of the General Manager of NTC up to now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, about rigorous annual medical check-up for all heavy duty vehicle drivers, if these drivers are found unfit to drive by doctors, will there be a compensation or some kind of pension or straight loss of jobs, Mr Speaker, Sir, of those drivers?

Mr Speaker, Sir, now let me consider, the Mauritius Light Rail Transport/Transit System. Through Government-to-Government arrangement, Singapore Corporation Enterprise is providing advisory service to prepare the project to the tune of Rs180 m. as consultant. Does this House know that Singapore Corporation Enterprise has no knowhow in LRT?

LRT, in Singapore, was engineered by a French renowned company. Mr Speaker, Sir, now that Government is launching request for proposal - that is, tender to six pre-selected companies - Mr Speaker, Sir, we know that the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development and his ex-Financial Secretary was not agreeable to this project because of excessive cost and viability. This is the main reason the hon. Prime Minister told the ex-Financial Secretary to '*lev paker aler*' about two months ago. The cost for implementing this project will be around Rs30 to Rs35 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. On average, it will cost about Rs2 billion per km for this project from Curepipe to Port Louis. How many of us, in this House, know the corridor of the MLRT? We only hear about it. The project is kept completely in opacity; I wonder why, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Another reason why the ex-Financial Secretary was called to *lev paker aller* is because he wrote a letter to the Singaporean Consultant asking them to make sure that there is no hidden cost in this project, as they did with the LRT project in an East Asian country which, on completion, Government had to subsidise heavily the project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the ex-Financial Secretary did not want Mauritius to suffer the same fate that is why he was sacked. Do we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, what will be the cost to travel from Curepipe to Port Louis on the LRT? Probably not even the hon. Prime Minister or the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Infrastructure, National Development, Land Transport and Shipping know. In 2003 the cost to travel to Port Louis via LRT was estimated to be around Rs100 to Rs125 when the estimated cost for LRT project was Rs7 billion. My calculation of the cost comes to around, today or in the near future, maybe Rs300 to travel from Curepipe to Port Louis. How many can afford a daily expense of about Rs300 per day, Mr Speaker, Sir? Mr Speaker, Sir, MRLT unit is monitoring the LRT at the PMO under the chairmanship of an officer, Dr. Reesaul for the MRLT. Now he is the CEO appointed to this post without call for candidature. There are a few officers in the Land Transport who are most senior to him. Why he has been privileged for such a huge highly engineering project? Now, Dr. Reesaul is the CEO of the Mauritius Land Transport Authority and The MLTA Act stipulates at Section 2 – “There shall be a Chief Executive of the Authority who shall be appointed with the approval of the Minister, by the Board on a fix term performance contract and on such terms and conditions as he thinks fit.” There has never been any advertisement of this post, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let's now consider on the issue of congestion. The hon. Minister of Finance mentioned that congestion is costing around Rs4 billion yearly. In 2005, the then hon. Minister was talking about Rs2 billion, an increase of 100%. Why Mr Speaker, Sir? Although huge sums, billion of rupees to build new roads are spent. To me the reasons are poor planning and poor civil engineering. While trying to decongest one site, they are creating congestion in another site or made worst where improvements are being brought. A good example is the IVTB round about and at Place d'Armes where newly built lane from Caudan flyover to Place d'Armes has caused the bottleneck at about 10 metres from the traffic lights and also, without forgetting, Colville Deverell Bridge construction and at Vandermeersch Street at Rose Hill, on peak hours at M1 and M2 to Port Louis, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Finance mentioned new projects with private participation that we all know as Toll Road Project. Tender was launched, evaluated and now under negotiations. The hon. Minister of Finance listed new constructions namely: grade separated junction over Phoenix and Jumbo roundabout, forgetting to mention Dowlut roundabout. Secondly, construction of a bridge over Grand River North West to link Coromandel to Sorèze, that is the A1-M1 bridge, forgetting to mention a flyover at Sorèze that I name as *couloir de la mort*. Mr Speaker, Sir, the third one is the construction of a tunnel through the Signal Mountain to Champ de Mars.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the tender exercise there was the Harbour Bridge, now no mention! Two months ago, through a friend of Dr. Reesaul, I came to learn that the Harbour Bridge was out in this project and this has been confirmed by the hon. Minister of Housing when we were dealing with supplementary Budget 2012. Why the Harbour Bridge is out? Will the tender exercise stand good if such a major scope of work has been removed? Now that there is no Harbour Bridge, what alternative, Mr Speaker, Sir, to decongest Place d'Armes? What I can forecast is that congestion on M1 to Port Louis will be more than worse. Mr Speaker, Sir, many years will lapse before we see the light at the end of the tunnel regarding congestion at Place d'Armes. Mr Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, I would like to bring to the attention of hon. Members of this House the following -

For the Toll Road Project, there were two bidders selected. The first one Plan Consortium made of Colas/Bouygues, Aveng Group and a few others. The second one was Groupfive. The Plan Consortium which was the most preferred bidder is being negotiated by CPB. The Aveng Group of companies of South Africa form part of Plan Consortium. Aveng Group of companies has been fined in South Africa by the Competition Tribunal and I am tabling the document for the Competition Tribunal of South Africa. It was fined in South Africa by the Competition Tribunal on 23 July 2013. Mr Speaker, Sir, here is the document that I am tabling to this House. The conclusion is as follows, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Before the hon. Member produces the documents, I would like to have a look at them to see whether they are admissible or not!

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. The conclusion is as follows: Avenge Group has agreed and admitted collusive tendering. He was fined 307 billion Rand, Mr Speaker, Sir and

the same Aveng Group solemnly affirmed to CPB on 23 October 2013 that Aveng Group has not been found guilty in any court of law of fraud and corruption related to crimes and no attempt has been made or will be made to engage in any corrupt act. This affirmation forms part of the best and the final offer submitted by contractors for the Toll Road project. Aveng group participation in the Toll Road Project is 18.5%, Mr Speaker, Sir. The second best offer is Profive/Strabag. Here also, Mr Speaker, Sir, Profive is being mentioned in this corruption affair which have rejected the arrangement proposal by the Competition Tribunal of South Africa. Profive is legally trying to defend itself in the Supreme Court of South Africa. Mr Speaker, Sir, now Harbour Bridge is out, corruption at the level Plan Consortium. What Government will do? Without any hesitation all the exercise should be annulled, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on congestion I shall quote a study undertaken in February 2012 by Sudhir Fowdur and Sunil Ragoopath, Department of Physics, University of Mauritius. They analysed three different solutions suggested for traffic congestion. The three alternatives are Light Rail Transit, construction of Ring Road and upgrading of the current bus network into Bus Rapid Transit System. I won't deal in the research aspect, but I will communicate to the House the conclusion of their research.

First one, the Ring Road option will not lead to any reduction in congestion level at Port Louis. On the contrary, it will lead to further congestion and will have higher CO² emission compared to the actual case. Commuters using Ring Road will travel an additional 5 kms before reaching their destination and the additional delay created at the point where vehicles from Ring Road mergers with the motorway.

The LRT can be envisaged as a long-term solution because of its lower CO². It, however, suffers from longer travel times and lower carrying capacity. The bus rapid transit can be set as the target. Authorities should go for it because bus rapid transit will carry more passengers than cars. One bus will replace about 30 cars, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As we can see, Mr Speaker, Sir, serious studies and conclusions have been disregarded and set aside by this Government. I keep wondering why the Ministry of Public Infrastructure is adamant on the Ring Road and LRT. Is it because of the huge amount in terms of multi billion rupees, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt you, hon. Member. You have to be careful and not to insinuate anything against any Member of this House. And as far as the document which you have not yet produced and which is being considered, this document is not certified. It is therefore not admissible. You may take back your document. Please, proceed!

Dr. Sorefan: Ok, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, I will deal with the privatisation of our fitness centres. Presently, we have two fitness centres which are making good profits to the tune of Rs20 m. to Rs25m. for the financial year 2012. This Government, through the MPI has issued letter of intent to three companies, namely Autocheck Ltd - I will not mention the names of the promoters. Secondly, this one there is no company, it is just Sunil Woochit with a British partner, Gemo, and the third one is the *Société Générale de Surveillance* and is situated at Phoenix. It is a company specialising in calibration of equipment, hardly any experience in vehicle examination. The first one Autocheck does not have any experience also in examination of vehicles, whereas the one I mentioned, Sunil Woochit, he also does not have any experience in vehicle examination.

Mr Speaker: Sorry to interrupt you. Can you enlighten me on the relevance of what you're saying with regard to the Budget?

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, fitness centre is mentioned. It is in the big booklet as an objective of the Government for 2014. That's why I am talking on this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, NTA launched expression of interest on 23 March 2011. There were 15 bidders. The Ministry of MPI took the whole file and document from the NTA and handed it over to Dr. Reesaul, who with other Officers of the MPI shortlisted 9 bidders.

Mr Speaker, Sir, requests for proposal were invited by MPI not by Central Procurement Board and a Bid Evaluation Committee set up by MPI, not by CPB and selected three bidders as I have mentioned earlier.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to know which section of any law, mainly the Road Traffic Act allows the MPI to evaluate, to call for expression of interest, setting up of evaluation bid committee. The MPI through unknown reason surpassed the prerogative of the CPB, which by law is the proper institution to call for proposal and setting up of Bid Evaluation Committee.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes, give way. There is a point of order.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the hon. Member is trying to impute motives on MPI. Everything had been done according to the law and according to the existing regulations, but the impression is being created that, in fact, deliberately we have tried to take the wrong track.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am just informing the House that the tender that was called by the MPI was not in the proper sense. It should have gone to the CPB. That is what I am trying to say. It should be legal by CPB. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister will have the chance to answer later on.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Sorefan: It is your right.

Mr Speaker: Please address, the Chair!

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. There was also, Mr Speaker, Sir, negotiation for the renting of the two centres, the Forest Side and the Port Louis examination centres, and to my information the Forest Side Centre has been negotiated for Rs1 m. as rental and Rs2 m. for Port Louis examination centre; and also there were negotiations carried out regarding examination fees.

Presently, it is Rs400 on average per vehicle. Now, it will be around Rs600 plus VAT, totalling to Rs690 per vehicle. This exercise, Mr Speaker, Sir should be cancelled and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance should enquire to establish the legal involvement of this tender exercise, and I also must add that in the Road Traffic Amendment Act (No. XXI of 2011), there is a section (122A) - Regulations in respect of authorised examiners -

“The Minister may make such regulations as he thinks fit for the purpose
of providing for the authorisation of a person to act as authorised examiner.”

To my knowledge, no regulations so far, but in the main Act, the Road Traffic Act, it is the Road Transport Commissioner who has the power to authorise a person to act as examiner, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me deal with our famous Sinohydro company - the widening of Colville Deverell Bridge northbound. The tender was awarded to Sinohydro Corporation to the tune of Rs257 m. For the tender exercise, there was an objection from company Colas, but the General Manager of RDA came with a certificate of urgency, and they proceeded with the contract. Work started in mid-January 2012 and was about to be completed in July 2013 with a penalty clause of Rs75,000 per day.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you may have noticed that the extension of the bridge is above the old roads to the tune of about two feet from the normal level, with concrete walls on both sides and what more the entry and exit point on the bridge is slightly out of phase of the entry point, that is, not in the straight line. It is very dangerous.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I asked a PQ last year on the bridge design the hon. Minister of MPI answered that it is a design and built project and under the supervision of a very competent consultant - if I am not wrong, it is Javad and Servansingh. Why is this out of phase of the old bridge, Mr Speaker, Sir? It is slightly off level. Mr Speaker, Sir, no one will convince me that because some officers are trying to make the public believe that due to vibration that is why it is on a higher level.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have contacted a few Civil Engineers. They all agree with me that it has been wrongly designed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us here...

Mr Speaker: I have to interrupt you again. Is it a project that is contained in 2014 Budget?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The 2014 Budget?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, it was. It is not completed; the payment will be finished...

Mr Speaker: My question is: what you are saying, is it a project that is mentioned in the 2014 Budget?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: OK.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I contacted a few civil engineers and they agreed that it has been wrongly designed. Mr Speaker, Sir, all of us here, our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren will have to live with this dangerous bridge.

Here, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister or MPI has to take his responsibility in allowing and accepting such – I won't say rubbish – an unengineered work for life long. History will always mention his name as an unaccomplished to this project. I have a tendency to name this bridge 'Bachoo SINO Extension Bridge'.

Another project of SINO of Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire...

(Interruptions)

Another project, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire, even to SINO, to the tune of R926.7 m. It is only now that the project is completed after eleven months' delay and a roundabout with hump of soil that obstruct drivers' view. Penalty per day R463,000! Will RDA claim the penalty as per the contract? If not, has there been any negotiation between parties on a win-win basis?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the project at Riche Terre at the cost of Rs89.3 m., here also to Sinohydro! Works should have been completed in June 2013. It is still far from completion. Penalty: Rs 25,000 per day. Here also, will to Sinohydro pay the penalty for non completion as per the contract?

Mr Speaker, Sir, same for Beau Climat-Nouvelle France. Contract value Rs85.1 m. to Sinohydro; it should have been completed in August 2012. Penalty 15% of the contract value as maximum, that is, about Rs12.7 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as per a PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Ganoo, Sinohydro was to be awarded a contract for a sports complex at Triolet to the tune of Rs190.2 m., higher than two other bidders who were lower. The hon. Prime Minister was not happy with the situation in this House. We want to know if the project has been awarded to Sino and where matters stand.

Another project, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, maybe you can have a series of PQs!

Dr. Sorefan: Well, I am giving the chance to the hon. Minister when he is willing to answer.

Mr Speaker: Hon, Member, this debate on the Budget. You have to make the difference between your query for information, your search for information and properly debating the ideas, projects, plans and vision as contained in the Budget.

Dr. Sorefan: Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, when we debate there are always question coming, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Another project, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Tulipes Avenue at Quatre Bornes, contract value Rs83.6 m., is not completed up to now, given to Sinohydro with penalty to the tune of...

Mr Speaker: I have to ask the same question: is this project found in the 2014 Budget?

Dr. Sorefan: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Tell me which paragraph?

Dr. Sorefan: It is in the big book, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, tell me which paragraph?

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir...

Mr Speaker: Try to limit your comments. This is your right to comment on the 2014 Budget; I'll ensure that it is respected, but make sure that it is your right.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, when I prepare my exposé, I referred to the Budget book; and this project started, not finished and will be paid in the next financial year and it is in the book.

Mr Speaker: Yes. I hope you have understood my point, hon. Member.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, you have heard that speed signage at Roche Bois motorway was changed recently from 60 kms to 70 kms. It is only in Mauritius that speed limit keeps changing, when they so wish.

Speed limit, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the first component when designing motorway. Engineers decide what speed limit will be allowed and then design the motorway. On M1, M2, very often we see 60 kms, 90 kms and 110 kms which is not scientific at all, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, I don't want to be unfair to you. You have been reading your speech. According to the Standing Orders, you can refer to your notes, but reading your speech systematically may not be correct. I may allow you to refer to your notes, but not copiously; and reading lengthily from your speech, right from the beginning to the end is not correct.

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute! This may not be fair. I allowed you some flexibility to keep on referring, but try to explain your ideas.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know we all want to go home.

Mr Speaker: I want you to withdraw these words. Hon. Member, it is not a question of anybody going home.

Dr. Sorefan: Well, I withdraw, Mr Speaker, Sir, with all due respect to the Chair. I am not reading, but many of the orators did read papers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, reading the Bagatelle Dam, the hon. Minister of Finance did not mention anything. An urgent project that has been delayed due to lack of proper competent geological survey by consultant! Work has stopped and billions of rupees will be needed to complete the dam.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another dam is the Arnaud Diversion Dam, which was awarded to the tune of Rs240 m. to Sinohydro in October 2012, a year ago. The project was in difficulty. Up to now, the project has not been completed and Mauritians are suffering from lack of water.

Mr Speaker, Sir, nobody listened to me about Sinohydro. Sinohydro has taken Mauritius for a ride. God knows when we will get rid of such a company in Mauritius. On penalty point, Mr Speaker, Sir, I declare my interest as there is a Court case from a bidder. It is unacceptable for a driver to be fined twice for the same offence, that is, Rs2,000 fine and loss of penalty points, 2 to 4 points.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to convey to this House that this law will be revisited in the interest of drivers when we will be in power.

Regarding my constituency, I will just say a few words concerning the inauguration of Parisot Bridge. A private land was levelled by the MPI with tonnes of gravels and sandstone, and the proprietor has fenced his property for no access for others. Millions of rupees, I suppose! I did ask a Written Question on this, but I never got an answer.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the underpass at Valentina, persons get robbed. There is no Security Officers there and I hope that people will be safe by providing security officers at this underpass.

At Cité La Caverne, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a land belonging to the Ministry of Housing and Lands used by one individual terrorising neighbours. Can the hon. Minister look into it?

There is a plastic industry also that is being built at Résidence La Caverne. Can Government see to it that the Environment Tribunal takes the matter as urgently as possible? There is an increase in house rate by the Council of Vacoas/Phoenix which we oppose because it is a high increase. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, I am sure, will take care as to whether this high rate is accepted or not.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to conclude, I will just say a few words to the Mauritians –

“Don’t cry Mauritians, in a few months, remake will be in power and we will look into those *maldonnes* and favouritism.”

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The Deputy Speaker will take the Chair!

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Kindly resume your seats, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Ritoo!

(11.53 p.m.)

The Minister of Youth & Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on hearing the previous orator and the number of penalties that he scored, we will have to rush to the stadium.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as we are stepping into year 2014 it has become more challenging than ever to consolidate the economy and place our country on the path of modernisation based on the vision of our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Appropriate and timely decisions have been taken by the Government to bring more prosperity to the population and empower people to improve their quality of life.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Budget has taken everybody on board, *personne n'a été laissée sur la touche*, priority being given to the most vulnerable groups of our society. Emphasis has also been laid on key sectors of the economy, namely education, infrastructure, transport and health, just to mention a few of them, to ensure a better standard of living to our citizens. In so doing, the Government is upholding its commitment to promote economic development in the country at large and social justice, in particular, with a special thrust on the weak segment of the population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2014 Budget is one that reconciles the interest of various stakeholders. The vision of our Prime Minister for the country to become a high income nation is well on track with our GDP *per capita* now at \$9,300 from \$5,200 in 2005.

First and foremost, my colleague, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has to be congratulated for putting fiscal discipline high on the agenda to reflect the seriousness of this responsible Government. Despite the difficult circumstances, the Government under the guidance of hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, has not pressed the panic button, still less found the *poëlon trop chaud* or toy with the benefits of social welfare – like some would have been tempted to do so. Keeping economic growth at the centre of this Budget through the concept of ‘creating a new wave of prosperity’, the Prime Minister has reaffirmed our commitment to make Mauritius an inclusive and caring society while at the same time consolidating the Welfare State.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for this Government, *il n'y a pas de développement sans épanouissement du peuple*. The ‘feel good factor’ is already echoing in the public after the series of Budget measures announced. “Putting People First” has not just been a slogan, it has been our mantra.

The incentives to bring in quality buses on our roads, accompanied by the forthcoming LRT Project will ensure that our fellow countrymen will travel comfortably, safely and in a more environmentally friendly way. These measures together with other measures announced to alleviate traffic congestion by redrawing the map of Mauritius should make transport more fluid and less costly.

Enhanced economic development by anchoring sectors such as green energy, telecommunication, research and development, sustainable development, ocean economy, utilities and the film industry, with a public sector investment package of Rs138 billion over five years, will definitely further strengthen our economic base both in the medium and the long terms.

Democratisation of our economy has been on our agenda since 2005 and this relentless pursuit of broadening the economic landscape remains at the forefront of our policies. Small and Medium Enterprises have been well taken care of as they will be the engine of growth for job creation. The challenge of access to market is also being addressed as Government procurement is expected to reach 20 percent from SMEs over the next three years

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, other sectors that cannot go unnoticed are health, housing, education including tertiary, social security and social integration. These six sectors together represent about Rs39 billion. This is clear indication that the Welfare State has been and will remain high on the agenda of this Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rs39 billion on the overall public expenditure of Rs113 billion speaks loads in favour of such a caring Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I'll now turn to youth and sports, that is, my Ministry. I am grateful to the Vice-Prime Minister for having granted a substantial increase in the Budget of my Ministry, that is, an increase of 12 percent and for the first time our budget has exceeded half a billion rupees. The series of measures spelt out illustrates that Government has at heart the advancement of our youth and sportsmen but, most importantly, highlights Government's determination to bring about the revival of football in the country.

Les mesures annoncées aideront mon ministère à atteindre les buts fixés. Il m'est agréable de noter qu'une bonne partie du budget ira aux infrastructures et que de nouveaux terrains et complexes sportifs seront construits. Comme je l'ai souligné la semaine dernière, le

football est une fierté dans la plupart des pays au monde, y compris ici à Maurice où nous comptons des milliers et des milliers de partisans.

M. le président, comme pratiquement tous les mauriciens, vous aurez certainement noté que la mesure phare concernant mon ministère demeure la volonté du gouvernement de rendre au ballon rond ses lettres de noblesse. Il suffit de voir le *buzz* créé et les débats passionnés autour du ballon rond. Nous voulons redonner au football mauricien sa popularité d'antan en y apportant et en mobilisant les ressources nécessaires.

M. le président, de 2008 à ce jour, le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports a investi plus de R 100 millions pour le développement du football à travers des donations directes ou encore des aides financières -

- pour la réouverture du Centre Technique National de Formation de Football ;
- la mise en place d'un Directeur Technique National ;
- la mise à la disposition des meilleurs techniciens et des infrastructures à la fédération ;
- pour investir dans des compétitions de masse comme le *Grassroot Project*, le *Mauritius Saturday Football League*, les Jeux de l'Avenir, les Jeux de l'Espoir, les Jeux Inter-collèges, le *Football for Health*, le *Mini Soccer*, le *Street Football* ou encore le futsal.

Malgré tous ces investissements, M. le président, notre football n'a toujours pas redécollé. Pire, notre sélection a dégringolé au classement de la FIFA pour atteindre la place de 198^e sur 209 pays en l'espace de 13 ans.

En tant que ministre responsable et redevable pour chaque roupie investie, j'apporte, M. le président, à travers ce projet des clubs semi professionnels, une stratégie qui permettra au foot de se remettre debout. M. le président, certains oiseaux de mauvais augure diront qu'on recule ou encore qu'on bascule dans le communalisme. Moi, je dis qu'on progresse tout en tirant des leçons du passé.

M. le président, la critique est aisée mais l'art est difficile. Il faut être réaliste car Rome n'a pas été construite en un jour. Le football mauricien redeviendra une fierté nationale, j'en suis

persuadé mais avec une bonne dose de patience, beaucoup d'énergie, avec l'aide de vrais patriotes et de par des mesures courageuses. Ainsi, rester les bras croisés et être spectateur passif de la mort lente de notre sport roi, n'a pas été et ne sera jamais une option pour nous.

M. le président, dans ce projet, les membres de cette assemblée, les passionnés du football, les anciens joueurs, les joueurs actuels, les mauriciens en général ou les représentants des médias, ont un rôle important à jouer. Pour moi, cette mesure vient à point nommé. Elle représente une formidable occasion pour nous d'utiliser le football pour démontrer que nous avons la capacité, en 2013, de dépasser tous les clivages, que nos mentalités ont changé et que nous sommes vraiment un peuple arc en ciel. D'ailleurs, notre plus grande force, M. le président, c'est notre différence et notre capacité à accepter et à respecter les valeurs des autres. Pour moi, cette mesure est un défi que le peuple mauricien doit relever.

Malheureusement, certains qui voient toujours le mal partout, tentent de dévier le débat. Au lieu de participer à cet élan national, ils parlent « de retour du communalisme par la petite porte.».

Sachez, M. le président, qu'ils font fausse route. En aucun cas, nous n'avons eu l'intention de ressusciter ce mal. Nous prévoyons des clubs non pas communaux mais arc-en-ciel. Un des objectifs des clubs semi-professionnels sera de promouvoir le multiculturalisme et la cohésion sociale.

Je dois aussi indiquer à la Chambre que depuis l'annonce de cette mesure, les mauriciens, dans leur grande majorité, ont déjà adhéré à ce projet national. On reçoit beaucoup de félicitations et de sollicitations pour démarrer le projet. Nous attendons la nouvelle loi sur le sport qui sera bientôt promulguée afin de donner un cadre légal à ce nouveau projet. Cette loi agira comme garde fou pour éviter toute tentative de récupération sectaire et définira les contours ainsi que les critères qui devront être respectés scrupuleusement par les clubs.

Nous avons une réelle et sincère volonté de revoir le public dans les stades, de revivre cette ferveur d'antan et in fine, d'aider notre football à progresser.

Parallèlement, au retour de ces équipes historiques ainsi bien que des nouvelles équipes, le gouvernement, suivant les recommandations de l'accord de Wolmar, financera une Ligue semi-professionnelle.

R 10 millions seront ainsi déboursées dans un premier temps pour mettre en place cette Ligue. Hormis l'argent public, les clubs qualifiés auront aussi l'aide du secteur privé. Comme indiqué dans le discours budgétaire, cette ligue comprendra 10 équipes et réunira les meilleurs éléments de l'île.

Nous avons déjà travaillé sur une première ébauche de ce projet en étroite collaboration avec ceux concernés. Nous attendons désormais que la situation se décante au niveau de la fédération pour avancer.

Néanmoins, il est bon de noter que la fédération et le ministère sont sur la même longueur d'onde et que nous croyons que la création de cette ligue sera d'une aide extraordinaire.

A l'inverse de ce que certains veulent faire croire, cette ligue ne sera pas réservée qu'à une catégorie d'équipes au contraire, elle sera ouverte, à condition bien sûr que ces formations puissent satisfaire les critères exigés.

Ici, j'aimerais également éclaircir un point capital. En aucun cas, nous voulons la disparition des clubs régionaux. Ils ont toujours existé et ont toujours produit de très bons éléments. Ces clubs sont des partenaires importants et je pense qu'avec le retour des glorieux anciens, ils pourront en bénéficier et ainsi permettre à notre football de connaître un nivelingement vers le haut.

Au niveau du Ministère, nous comptons poursuivre les discussions et consultations avec d'autres secteurs du ballon rond afin de dégager la meilleure synergie possible.

Ceci dit, M. le président, je profite du temps qui m'est imparti pour remercier ceux et celles, qui, des deux cotés de la Chambre, ont participé aux débats. Vos paroles ne sont pas tombées dans l'oreille d'un sourd.

Rassurez-vous, je ne répondrais pas à ce vendeur de sirop, qui ne connaît le football qu'à travers sa télévision ni ceux qui font passer leur ego avant le football.

(Interruptions)

il se reconnaît. '*Ena ene bougre qui vann sirop ici.*'

(Interruptions)

mais je constate qu'hormis des critiques faciles ainsi...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, there is a point of order!

Mr Obeegadoo: On a point of order. The speaker, a short while ago, invited hon. Members to use, in the course of these debates, language that is becoming of this House...

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order, hon. Obeegadoo?

Mr Obeegadoo: My point of order is I would wish to have your guidance as to whether I should be free when I intervene to refer to hon. Members on the other side of the House as '*vendeur de sirop*'. I would pray that you invite the hon. Member to respect the decorum in this House and to withdraw those words.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister will have to tell me whether the term that he used was meant to qualify a hon. Member of the House.

Mr Ritoo: I never said any name or did not qualify any person. Don't forget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last time someone said that I was '*battèrre vavang*'. '*Battèrre vavang*' is a physical activity and '*vendeur sirop*' is not an activity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cela est malheureux mais en même temps symptomatique de leur part.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, please. I am just asking you whether you were referring to an hon. Member when...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ritoo: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay! Please, go ahead!

Mr Ritoo: Vous savez, M. le président, cela n'étonne pas car quand le sage et non SAJ, désigne la lune, le fou regarde le doigt. Cela est malheureux mais en même temps, symptomatique de leur part. Eux, qui n'ont même pas une véritable culture sportive ou pire encore, qui se servent du peu de culture sportive qu'ils ont pour l'étaler, un peu comme de la confiture sur une tranche de pain et se faire passer pour des spécialistes de la chose sportive.

Par exemple, j'ai entendu qu'il fallait consolider la régionalisation et mettre en application les recommandations des rapports du Comité des Sages et du Juge Ahnee.

Personnellement, j'ai un énorme respect pour le travail effectué par ces personnes de bonne volonté.

M. le président, c'est facile de jeter la première pierre mais il faut d'abord balayer devant sa propre porte car, sauf erreur de ma part, de 2000 à 2005, le Gouvernement MSM/MMM aurait pu les mettre en application.

Mieux encore, durant cette période, les collectivités locales étaient sous leurs contrôles. Alors pourquoi, ne pas l'avoir fait? Encore une fois, c'est de la pure malhonnêteté intellectuelle. Ce sont eux qui avaient le devoir moral de mettre la régionalisation sur les bons rails malheureusement nous connaissons la suite de l'histoire. Ils ont fait fermer le Centre de Formation. C'est là où le football a connu le déclin. C'est en 2004 quand ils ont fermé ce centre. Nous, au niveau du ministère, nous insistons à chaque fédération, qu'il faut qu'il y ait des centres de formations pour préparer l'avenir. Mais eux, en 2004, ils ont fermé le Centre de Formation de Réduit.

Ceci dit, vu l'enjeu national, je ne pense pas que c'est le moment de dénoncer le ou les coupables.

Donc, au lieu de se renvoyer la balle et de jeter encore plus d'huile sur le feu, j'invite tout le monde à être humble et à se mettre réellement au diapason du football. Nous devons unir nos forces et travailler ensemble pour sortir notre football de ce très mauvais pas et ainsi consolider notre unité nationale.

Nous sommes déterminés, M. le président, et nous réussirons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now to enumerate the different measures announced.

Sports grounds are our basic resources and these need to be always kept in the best condition so that our sportsmen feel comfortable and motivated to improve their performance. Upgrading is a continuous process and for next year we have planned to have 12 sport sites upgraded.

Four new football grounds at Anse Jonchée, Bassin, Belvédère and Glen Park will be set up including lighting facilities.

Furthermore, ten existing football grounds around the island are in the process of being equipped with lighting facilities.

Volleyball and basketball pitches will be constructed at -

- (1) Vallée-Pitot;
- (2) Phoenix;
- (3) Rose Belle, and
- (4) Cité Atlee.

Two multisport complexes will be constructed, one at Triolet and another one at La Source.

La piste synthétique du Stade Maryse Justin à Réduit, qui abrite un Centre d'entraînement international, va être remplacée au coût de Rs24 m. tout comme la piste synthétique du Stade de Camp du Roi à Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with the policy of my Ministry to promote Sports among our handicapped community and also in line with the policy of this Government to provide equal opportunities to all of our citizens, I am putting in place a new program next year for organisation of a “National Handisports Championship”.

This event will provide opportunities and will create the sports environment for our handisports athletes to compete on a national platform and it will also enable the detection of sports talents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me now to say a few words on performances of our individual sports. During the last three years, our high level athletes have demonstrated that we can count on them to honour our national flag and bring pride to the nation and the investment made is fully justified.

In 2011, our athletes won a total of 202 medals in major international competitions including 41 at the African level and 5 at world level events. Our country produced 11 African champions in that year.

In 2012, our athletes won a total of 42 medals in major international competitions including 37 at the African level and 5 at world level events. 6 athletes were crowned African champions.

M. le président, l'année 2013 a été positive. Nos athlètes ont réalisé de très belles performances dans des disciplines aussi variées que l'haltérophilie où Shalinee Valaydon est

montée sur la plus haute marche du podium africaine en épaulé-jeté ; l'athlétisme; le judo; le badminton; le tennis; le triathlon; le squash; le VTT; l'équitation entre autres.

Mais la cerise sur le gâteau demeure la performance historique de nos tireurs, nos *kickboxers*. En effet en *kick-boxing M. le président*, nous avons fait des pas de géant ces dernières années confirmant ainsi le potentiel mauricien dans cette discipline. Dans ce sens, je voudrais profiter de ce temps de parole pour dire bravo, pour saluer et féliciter encore une fois nos courageux combattants pour ces moments de grand honneur et de fierté.

Ainsi, après plusieurs podiums mondiaux, des titres en Coupe du monde et des titres de champions d'Afrique, le kick-boxing mauricien a encore franchi un cap important cette année en nous ramenant deux titres de Champions du monde par l'entremise de Fabrice Booluck et de James Agathe.

Pour une petite île comme la nôtre, remporter deux titres de champions du monde et avoir deux vice-champions du monde dans une compétition aussi importante, c'est tout simplement phénoménal.

Ces Championnats du Monde, je vous le rappelle, se sont déroulés au Brésil. Maurice était représenté par cinq tireurs (5 *Kick-boxer*). 413 combattants venant de 48 pays étaient en lice

Maurice a terminé la compétition à une très belle 6^e sur les 48 pays inscrits et s'est classée première au niveau africain. A titre d'exemple et pour mesurer cet exploit, l'île Maurice a devancé de grandes nations comme la France, le Brésil, la Chine, les Etats Unis, la Grande Bretagne, l'Allemagne entre autres.

Bien sûr, M. le président, le mérite de cet exploit revient en premier lieu aux sportifs. Ce sont eux qui, de par leur courage, leur détermination, leur effort et leur sacrifice ont fait briller nos couleurs sur les rings. N'empêche, ces résultats ne sont pas le fruit du hasard.

Outre les tireurs, le Ministère ainsi que la fédération ont aussi apporté leurs modestes contributions. Eu égard de leur performance -

- Nous avons quadruplé le budget de la Fédération de kick-boxing qui est passé de R 300, 000 à Rs1.2 m. C'est parce qu'ils ont été performants.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, can you address the Chair, please?

Mr Ritoo: Yes.

(*Interruptions*)

- Certains tireurs c'est-à-dire nos *kick-boxers* reçoivent chaque mois des allocations financières de la *High Level Sports Unit*. C'est une grande première pour une discipline non-olympique.
- J'ai octroyé des bourses de perfectionnement à nos combattants afin qu'ils puissent se parfaire en Thaïlande.

M. le président, pendant la dernière compétition au Brésil pour le championnat du monde, même les Thaïlandais demandaient aux Mauriciens: mais pourquoi vous avez cinq tireurs qui ont participé dans la compétition, quatre ont atteint la finale (deux champions du monde et deux vice-champions du monde). Maintenant ils disent - pourquoi venir en Thaïlande pour se perfectionner. Ce sont eux qui viendront à Maurice. Pour vous dire le niveau que l'île Maurice à atteint en *kick-boxing*.

- le ministère a financé plusieurs déplacements importants notamment pour les compétitions internationales et pour des camps d'entraînement en Afrique du Sud.
- le ministère a mis à la disposition de la fédération de *kick-boxing* un lopin de terre à Camp Levieux pour la construction d'un Centre National.
- fidèle à la philosophie du Premier ministre de toujours récompenser les efforts de nos sportifs, nos champions, les stars de *kick-boxing* ont reçu des Cash Prizes à hauteur de leurs performances. Ils auront aussi bientôt des lopins de terre *with site and services*.

Ce ne sont là que quelques exemples d'aide. J'espère que la cohésion entre tireurs, dirigeants fédéraux et ministère se consolidera davantage dans les mois à venir et que le *kick boxing* mauricien nous fera vivre d'autres moments magiques.

En tout cas, les acteurs de cette discipline pourront toujours compter sur le soutien inconditionnel du Ministère.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at 31 October 2013, Mauritius has won a total of 42 medals including 8 gold, 13 silver and 21 bronze in major international sports events.

With regard to the Francophonie Games held in France this year, Mauritius won four bronze medals. The result is not to my satisfaction compared to the results obtained in 2009 at the same Games held in Lebanon and the attention of national Sports Federations has been drawn to the fact that they should work harder and take necessary corrective actions for our athletes to obtain better results in future.

In addition, the following performances were recorded by Mauritius in youth regional events -

- (i) 6 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze medals at the CJSOI Badminton Championships held in Seychelles in May 2013;
- (ii) 1 gold medal at the CJSOI Football tournament held in Mauritius in the month of August 2013;
- (iii) 17 gold, 11 silver and 13 bronze medals at the CJSOI Athletics Championships held in Reunion Island in August 2013, and
- (iv) Mauritius ranked first at the recent CJSOI Triathlon Championships held in Reunion Island.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am result-oriented. Our Sportsmen and Sportswomen have done their best to honour the country this year. It is not easy to win all the time, but the courage and determination of our high level athletes must be recognized. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I seize this opportunity to once again congratulate all those athletes who represented and honoured our country.

The results that we are obtaining in sports today show the pertinence of actions taken by this Government since 2005 and also the collaboration and relation established with the different stakeholders for the continuous development of Sports in Mauritius. Certains, et ils se reconnaîtront, disent que le sport mauricien se porte mal surtout depuis ces dernières années. Bien entendu je ne suis pas d'accord avec cette opinion.

Pour avoir été pendant longtemps un athlète de haut niveau, je peux vous affirmer que dans le sport seuls les résultats et les médailles sont les véritables baromètres pour juger de votre valeur.

Dans ce sens, laissez-moi rafraîchir la mémoire de certains membres de l'Opposition avec quelques exploits de l'île Maurice sportive durant ces dernières années –

Pour n'importe quel sportif de haut niveau, son rêve c'est de gagner une médaille dans la plus importante compétition mondiale, c'est-à-dire, une médaille aux jeux olympiques et en 2008, M. le président, l'île Maurice a gagné sa première médaille olympique à travers Bruno Julie et c'est quand ce gouvernement, à la tête le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, était le Premier ministre.

L'île Maurice réalise sa meilleure performance de toute participation aux jeux de francophonie en terminant sixième sur les 42 pays en lice au Liban et ce encore une fois sous ce même gouvernement avec le Premier ministre qui dirige. Maurice gagne plusieurs titres dans le championnat d'Afrique. En football, des jeunes de moins de 17 ans, Maurice est champion de l'océan Indien dans les trois dernières éditions de la CJSOI de 2009 à 2013 et c'est toujours sous ce même gouvernement que pour la première fois de son histoire, l'île Maurice est qualifié pour les jeux olympiques de Londres en 2012 en sport collectif, c'est-à-dire à travers le *beach volleyball* et cette même discipline, le *beach volleyball* nous fait gagner notre premier titre africain en sport collectif et la performance qui a marqué l'histoire du sport mauricien bien évidemment sont deux titres de champion du monde et deux titres de vice-champion du monde et vivement récompensés de la main du Premier ministre lui-même.

Avec votre permission et même si la liste est encore longue je m'arrêterais ici.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures announced in the Budget last year have been implemented with success. For example, for this year, 30 athletes have benefitted from training overseas in high performance centres under the scholarship scheme for athletes. The *Sport-Etude* programme under the responsibility of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports has been extended to cater for more than 400 “*jeunes espoirs*” this year.

The fund allocated to this institution has been increased from 12.5 to 14.5 million rupees. The monthly allowance payable to listed high level athletes has been increased by 50 percent. Today Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, athletes get a monthly financial help from Rs3,000 to Rs30,000 per month depending upon the level of competitions they are participating. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has also successfully re-launched the “Sports Inter Colleges”. The promotion of kite surfing which was a measure announced by the Minister of Finance last

year is now being promoted as a competitive sport with the collaboration of the Mauritius Yachting Association. A training structure is being set up at Le Morne.

I will also introduce a new policy to include other competitions of high standard not listed in the Cash Prize Scheme with a view to further motivating our athletes to excel on the international scene. Furthermore, a Committee has been set up under my Chairmanship to review the dispensation to athletes with outstanding performances.

Approximately 3.3 million rupees have been awarded to athletes as financial reward for their performances in major international competitions this year under the Cash Prize Scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as you are aware, one of the major event that all our citizens are awaiting is the Indian Ocean Islands Games. This event will now take place in Reunion Island from 27 July to 08 August 2015 and preparation is well under way.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, approximately Rs45 m. have been granted to 42 National Sports Federations for the year 2013 for participating in different championships and for training.

Over and above the Rs45 m. around Rs100 m. have also been provided in terms of facilities, sports infrastructure equipment and human resources.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has extended necessary supports for the holding of the FIFA Congress on Mauritian soil this year. Moreover, three major international events were held in Mauritius this year, namely, the African Junior Athletics Championships, the African Senior Badminton Championships and the African Open Judo Championships. All three events have received full support of my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to encourage National Sports Federations to follow proper, democratic and healthy management practices which provide for greater accountability and transparency at all levels, the guideline elaborated in 2011 is being reviewed.

The BECS (Brevet d'Etat du Cadre Sportif) program is being reviewed for the coming year in order to offer a complete training program. A BECS "Animateur Polyvalent" program will be offered in 2014.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the "Sports for All" program has also been the focus of my attention. Many measures have been taken to boost participation of the Mauritian public in sports.

The “Sports for Life” program is a new concept which has been introduced this year for the promotion of mass sports in Mauritius. The Program aims at developing and promoting a culture of sports among the citizens of Mauritius through physical activities as well as reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the “*Jeux de l’Avenir*” and the “*Jeux de l’Espoir*” are now regular mass sports events for the youth citizens of the country.

The Inter University Games is now organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Tertiary Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The “*Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin*” has been provided with continuous financial, technical and logistics supports to run its activities. More women are now participating in programmes (Aerobic, Yoga, Swimming, Tai-Chi, Step, Salsa dance, Belly dance, Zumba, Aqua-zumba, Hiking, Beach Games, Omnisports, Beach Volley, football, brain fitness games, Quiz) all run by the *Commission National du Sport Féminin*.

My Ministry has also extended all its support for organisation of the Salon de la Jeunesse et des Sports held at Freeport, Mer Rouge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the development of sports infrastructure I would point out that necessary funds were made available to upgrade and maintain our existing sports infrastructures to enable our athletes and the public in general to train and compete in a clean and safe environment.

Sports equipment on Government-owned sports infrastructure has continuously been renewed to offer the best possible condition to users for training and competition purposes.

Various sports facilities have been provided with lighting amenities to enable the general public to practice sports after working hours.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming to the youth sector, youth empowerment has been and will remain one of the priorities of this Government. To this effect my Ministry is offering a wide range of healthy youth activities through its network of 25 Youth Centres across the country.

In 2013, some 63,000 young people have benefitted from our various training and leisure programmes, namely, Youth Leadership, Icafé, Life Skills Education, Human Rights,

Entrepreneurship, Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, *Special Vacances*, Citizenship Training, Sensitization Programmes on HIV and AIDS and Community Based Activities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a caring Government, special attention is given to vulnerable youth coming mostly from less privileged regions. In this context, my Ministry has organised customised programmes such as the Junior Life Skills Programme in collaboration with the National Empowerment Foundation to equip them with the necessary skills to cope with challenges in their daily lives. Moreover, Residential workshops have been organised to further instil in them basic values.

Our *Special Vacances* Programme provides healthy leisure and recreational activities not only to the student community but also to disabled youth and those at risk. Some 25,000 young people participated in various activities organised in the context of *Special Vacances* Programmes this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Youth Achievement Award Programme of my Ministry has been rebranded into the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award with a new international logo. You may wish to note that Mauritius is the first country in Africa and second in the world to obtain a full licence to operate the Award Programme. In 2013, some 5,000 young people enrolled for this Programme.

With the collaboration of the *Commission de la Jeunesse et des Sports de l'Ocean Indien*, my Ministry has run a specialised training in “*Animateur Polyvalent*” for young people of the region. 40 Youth Leaders from Mauritius have successfully followed the training course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will come up with new programmes in 2014 to promote further opportunities for youth empowerment.

With a view to promoting camping and other outdoor recreational activities, my Ministry proposes to set up necessary amenities at Bel Ombre, Belle Mare, Flic en Flac and Anse la Raie for that purpose. In this context, young people will have the opportunity to participate in more outdoor activities.

A Youth Parliament will be set up to create a platform whereby youth can debate and voice their opinions on various issues affecting them. To this end, some 800 young people have followed a course in Human Rights Education in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office.

Moreover, a dedicated website for young people will be hosted by the National Youth Council to provide a one-stop platform to share up to date information and interact on youth related issues. This platform – *Info Jeunes* will be launched shortly.

A Citizenship Training Programme will be introduced on a pilot basis for students of secondary schools as from next year. This programme will focus on basic civic values and healthy lifestyles to enable students to become good citizens.

Moreover, my Ministry will set up 4 new youth centres in existing buildings at Montagne Longue, Grande Rivière Noire, Cité La Cure and Cité Malherbes in line with our outreach programme. Hence, young people living in these localities will benefit from all opportunities extended by my Ministry.

Existing Youth Development Programmes will be reinforced to empower a maximum number of young people. For instance, workshops on *bricolage* will be run to promote the concept of “Do It Yourself” among young people.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that all actions initiated under the leadership of our Prime Minister, the hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam since July 2005 are proving to be outstanding. I can assure this House that my dedication and commitment for the continuous development of our youth and our sports will be unrelenting and my Ministry will continuously assess its actions and will bring new ideas and vigour in this sector.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

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

Dr. Bunwaree rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 3.30 p.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 00.29 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FLASH FLOODS - 30 MARCH 2013 - INQUIRY

(No. B/896) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin &Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

(Reply not available)

INDIA - POLY-METALLIC SULPHIDE EXPLORATION - INDIAN OCEAN BED

(No. B/898) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe &Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues, whether, in regard to India's recent application before the International Seabed Authority for the exploration of poly-metallic sulphide from the Indian Ocean bed, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the location of the proposed mining exploration site;
- (b) state
 - (i) when was he informed thereof;
 - (ii) if he has taken cognizance of a public statement of the Mauritian Minister of Fisheries in relation thereto, and

(iii) if bilateral discussions on the scope of Indo-Mauritian cooperation to explore and exploit marine mineral resources in our region have been held recently.

(Reply not available)

CUREPIPE –

CUREPIPE - CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

(No. B/899) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if Closed Circuit Television Surveillance Systems will be installed thereat and, if so, indicate when and the number and location thereof.

(Reply not available)

QUATRE BORNES - PALMA - POLICE STATION

(No. B/900) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the construction of a Police Station in the region of Palma/Bassin is being envisaged, in view of the rising demographic challenges thereof.

(Reply not available)

UNDERGROUND WATER TABLES & DRINKING WATER – TESTS

(No. B/918) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the underground water tables and drinking water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority, information as to if tests are carried out on a regular basis thereon to determine the level of agro-chemical residues therein and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

(Reply not available)

STC – FLOUR - BIDDERS

(No. B/919) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to flour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the names of the bidders for the supply thereof for 2014, indicating the

- (a) bid amounts and the decision taken in relation thereto, if any, and
- (b) amount of subsidies that will be required to maintain the retail price thereof to the consumers at its present level.

Reply: I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that on 27 September 2013, it invited bids through Open Advertised Bidding for the supply and delivery of 53,100 metric tons of White Wheat flour and Whole Wheat flour, covering the period 1 January to 31 December 2014, and representing 50% of the country's annual requirement.

At the closing date of the tender on 22 October 2013, bids were received from seven bidders.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the bid amounts range from USD 24,142,600 to USD 29,593,000.

I am tabling a list of the prices submitted by the seven bidders.

The STC is not bound by the Public Procurement Act. The Evaluation Committee of the STC has accordingly highlighted the need to take into account, not just the price tendered, but also the experience, track record and reliability of bidders in ensuring a regular supply of consistently high quality of fresh flour throughout the year.

In this regard, STC is pursuing due diligence with the two lowest bidders, i.e., Shri Lal Mahal Ltd and Les Moulins de la Concorde Ltée, with a view to reaching a final decision by 22 November 2013, the validity limit of all tenders received.

As regards part (b) of the question, the estimated amount of subsidy to be paid in 2013 is Rs627.6 m. Since the prices quoted for the present tender are less than in 2013, the subsidy for 2014 is estimated to be lower by some Rs160 m.

GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY – BOOKMAKER AND/OR TOTALISATOR LICENCES

(No. B/920) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the bookmaker and/or totalisator licences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if it has received new applications for the issue thereof for 2014 and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Reply not available)

NATIONAL RESILIENCE FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/921) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Resilience Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, for 2012 and since January 2013 to date, information as to the

- (a) amount of money disbursed therefrom, indicating the
 - (i) purposes therefor and
 - (ii) beneficiaries thereof
- (b) nature of the
 - (i) deposits and
 - (ii) placements effected
- (c) outstanding balance thereof, and
- (d) amount of money received in terms of interest.

(Withdrawn)

CAMP LEVIEUX HOUSING ESTATES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/922) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Camp Levieux Housing Estates, he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Limited, information as to if it has been informed of the irregular water supply thereat and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the measures, if any, taken in relation thereto, and
- (b) if all the water pumps thereat are operational and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT - SENIOR CITIZENS - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/923) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to public transport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, since 2005 to date, information as to the number of complaints received at the Complaints Unit thereof emanating from senior citizens, indicating the measures, if any, taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS AND RODRIGUES – TOURIST ARRIVALS

(No. B/924) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues, he will state the tourist arrivals forecasts for the coming summer peak season.

(Withdrawn)

TERTIARY EDUCATION – PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS - COMPLAINTS

(No. B/925) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the complaints made by foreign students against registered private institutions providing tertiary education in 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, in each case.

(Withdrawn)

STC - MANGALORE REFINERY AND PETROCHEMICALS LTD

– DEMURRAGE FEE

(No. B/926) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to

- (a) the amount of demurrage fee claimed therefrom over the past five years, indicating the amount thereof recovered as at to date and
- (b) where matters stand as to the arbitration proceedings brought against the company in relation to the consignments of poor quality fuel oil delivered in 2009.

Reply: I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that demurrage is claimed from Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) when the petroleum products are not loaded within the laytime allowed.

I am further informed that during the period 2008 to 2012, STC claimed demurrage fees from MRPL amounting to USD 652,903.81 which represents MUR 19,436,601.18. The totality of this amount has already been settled.

As regards 2013, STC has claimed and received payment of an amount of USD 286,765.78 for the period ending July 2013. Regarding consignments for the period August to October 2013, an amount of USD 313,904.18 has been claimed by STC; payment is awaited from MRPL.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House as follows –

Date	Vessel	Contaminated	Quantity	Claim

Product				
10 February 2009	Pretty Jewelry	Fuel Oil 180 CC	15 332 MT	USD 2,608,329
16 March 2009	Ribe Maersk	Fuel Oil 180 SR	10,762 MT	USD 1,061,175
11 July 2009	Atlantic Eagle	Fuel Oil 180 CC	19,954 MT	USD 1,942,301

Upon the receipt of the first consignment of contaminated products, STC immediately sent a notice of claim to MRPL. Discussions between the STC and MRPL started on 22 February 2009 and were still ongoing when the second consignment of contaminated products was delivered.

In the course of 2009, technical discussions were held involving the STC, MRPL, SGS, ST Shipping and Saybolt Core Laboratory, consultant in petroleum products, with a view to reaching an amicable settlement.

In parallel, the STC referred the matter to the State Law Office. As no amicable settlement was reached, in April 2010, the State Law Office proposed Royds Solicitors to handle the matter with a view to Arbitration. In June 2012, the services of Petroleum Development Consultants and Counsel, Sir David Hunt, QC, were also retained on the recommendation of Royds Solicitors.

On 02 October 2013, a request for Arbitration, as provided for in the Agreement between STC and MRPL in case of dispute, was formally lodged on MRPL by Royds Solicitors and filed, on the same day, at the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA). In principle, MRPL had 30 days to react and to file its response to the LCIA.

On 04 November 2013, the Solicitors of MRPL responded to the Request for Arbitration. MRPL has instructed English Solicitors, Waterson Hicks, to represent them in the LCIA arbitration.

On 08 November 2013, Sir David Hunt, QC proposed Peter Rees QC as Arbitrator for STC, which the STC has agreed to. MRPL has to submit the nomination of an Arbitrator.

The next stage of the LCIA process is the appointment of a Chair of the Arbitration Panel. Once the Arbitration Panel has been constituted, each party will have 30 days to file its detailed Statement of Case.

It will not be proper at this stage to render public any technical and commercially sensitive information and details in order not to cause any prejudice to the case.

PUBLIC SERVICE – HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION – COMPUTERISATION

(No. B/927) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the project for the computerisation of the human resources information, including the payroll system of the public service, he will state if same has already been initiated and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the company to which the contract has been awarded, and
- (b) cost thereof.

Reply: The project for the establishment of an integrated Human Resource Management Information System was initiated in 2012 by my Ministry. The project includes modules on Human Resource, Payroll, Learning Management, Performance Management and Self Service. The contract has been awarded to the State Informatics Ltd (SIL) under Section 3(1)(c) of the Public Procurement Act for a sum of Rs 206,382,034 inclusive of VAT.

LA VIGIE – DECAEN STREET – STATE LANDS

(No. B/928) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the strategic State lands located on both sides of the Decaen Street, at the level of the La Vigie roundabout to that of the National Transport Authority Centre, in Curepipe, he will state their respective status, indicating, if they have been leased, in each case, the –

- (a) name of the lessee thereof
- (b) terms and conditions thereof, and

(c) purpose thereof.

(Withdrawn)

LA VIGIE - DECAEN STREET - LIGHT RAILWAY TRANSIT PROJECT

(No. B/929) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Light Railway Transit Project, he will state the location of the park and ride State land earmarked, along the Decaen Street at La Vigie, indicating the extent thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, NDU, Land Transport and Shipping that a study carried out by the Singapore Co-operation Enterprise, Consultants for the Mauritius Light Rapid Transit Project indicates that three Park and Ride facilities will be needed in the Light Rail Transit system.

However, the proposal can be firmed up only after the Request for Proposal (RFP) exercise, as the shortlisted proponents are expected to come up, among others, with options regarding the extent and location of Park and Ride facilities.

I am further informed that in the event that a Park and Ride facility is considered necessary at La Vigie or its vicinity, appropriate consultations will be held with all parties concerned before a decision is taken, bearing in mind all the implications.

Consequently, no land has been earmarked at this stage for the Park and Ride facility along the Decaen Street at La Vigie.

MARINE RESOURCES – GOVERNMENT POLICY

(No. B/930) Mr J. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the marine resources, he will state Government policy in relation to the management thereof for purposes other than for food.

(Reply: Prime Minister)

(Reply not available)

MAURITIUS CONTINENTAL SHELF

(No. B/931) Mr J. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW& Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to our continental shelf, he will give details of the disputes, if any, with the Seychelles, the Maldives Islands and the Republic of India.

(Reply: Prime Minister)

(Reply not available)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 18 – PROJECTS

(No. B/932) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No.18, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to the number of projects earmarked and completed thereat, indicating in each case, the amount of money earmarked therefor.

(Reply not available)

WOLVERHAMPTON UNIVERSITY, MAURITIUS BRANCH CAMPUS - MANAGERS

(No. B/933) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Wolverhampton University, Mauritius Branch Campus, he will state if his Ministry has ascertained –

- (a) the identity of the owners and managers thereof, and
- (b) if it is complying with the conditions set down by the Tertiary Education Commission, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the students enrolled thereat.

(Withdrawn)

BEACHES (PUBLIC) - FOOD CATERING - LICENCES

(No. B/934) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the public beaches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Beach Authority, for the past five years, information as to the number of licences issued for food catering thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Beach Authority that Beach Traders Licences to carry out trades on public beaches all over the island are issued in accordance with the Beach Authority (Traders Licence) Regulations 2004. The trades which are authorised are specified in Class I and Class II of the First Schedule to the Regulations as follows -

Class I - Sale of foodstuffs comprising coconuts, fruits, ice cream or ice lollies, cooked food, dholl puri and cakes, non-alcoholic beverages, juices, pre-packed snacks and confectionary.

Class II - Sale of non-foodstuff products such as ready-made garments, handicraft and fancy products, Renting of mattresses and Umbrellas

I am informed that 263 licences have been issued to beach traders licences to carry out the trades specified in Class I for the past five years as follows -

Trades	No. of licences issued
(i) Selling of coconuts	19
(ii) Selling of fruits (other than coconuts)	52
(iii) Selling of ice cream and ice lollies	20
(iv) Selling of cooked food	109
(v) Selling of "dholl puri" and cakes	38
(vi) Selling of non-alcoholic beverages and juices	57
(vii) Selling of pre-packed snacks and confectionary (other than canned foods)	8

(No. B/935) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the market fair being constructed at Roche Bois, he will state if consideration will be given for postal and banking facilities to be provided thereat.

Reply: I am informed that the project for the construction of a market fair at Roche Bois which is being implemented by the National Development Unit is meant specifically for related market activities and is not a multipurpose complex whereat various services are made available to members of the public.

I am therefore informed that the building does not make any provision for postal and banking facilities thereat and being given that the project has reached an advanced stage of implementation, no adjustment can be made to the planning layout of the building.

EDUCATION - NINE-YEAR SCHOOLING PROJECT

(No. B/936) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the nine-year schooling project announced in the 2014 Budget Speech, he will give details thereof.

Reply: In my reply to the PNQ of 16 November 2013 regarding the phasing out of CPE Examination and the announcement made in the 2014 Budget Speech about the Nine-Year Schooling, I explained the policy objectives underlying this reform measure, that is, we should have a schooling system which facilitates the preparation of our children for life in a very conducive and stable environment and that the system should be stress free, devoid of intense competition and do away with the phenomenon of additional tuition.

In short, we want to build up a Nine-Year Schooling system which provides for the holistic development of our children and render their learning experience more enjoyable and enriching by providing them the opportunities to evolve, develop and learn as a homogenous cohort during the Nine Year Basic Education cycle.

I also highlighted that the new system of schooling which I had proposed to the stakeholders at the “*assises de l’éducation*” and which was announced by my colleague the Vice

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, was in line with our new strategic orientation and that we were well poised and confident to embark on such a new programme because a number of critical elements which constitute a strong foundation upon which such programme would rest, have been already taken on board, namely, introduction of new curriculum frameworks, amendment to the Education Act to ban additional tuition up to a certain level, execution of innovative pedagogical programmes including remediation, full scale implementation of the National Assessment at Form III level and the future introduction of the *Carnet Scolaire*.

Subsequent to the PNQ, I also held a Press Conference on 18 November 2013 and again stressed that the new system will have following stages -

- (i) Early Childhood Care and Education (3 – 4 years)
- (ii) Basic Schooling (5 – 14 years)
- (iii) Post nine-Year Schooling (14 – 18 years)

The 9-Year Basic Schooling will be made up of 6 years in a primary schooling environment and 3 years of secondary education in a secondary school.

The first six years will be in a primary school and each year of the primary schooling will be subject to an assessment/examination which will also include continuous assessment. The assessment will be summative and life skills will also be assessed. The *Carnet Scolaire* will be used to record the performance and acquisition of competencies.

At the end of the six years, the pupils will be assessed by way of an examination which will not be used for selection/allocation of seats in a secondary school. It will not be a competitive examination but will assess the general and range competencies acquired after six years of basic schooling which have been enjoyable and enriching for the child.

By the six years of schooling in primary institution, the child would have already an indication of the secondary school he would be admitted to. The school mapping exercise on which work has already started and will be instrumental in determining the school (system of feeder school).

Once in the secondary school, the student will follow the new lower secondary curriculum on the basis of which a National Assessment at Form III level will be conducted.

The level to be attained in Form III will be geared towards the CIE 'O' Level; the standard and quality of education should be such that the student has acquired the necessary competencies and developed his preparedness for the SC examinations in two years time.

Once admitted in a secondary school, he will have the choice to retain the school he was admitted to in Form I, that is, beyond Form III, provided that he passes the National Form III Assessment.

New pathways in secondary education will be provided to the students inasmuch as they will be getting the opportunity to opt for a wide range of subjects as highlighted; students are being taught new subjects/modules, namely Physical Education, Sexuality Education, Travel and Tourism, Marine Sciences, Entrepreneurship Education and HSC Pro in 2015.

Moreover, other opportunities will be offered to the students, namely the possibility to join specialised schools (Languages, Music, Arts, etc.).

In addition, we are also coming forward with a new project for the setting up of the School for the Gifted so that the outstanding performance and talents are given due recognition and are nurtured.

The Nine-Year Schooling system has a number of implications -

- Pedagogy
- Curriculum
- Textbooks
- Infrastructural facilities
- Mode of assessment
- Allocation of seats
- Certification
- Training of teachers

In order to implement this budgetary measure, a High Level Committee has been set up to look into the implementation of this new system of schooling.

The High Level Committee has met last week and has identified a number of critical factors which will have to be taken on board for the successful implementation of this measure and is pursuing its work. The Committee will also co-opt other members made up of representatives of Trade Unions, NGOs and other organisations who can contribute. Proposals from Members of the House will also be welcome.

Further options being considered are -

- co-education
- different pathways including TVET
- setting up of Polytechnics
- a greater degree of regionalisation with a new system of scholarship for regional schools
- a certificate for lower secondary education.

The High Level Committee is working on the modus operandi of the new system and as soon as all implications have been studied and all stakeholders have been consulted, I shall inform the House of the modus operandi agreed upon with the stakeholders and implementing guidelines.

FILM INDUSTRY - SHOOTING

(No. B/937) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the film Industry, he will give details of the seven films which have been approved to be shot in Mauritius, as announced in the last Budget Speech, including the names of the producers and the calendar of shooting activities thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER - HOUSES - ASBESTOS

(No. B/938) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the houses containing asbestos,

he will state the number thereof located in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, indicating the measures taken, if any, for the removal thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SMES - CLOSED DOWN

(No. B/939) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the small and medium enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, since January 2013 to date, information as to the -

- (a) number thereof having closed down, and
- (b) number of job losses, indicating the measures, if any, taken in relation thereto.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to a similar PQ that he addressed to me at the sitting of 04 June, 2013. In my reply I, *inter-alia*, informed the House that such data as job losses and closure of SMEs were not being compiled by Statistics Mauritius and that having realised that absence of vital statistics on SMEs was a serious lacuna for effective decision and policy-making, I accordingly decided to take necessary steps for the setting up of a Statistical Unit at SMEDA.

The Statistics Unit is headed by an Officer from the Statistics Mauritius and is fully operational since May this year. I am pleased to report that substantial progress has been achieved in the compilation of data on SMEs. As at date -

- The National Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (NSIC) codes have already been allocated to all SMEs registered with SMEDA. This makes a total of 20,700 SMEs. This codification which is an international mechanism is of prime importance and is prerequisite for collection and compilation of statistics of SMEs;
- The status of all SMEs registered with SMEDA in 2012 is being updated (whether operational or not).
- Around 450 enterprises have so far been contacted in form of a survey to collect information on difficulties faced when starting a business.

Since SMEs form an important part of the economy and for monitoring purposes, it was imperative to move towards a more systematic statistical measurement of SME behaviour. In this context, regular surveys will be conducted by the Statistical Unit early 2014 so as to compile more accurate statistics on SMEs. In the meantime, Statistics Mauritius is conducting its sixth Census of Economic Activities (CEA), with 2013 as reference year. The results of the census on 'small' establishment (i.e those operating with less than 10 persons) will be available in August 2014, while those for 'large' establishments (with 10 or more workers) will be published in 2015.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) that as per records available for the period 01 January 2013 to date, 14 SMEs registered with SMEDA have closed down resulting in 22 job losses. However, during the same period, 1738 new enterprises have been registered at SMEDA.

I am further informed by SMEDA that a series of measures have been taken to prevent SMEs from closing down resulting in job losses. These include constant -

- capacity building activities
- monitoring and handholding
- road shows
- trade fairs to provide access to markets
- counselling
- access to financial assistance through various schemes

In addition, whenever SMEDA was made aware of the difficulties of an enterprise, the Business Development Officers of SMEDA were delegated to visit the enterprise to assist it.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES - DOCUMENTS - CONSERVATION

(No. A/294) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the National Archives, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of the staff members thereof who have been trained in the scanning and uploading of the existing documents for the

conservation thereof, indicating the percentage thereof which has been digitalized and if same will be freely accessible online or will there be a digital lock.

Reply: I am informed that during the first phase of the implementation of the Electronic Archives System, all the officers concerned benefitted training from the Supplier of hardware and software, DCDMC. However, for the scanning and uploading exercises, one Conservator and two Reprographic Officers of the National Archives Department were trained during the years 2010 and 2011.

I am further informed that as at date, some 526,427 pages representing about 3% of the total holdings of the National Archives have been scanned and uploaded in the Electronic Archives System.

The scanned documents are accessible freely through the website <http://nationalarchives.gov.mu>.

SLAM, DRAMA, PHOTOGRAPHY, READING AND WRITING – PROMOTION

(No. A/295) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed promotion of slam, drama, photography, reading and writing in schools, he will state the names of the resource persons recruited therefor, indicating the

- (a) fees allocated thereto, and
- (b) schools to which they have been attached.

(Reply not available)

VALLEE PITOT – LANDSLIDE - SURVEY

(No. A/296) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the landslide at Vallée Pitot, he will state if the Japanese International Cooperation Agency has completed its survey and submitted its recommendations in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the actions taken, if any.

Reply: In June 2012, a preliminary survey of the Vallée Pitôt was conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Expert Team. Subsequently, in March 2013, a topographical survey was done by a private consultant and MPI, under the supervision of JICA Expert Team. Based on the topographical map produced after the survey, JICA proceeded with the identification of a landslide hazard area and recommended some emergency measures; namely clearing of drains and installation of extensometers and alarm systems.

In July 2013, after the clearing of Canal Anglais, major deformation of the ground was observed in the area and the Japanese Experts recommended additional emergency measures. In order to come up with an accurate delimitation and a plan for the stabilisation of the site, the JICA Expert Team, in collaboration with this Ministry worked out technical specifications for an in-depth survey. Thus, the bid documents for the appointment of local surveyors for an in-depth investigation of the region have now been finalised.

Given the complexity of the task and the various tests that need to be carried out, the in-depth survey could only be completed by July 2014. As from June 2014, monitoring of the site would be undertaken with more devices that would be installed. After the in-depth survey, detailed analysis and design for permanent counter measure works would be carried out up to May 2015 approximately. The construction of the countermeasures would last over June to November 2015 and finally, the repair of the damaged Canal Anglais would be undertaken between November to December 2015.

On 08 August 2013, this Ministry had informed the Ministry of Housing and Lands that a survey on the situation of active landslide at Vallée Pitôt was carried out by the JICA Expert Team, which had recommended that one identified area be evacuated. A joint site visit with the Ministry of Housing and Lands was carried out on 20 September 2013 to determine the number of households affected by the landslide at Vallée Pitôt. After the survey, it was found that 8 households units found on State land at Vallée Pitôt are found in the hazard zone. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is in the process of identifying potential residential sites for the eventual relocation of the 8 lessees.

In the meantime, at a meeting held on 31 October 2013 under the Chairmanship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping, the National Development Unit was requested to initiate action for the

repair, rehabilitation and upgrading of existing channels and catchment drains as a mitigation measure recommended by the JICA Expert Team, in the region of Vallée Pitôt. Moreover, the two extensometers which have been installed and are regularly being used for close monitoring of ground movements in the area.

The JICA Expert Team had also recommended that alarm systems be installed for early evacuation of the inhabitants in the risk area in case of necessity. The works for the installation of alarm systems have been completed. The inhabitants of Vallée Pitôt have been sensitised on the functioning of the alarm systems put in place and on the actions to be taken in case the alarm is triggered. Meetings have been held with the residents on safety and precautionary measures to be taken in case of impending ground movement.

FOOD (NON-HALAL) - SALE

(No. A/297) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether he is aware that non-Halal food are being sold to the public as halal food and, if so, will he state the actions, if any, taken by his Ministry, as at to date for the prevention thereof.

Reply: I am informed that neither the Consumer Protection Act nor the Food Act specifically makes it mandatory to indicate the label “Halal” or “non-Halal” on food products sold in Mauritius. However, if a label “Halal” is affixed on a product which is proved to be non-Halal, this constitutes an offence under section 4 of the Fair Trading Act 1979 which stipulates –

“No person shall for the purpose of trade or promotion carry on a consumer trade practice which has the effect or is likely to have the effect of misleading or confusing consumers in respect of any matter in connection with any consumer transaction”.

My Ministry has been informed that an incident occurred at Jumbo Phoenix on or around 13 October 2013 whereby venison was exposed for sale bearing a label “Halal”, when there were no evidence that the product was of “Halal” origin. Following representations from consumers, the trader has taken remedial action by removing the product from the shelves.

Subsequently, my Ministry has taken the following actions –

- (a) traders are requested, henceforth, to provide a separate area where “Halal” products are exposed for sale, and
- (b) to conspicuously affix the “Halal Certificate” in that area for the information of consumers.

It has also been reported that frozen beef bearing “Halal” labels could be “Non-Halal”. The Consumer Affairs Unit of my Ministry carried out an enquiry which proved that all brand of frozen beef supplied on the market are Halal compliant as evidenced by certificates from exporting countries produced by the respective importers.

The actions of my Ministry are undertaken according to the provisions of the legislations in force.

In Mauritius, it is the Jummah Mosque which is the authority which issues a Halal Certificate.

SILWF – DRIVER – OVERTIME ALLOWANCES

(No. A/298) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the driver attached to the Chairperson of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, a breakdown of the overtime allowances paid to him, on a monthly basis, since January 2012 to date, indicating the reasons for the payment thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund that the Independent Commission Against Corruption is currently conducting an investigation on the matter.

In view of the above, it is not appropriate for me to provide the information requested by the hon. Member at this stage.

M1 MOTORWAY – STREET LIGHTING

(No. A/299) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit,

Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the street lighting system on the M1 Motorway, from the level of the Curepipe roundabout to that of the Plaisance roundabout, he will state if he has been informed that several sections thereof are out of order and, if so, obtain from the respective local authorities concerned therewith, information as to if a complete survey thereof will be carried out at night and for the taking of urgent remedial measures.

Reply: I am informed that underground cables had been stolen along the stretch of the motorway from Plaine Magnien roundabout to Midlands. These have now been replaced by overhead cables and energized. However, on 11 November 2012, a blackout occurred along a stretch of 1,680 metres at Union Park due to a faulty connection of a CEB solar switch. The fault had been repaired on the same day and the problem has been resolved.

I am further informed that, following a routine night inspection carried out along the motorway from the Wootun roundabout up to the southern boundary of Curepipe, it was observed that -

- 26 lighting points were defective from the Wootun roundabout up to the La Vigie roundabout, and
- 27 lighting points were defective from the La Vigie roundabout up to the town limit southwards.

I am informed that necessary repairs are currently being undertaken by the Municipal Council of Curepipe.

PENALTY POINT SYSTEM - COURTS - PROCEDURES

(No. A/300) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the introduction of the Penalty Point System, he will state if he has been informed of the long queues and procedures to be followed in the courts and at the cash offices for the payment of fines in relation thereto and the application of penalty points and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

(Reply not available)

ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES & MAGON STREET - DRAINS

(No. A/301) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the cross drains, situated at corner Route des Pamplemousses and Magon Street, near the traffic lights and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, he will state if he is aware that the slabs thereat often get damaged due to heavy vehicles passing thereon, thereby representing hazards and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for same to be replaced by heavy duty slabs.

Reply: The Road Development Authority has already included the replacing of the existing cover slabs by heavy duty slabs at junction of Route des Pamplemousses and Magon Street in its maintenance programme for next financial year.

ROCHE BOIS - BRIDGE

(No. A/302) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Roche Bois, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to if consideration will be given for the urgent –

- (a) replacement of the bridge over the canal cochon, since the existing one is flooded during heavy rainfalls, and
- (b) removal of wastes under the bridge of the Lataniers River at the Abattoir Road and the dredging thereof from the level of the upper part of the Bernardin de Saint Pierre Street to the bridge at the M1 Motorway, and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: Under the project ‘Drain works at Roche Bois’, two culverts have been identified which need reconstruction and upgrading. These are at Balisage Street (near Emmanuel Anquetil Govt. School) and Abattoir Road (near Roche Bois Transfer Station).

The reconstruction of culvert across Balisage Street has already started on 13 November 2013 and will be completed by December of this year.

On the other hand, the reconstruction of culvert across Abattoir Road has been rescheduled to start as from January 2014 because of difficult site condition and presence of existing major services. The work will be completed by March 2014. In the meantime necessary measures are being undertaken to avoid inconveniences due to flooding.

As regards part (b) of the question, the dredging and removal of wastes under the bridge of Latanier River and at the Abattoir Road from the level of the upper part of the Bernardin de St Pierre Street to the bridge at the M1 Motorway, works will start soon.

MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES - FIREFIGHTING VEHICLES

(No. A/303) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed acquisition of six semi-urban firefighting vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, information as to where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that funds to the tune of Rs50 m. have been earmarked in its Estimates 2014 for the acquisition of fire fighting and rescue equipment. However, since the six semi-urban firefighting vehicles are estimated to cost Rs78 m., only three of them can be acquired during fiscal year 2014.

I am informed that once these funds are secured, tenders will be launched for the acquisition of these vehicles.

NGO TRUST FUND - FUNDS DISBURSED - BENEFICIARIES

(No. A/304) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Non-Governmental Organisations, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Non-Governmental Organisation Trust Fund and the Mauritius Council of Social Services, information as to the amount of funds disbursed therefrom, since 2011 to date, indicating the –

- (a) names of the beneficiaries thereof and the quantum in each case, and
- (b) eligibility criteria laid down therefor.

Reply: I am placing in the Library the relevant information concerning funds disbursed since 2011 to date, names of beneficiaries and quantum as well as eligibility criteria for disbursement of funds by the NGO Trust Fund.

With regard to Mauritius Council of Social Services, the Council receives an annual Grant in Aid to meet its administrative cost from this Ministry and for the year 2013 it has received the amount of Rs4.2 m. The Council is managed by its Management Committee which is independent from the Ministry.

Timetable for implementation of the measures announced in the 2014 Budget Speech and Annex

SN	Budget Para	Measures	Implementing Organisation	Date limit for implementation
		A World Class Airport		
1	64	Develop a Masterplan to realise an aviation hub	PMO	June 2014
		Sea Change In Port Development		
2	69	Extension of the quay at the Mauritius Container Terminal	MPA	July 2014 to August 2016
3	69	Deepening of the navigation channel so as to accommodate 3rd generation container vessels	MPA	December 2014
4	69	Construction of a cruise terminal building at the Christian Decotter Terminal	MPA	August 2014 to December 2016
5	69	Upgrading of the Multi-Purpose Terminal	MPA	2014 to 2016
6	69	Construction of access road and other infrastructural works at Fort William	MPA	2015 to 2017
7	71	Facilitate the setting up of a Logistics Park to expand port facilities on some 65 hectares within the Jin Fei zone, which will include space for containers depot, warehousing, light assembly and other logistics related activities	BOI	Ongoing

		Marine Services Hub		
8	72	Setting up of a Marine Services Platform centered on growing the bunkering facilities and the various economic activities that are linked to that trade, such as ship chandling, repairs and maintenance of vessels, crew management and ship leasing	MPA	2014 to 2016
9	76	Liberalising the bunker trade	MoCommerce	January 2014
		Petroleum hub		
10	82	Development of the Petroleum Hub	PMO	Ongoing
		People Centered Land Transport		
11	92	Construction of a grade separated junction to re-engineer the traffic flow over the Phoenix and Jumbo roundabouts	MoPI	October 2014
12	92	Construction of a bridge over Grand River North West to link Coromandel to Soreze on M1	MoPI	October 2014
13	92	Construction of a tunnel through the Signal Mountain to Champ de Mars	MoPI	October 2014
		Bus Transport		
		Bus Replacement Mechanism		

14	96-97	Setting up of a Bus Replacement Mechanism to facilitate the annual purchase of up to 200 modern, semi-low floor buses equipped with latest safety features	MoPI	January 2014
15	98	Removing VAT on the purchase of the semi-low floor buses	MoFED	December 2013
16	105	100 buses of the semi-low floor type will be purchased by the NTC	NTC	November 2014
17	106	Responsibility for repair and maintenance is being transferred to manufacturers' authorised agents for all new buses purchased	MoPI	Ongoing
18	107	Prescribe regulations to make it mandatory for all newly imported vehicles of 5 tonnes and above to be equipped with state-of-the-art safety devices and braking systems	MoPI	January 2014
19	108	A more rigorous annual medical check-up will be introduced for all heavy duty vehicle drivers	PMO	July 2014
		Mauritius Light Rail Transit (MLRT) Project		
20	110-111	Preparations for the launch of the MLRT	MLTA	October 2014
		Investing in Public Utilities		
21	112	Increase the capacity of the Saint Louis Power Generation Park by 60 Megawatts	CEB	2015
22	112	CEB to operationalise the power purchase agreements on renewable energy with the private sector by 2015	CEB	2015

23	112	Make regulations to liberalise the sale of electricity whereby enterprises that produce their own electricity will be able to sell directly to their tenants	MoPU	January 2014
24	112	Feasibility study commissioned by CEB on the use of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for future generating plants	CEB	April 2014
25	112	Encourage Medium Scale Distributor Generators to sell their surplus electricity generated from renewable sources to the CEB	MoPU	June 2014
26	112	Launching of a National Energy Efficiency Campaign	MoPU	January 2014
		Securing Water Sustainability		
27	115	Introduction of a new Water Authority Bill	MoPU	July 2014
28	115-116	Enlisting the services of an international team of experts to assist in the merger exercise (Central Water Authority, Wastewater Management Authority and the Irrigation Authority)	MoPU	September 2014
29	117	Introduction of state of the art technology to operate and monitor the water supply system and replacement of old pipes in upper Mare-Aux-Vacoas.	CWA	Ongoing
30	118	Complete the Pailles Water Treatment Plant	CWA	March 2015
31	120	Pursue the connection to the sewer system in Central Quatre Bornes, Sodnac and Belle Rose	WMA	Ongoing
32	121	Award of works contract for connecting households at Guibies, Pailles to the sewer system	WMA	End 2014
33	122	Setting up a Build Mauritius Fund which will be a Special Fund under the Finance and Audit Act	MoFED	December 2013
		LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE NEXT ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE		

		Anchoring the Ocean Economy		
34	129	Publication of a Roadmap on Ocean Economy	PMO	December 2013
35	130	Setting up of a National Ocean Economy Task Force	PMO	December 2013
36	130	Setting up of an Office for Ocean Affairs and Development	PMO	January 2014
37	133	A new faculty on ocean studies will be established at the University of Mauritius	UOM	August 2014
		Fostering the Green Economy		
38	136	Introduction of a Biomass Development Scheme to encourage small planters to grow plants that will be efficient sources of biomass energy	MID Commission	April 2014
39	137	To explore the cultivation of the crop Arundo Donax, which holds good potential as a substitute for coal in the future	MID Commission	June 2014
		Film Industry		
40	148	Youth Employment Programme will design targeted courses to empower our young people to develop a career in the film industry	MoFED	March 2014
		Building on our Africa Strategy		
		Mauritius-Africa Fund		
41	156	Creation of a Mauritius-Africa Fund	MoFED	January 2014
		Our Export to Africa Strategy		

42	158	Provide a subsidy of 25 per cent of the freight cost up to USD 300 per container	MoFED	January 2014
43	160	Provide a 50% subsidy on the cost of Credit Guarantee Insurance for exports to Africa	MoFED	January 2014
		Gateway to Africa		
44	161	Organise high level conferences in Africa, to showcase Mauritius as a gateway to the African continent	BOI	January to December 2014
45	162	Mauritius to host an Annual Conference of Chief Executive Officers of all Investment Promotion Agencies in Africa	BOI	June 2014
		Building Human Capacity to support Rising Africa		
46	163	Actively promote the placement of our young technicians, graduates and professionals on the African continent	BOI	January 2014
47	164	Renewal of 50 scholarships to African students	MoTED	Ongoing
		Enhancing our status as a regional centre		
48	166	Presentation of a Host Country Bill	MoFA	July 2014
		A World Class Investment Climate		
		Fast-tracking major projects		
49	173 - 175	Setting up of a Fast Track Committee under the Chairmanship of FS to expedite the processing of all permits and approvals concerning major big-impact investment projects.	MoFED	January 2014

50	176	Amending the Investment Promotion Act, the Non-citizens (Property Restriction) Act ,Planning and Development Act, Building Act, Morcellement Act, Environment Protection Act, Local Government Act and Sugar Industry Efficiency Act	MoFED	December 2013
		Speeding up the delivery of Building and Land Use Permit		
51	178-179	Creation of a central E-monitoring system at the Ministry of Local Government to track all applications for Building and Land Use Permits	MoLG	March 2014
52	180-181	Amending the relevant legislation to require the CWA, CEB, WMA, Health and Fire authorities to give their clearances within one week of receipt of the on-line submission. Once the deadline is passed, the Silent Agreement Principle will apply	MoFED	December 2013
53	182	Amendments to ease business facilitation in the tourism sector	MoT	January 2014
		A Regional Centre for Talent		
54	184	Abolishing the bank guarantee needed for the application of Occupation and Residence Permits along with a revision of fees for permits	BOI	January 2014
55	184	Implementation of an integrated online system involving the Passport and Immigration Office, Registrar of Companies and the MRA and the BOI to facilitate the application for Occupation Permits and visas	PMO	September 2014
56	184	Launch a communication campaign to bring the number of professionals under the Occupation Permits from 4,200 to 5,000 in the short term and to 10,000 in the medium term	BOI	November 2013 to December 2014
57	185	High net worth retired non-citizens will now have the right to purchase an apartment upon a minimum transfer of USD 120,000 at time of application	BOI	January 2014

		RETUNING THE TRADITIONAL ENGINES OF GROWTH		
		TOURISM		
		Stronger Destination Marketing		
58	194	Setting up a Joint Public- Private Tourism Committee to look principally at destination marketing strategy	MoT	January 2014
		Improved air services and tapping new markets		
59	200	Redouble efforts to promote Mauritius on the African continent	MoT	January 2014
60	201	Air Mauritius to develop, offer and actively market a Dual Destination Strategy to tourists from Asia at attractive fares	MoT	January 2014
		National preparedness for new markets		
61	202- 203	National preparedness for new customers from emerging markets in language training, people skills, cuisine, investment in signage and investment in landmark photo spots	MoT	Ongoing
		Filling our hotels in the low season and successfully marketing our new air terminal to transit passengers		
62	205	Special Fund to boost arrivals from regional destinations during the low season, whereby incentives will be provided for short haul regional flights complimented by a discount shopping package	MoFED	January 2014
63	207	Provision of additional funds to be used in collaboration with the airport authorities to generate greater transit stopover passengers	MoFED	January 2014
		FINANCIAL SERVICES		

		Strengthening the regulatory framework		
64	214	Setting up a Serious Fraud Office	PMO	2014
65	214	Redefining the term “financial crime” to capture an offence under the various existing Acts and banking laws	MoFED	December 2013
66	214	Setting up a Coordination Committee among all agencies combating financial crimes	PMO	2014
67	214	Amending both the Bank of Mauritius Act and the Financial Services Act to strengthen their respective regulatory functions	MoFED	December 2013
68	214	Responsibility for regulation and supervision of credit unions to be transferred from the Registrar of Cooperative to the Bank of Mauritius and money lenders which are presently under the control of the Accountant General	MoFED	December 2013
69	215	The membership of the Financial Stability Committee will be expanded to include the Financial Intelligence Unit	MoFED	December 2013
70	216	Mauritius will adhere to the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in tax matters to ensure adherence to international standards and best practices	MoFED	March 2014
		Enhancing the good reputation of the Financial Services Industry		
71	219	Setting up a joint public-private sector Financial Services Promotion Committee to implement a targeted promotion campaign in line with the Expanded Africa Strategy and reinforce our reputation as an international financial centre	BOI	January 2014
		Enhancing product offering		

72	220	Amending the Investment Promotion Act to include investment in Initial Public Offerings as a qualifying business activity for the purpose of granting Permanent Residence in Mauritius	MoFED	December 2013
73	220	Amending the Investment Promotion (Real Estate Development Scheme) Regulations to allow GBL1 Companies to purchase property in Mauritius in the IRS/RES schemes	MoFED	December 2013
74	222	Introduction of a new Bill on Captive Insurance 1 to make Mauritius a captive insurance jurisdiction of choice	FSC	June 2014
75	223	Introduction of a Sustainability Index that will showcase companies listed on the stock exchange that are actively promoting the sustainability cause	MoFED	July 2014
76	224	Promote a new Social Impact Exchange to develop Mauritius into a regional centre for investments that have a positive social or environmental impact	MoFED	July 2014
77	226	SICOM Ltd will be listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, with shares offered to small private investors in priority	MoFED	Mid 2014
		ICT/BPO Sector		
		Reduction in International Private Lease Circuits (IPLC) tariffs		
78	230	Reduction of tariffs for International Private Leased Circuit (IPLC) by another 16 per cent	MoICT	January 2014
		Increased connectivity		
79	231	Pursuing the fibre to home connections, 50,000 homes to be connected	MoICT	December 2014
80	233	Cross-connection of the LION and SEAS fibre optic cable system will be established between Mauritius and Seychelles	MoICT	December 2015

		Guaranteeing Quality of Internet		
81	235	Internet Service Providers will be required to guarantee to consumers a minimum quality of service parameters	MoICT	March 2014
		Developing Talent in ICT		
82	237	Provision for a second Accelerator in 2014 in Port-Louis	MoFED	July 2014
		AGRO-INDUSTRY		
		Addressing Land Abandonment		
83	241	Provision of Rs 400 million for FORIP to carry out derocking	MoAgro	January 2014
84	242	Mauritius Cane Industry Authority will pursue an implementation regime for abandoned cane lands in various regions targeted for derocking	MCIA	March 2014
85	243	Continuation of the Compost Subsidy Scheme	MoAgro	Ongoing
86	244	Maintaining 80% advance to sugar cane planters	BOM	January 2014
87	245	Extending LEMS equipment leasing facilities under the Planters' Harvest Scheme	MoFED	Ongoing
88	249	The full VAT refund scheme for agricultural machinery, equipment and tools which was introduced in 2012, is being made permanent	MoFED	December 2013
89	246	Setting up the National Plant Varieties and Seed Office	MoAgro	March 2014
90	247	Provision to cover 75 percent of the purchase price of bat nets	MoAgro	Ongoing

91	248	Raising the provision for the freight rebate scheme for horticulture exports from Rs 10 M to Rs 15 M	MoAgro	Ongoing
		Discouraging excessive use of pesticides in agriculture		
92	250	Control of the use of pesticides	MoAgro	June 2014
		Livestock		
93	251	Animal breeders will benefit from 50 % grant on livestock schemes implemented under the Food Security Fund	MoAgro	January 2014
94	252	Implementation of another 'salle de découpe'	MoAgro	October 2014
		FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE		
		Seafood Hub		
95	255	Addition of 3 more Marine Aquaculture sites over the next two years to double production	MoFisheries	October 2014
		Artisanal Fishing and Aquaculture		
96	256	20 additional cages to be set up this year	MoFisheries	June 2014
97	257	Tripling the pace of replenishment by increasing the number of fingerlings to 1 million	MoFisheries	2014
98	259	For fishermen to surrender their nets and fishing licenses, all the 21 fishermen co-operatives and associations will be eligible for an increase of 50 per cent in the compensation package being offered presently	MoFisheries	2014

99	261	Provision of a 50 percent grant on the purchase of off-lagoon 'canottes' up to an amount of Rs 200,000 per 'canotte'	MoFisheries	March 2014
100	262	Encourage fishermen to go into higher value added activities such as seaweed and pearl culture	MoFisheries	June 2014
		SUPPORTING THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR		
101	265	Introduction of an Investment Tax Credit Scheme	MoFED	December 2013
102	266- 267	A further Rs 1 Billion will be injected in the Foreign Currency Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS)	MoFED	January 2014
103	268	Increasing the export promotion budget of Enterprise Mauritius by 33% to Rs 180 Million	EM	January 2014
		Work Permits		
104	270	For Export Oriented Enterprises, work permit applications would be fast tracked and delivered within two weeks	MoLabour	February 2014
105	270	For these enterprises, annual work permit fees for employees after the fifth year of employment will be reduced from Rs 10,000 to Rs 6,000	MoLabour	January 2014
		ECONOMIC DEMOCRATISATION		
		SME Procurement		
106	279	Ensuring a larger number of SMEs are appointed district contractors as contracts by unbundling contracts allocated on a district wise basis	MoPI	January 2014

107	279	Number of zones in rates contracts for maintenance and upgrading of roads, drains and civil works will be increased and the contracts will be reclassified into specific categories of works	MoPI	January 2014
108	279	Standard bidding documents for goods and services will be simplified from 15 pages to only one page and for small works contracts to two pages	PPO	November 2013
109	279	Holding a series of courses targeted to SMEs to help them understand and take part in Government procurement	PPO	Ongoing
110	280	Organize a National Inclusive Business Award to recognize efforts by large businesses to promote and support SMEs	MoBEC	September 2014
		SME Websites		
111	284	Provision of a free basic website to all SMEs	MoFED	January 2014
112	285	50 percent subsidy on websites costing up to Rs 6,000	MoFED	January 2014
		Overseas Marketing Missions		
113	287	Maintaining the refund scheme to SMEs of Rs 200,000 per annum for participation in international fairs	MoFED	Ongoing
		SME Financing Scheme		
114	289	Extending the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme up to 2016	MoFED	December 2013
		Loan to MSMEs without guarantee		
115	290	Loans without guarantee to Micro SMEs with turnover less than 10M	MoFED	December 2013

116	291- 293	Introduction of a new credit guarantee scheme for Micro and SME borrowers which will remove the need for them to provide collateral and third party guarantees when applying for commercial loans.	MoFED	January 2014
117	294	Funding the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme(MBGS)	MBGS	January 2014
118	294	Rs 70 M to the SME Factoring Scheme for 2014 and this scheme will be extended to planters	MoFED	January 2014
119	294	Training 500 SMEs on productivity improvement, organising high level motivational talks and launching a National Productivity Award	NPCC	January to December 2014
		Industrial Space		
120	296	Construction of two more SME parks at Solitude and Plaine Magnien which will provide for 80 additional industrial space	SLDC	December 2014
		BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF OUR PEOPLE		
		Pre-Primary Education		
121	305	One-off grant of up to Rs 100,000 to 125 private pre-primary disadvantaged schools for providing a safe and conducive learning environment	MoEDU	March 2014
122	306	Continuing the existing crèche upgrading program for another year for a maximum amount of Rs 200,000 per facility	MoFED	Ongoing
		Primary Education		
123	307	Increasing the total provision for the ZEP schools programme by 30 per cent to Rs 440 Million	MoEDU	January 2014

124	309	Implementing a project of innovative pedagogy for low performing schools on a pilot basis together with ESSA Foundation, a non-profit UK organization and the African Development Bank	MoEDU	July 2014
		Hot meals		
125	312-313	Hot meal programme, under strict hygiene standards as per HACCP certification	MoEDU	April 2014
126	314	ZEP schools will be equipped in a phased manner with appropriate kitchens and eating areas	MoEDU	2014 to 2015
127	315	Construction and extension of 3 Special Education Needs centres in primary schools at Rivière des Anguilles, Flacq and Plaine Magnien	MoEDU	December 2014
128	315	Rs 20 million for the rehabilitation of D. Sewraz Government School at Triolet	MoEDU	December 2014
129	316	Rs 200,000 to each and every primary and secondary schools, for use by Parent Teachers Associations for minor upgrading projects	MoEDU	January 2014
		Secondary Education		
130	318	Installing free Wi-Fi connectivity in all public and private aided secondary schools	MoICT	October 2014
131	318	Supplying all students in Form V with a digital tablet	MoEDU	January 2014
132	318	Supplying all students in Form IV with a digital tablet	MoEDU	June 2014
133	318	Children from families on the Social Register of Mauritius will be granted free internet access and will also be exempted from payment of the insurance	MoEDU	January & June 2014
134	318	Implementing the HSC Pro qualification starting with the ICT sector	MoEDU	January 2014

135	318	8 existing secondary schools to be transformed into Specialised Language schools, offering a wide range of foreign language courses to our students	MoEDU	July 2014
136	318	8 additional National Scholarships reserved for ICT students (Guidelines finalised)	MoEDU	February 2014
		Lifelong Education		
137	320	Use available school premises after hours to conduct adult education classes including, but not limited to adult literacy	MoEDU	April 2014
		Tertiary Education		
138	321	Setting up of an IIT Delhi Research Academy (signing of MOU)	MoTED	December 2013
139	321	Recruitment of 30 experienced international lecturers who will be posted in participating state universities	MoTED	August 2014
140	321	Introduce an Independent Rating System for our faculties	MoTED	June 2014
141	321	Start construction of three modern campuses at Reduit, Montagne Blanche and Pamplemousses	MoTED	January 2014
142	323	Regulations will be introduced to prohibit misleading advertisements by our higher education providers and their agents	MoTED	December 2013
143	323	Recruitment fees for agents will be capped	MoTED	December 2013
		Innovation		
144	326	Provision of funds towards research and innovation projects, including a Collaborative Research Scheme, Small Business Innovative Scheme, and research by public sector institutions through the Mauritius Research Council	MoFED	January 2014

145	327	Setting up of a National Research and Innovation Advisory Committee to foster innovation and will count among its members Nobel Prize laureates and nominees	MoTED	June 2014
146	328	To enable our industries adopt latest techniques, designs and practices, a 25 per cent annual capital allowance will be granted for the purchase of patents	MoFED	December 2013
		Smoother transition into the world of work		
147	330	Publication of a six-monthly Employment Trends Survey to inform the youth on career opportunities	YEP	March 2014
148	331- 332	Setting up a Dual-Apprenticeship Scheme, with new regulations, by extending the existing Apprenticeship Program to cover diploma and degree courses to increase work-readiness of youth	YEP	January 2014
		Youth Employment Programme		
149	334	Rs 275 million for the Youth Employment Programme (YEP)	MoFED	January 2014
		Female Employment		
150	336	Implementation of a new “Back to Work” Programme particularly for women who wish to re-join the labour force. This will consist of special training schemes to prepare them in 15 occupations	MoLabour	February 2014
		LABOUR, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT		
151	338	Review the existing ratios of foreign to local workers for the different sectors of the economy to determine the number of work permits to be issued	MoLabour	March 2014
152	339	For local enterprises, work permits will be granted on the basis of scarcity areas	MoLabour	January 2014

153	340	Removal of the exemption from payment of the Levy, National Pensions Fund and National Savings Fund in respect of foreign workers for their first two years of employment, except for those working in the Export Oriented Enterprises	MoSS	January 2014
154	341	Reviewing the apportionment of the 1.5% levy going to the Workfare Programme Fund and Training Fund for the next 3 years	MoSS	January 2014
155	344	Increasing inspectorate capacity by 15 staff and providing for two Special Squads – one for the Labour Inspectorate, and the other for the Safety and Health Inspectorate	MoLabour	June 2014
		BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS		
156	347	Setting up an independent Board of Enquiry with the powers to review matters raised in the report of the Director of Audit	PMO	June 2014
157	348	Setting statutory requirements for State-Owned Enterprises and Statutory Bodies to improve their accountability and performance management	PMO	June 2014
158	350	Implementation of a new Civil Service Performance Related Incentive Scheme	MoCSAR	August 2014
159	352	Setting up of Project and Programme Implementation Units (PPIU) in Key Ministries to provide the necessary in-house capacity to plan, execute and manage projects within the set time frame	MoFED	February 2014
160	353	Review the Investment Project Process Manual to streamline the screening process of public sector projects undertaken by the Project Plan Committee.	MoPI	January 2014
161	354	A new Strategic Policy Unit under PMO	PMO	March 2014

170	362	Setting up of a National Cancer Agency where emphasis will be on early detection, diagnosis and up-to-date information as regards treatment protocols available	MoHQL	July 2014
		New State of the Art facilities		
171	363	Creation of six State of the Art Operating Theatres at Victoria Hospital	MoHQL	December 2014
172	363	Creation of four new wards with a bed capacity of 120	MoHQL	December 2014
173	363	Construction of 3 mediclinics at Goodlands, Stanley and Floreal	MoHQL	December 2014
174	363	Upgrading of 2 Community Health Centres at Baie du Tombeau and Phoenix and an Area Health Centre at Bambous	MoHQL	2014 to 2015
		Recruitment of other Specialists and Doctors		
175	364	33 specialists to implement a 24-hour service in all our Regional Hospitals	MoHQL	January 2014
176	364	To implement the shift system, 36 doctors will be recruited in the Accident and Emergency Units	MoHQL	January 2014
177	364	Recruitment of 300 student nurses	MoHQL	April & July 2014
177	364	Recruitment of 400 attendants and health care assistants	MoHQL	2014
		Assistance to Patients Inoperable in Mauritius		
179	367	Enhancing the assistance to patients inoperable in Mauritius scheme by raising the maximum grant from Rs 500,000 to Rs 800,000 for complicated treatments requiring care abroad	MoHQL	January 2014
		Promoting An Environmentally Friendly Lifestyle And Cleaner Mauritius		
180	372	Provision of Rs 100m for a Beach Re-Profiling Programme, starting at Flic en Flac, Le Morne and Blue Bay; and rehabilitation of our coral reefs and increasing the live coral coverage	MoEnv	July 2014

		Bare Lands		
181	376	Amending the Local Government Act to enable local councils to place an obligation on landowners to fence their land in residential areas	MoFED	December 2013
182	377	Provision of a further Rs 185m for the purchase of additional scavenger lorries to replace those that are more than 12 years old	MoLG	January 2014
		Solid Waste Management		
183	379	Provision of Rs 30 million for a financial incentive to encourage the collection and re-export of PET plastic bottles	MoEnv	January 2014
		Community-based projects		
184	381	Rs 3 million for the setting up of children's playgrounds	NDU	July 2014
185	381	Rs 2 million for a new traffic centre at Rivière du Rempart	NDU	July 2014
186	381	Rs 12 million for the improvement and upgrading of cremation ground/cemeteries at Mon Gout, Triolet, Grand Gaube, Sebastopol and Vieux Grand Port	NDU	July 2014
187	381	Rs 7 million the upgrading of the Youth Training Centres at Anse La Raie and Bel Ombre	MoYS	October 2014
188	381	Rs 87 million for the construction of a new market fair at Goodlands	NDU	October 2014
189	381	Rs 150 million for a market fair at Quatre Bornes	MoFED	October 2014
		Natural landscape		
190	382	Provision to enhance our natural landscape by planting a total of 200,000 trees over the next two years	MoEnv	2014 to 2015

191	383	A Biking trail of 5 km will be set up in the Vallée d'Osterlog	MoAgro	September 2014
192	385	Increase the grant in aid allocation to local councils by Rs 500 M to Rs 2.5 B	MoFED	January 2014
193	386	Funding of Rs 210 M for additional local infrastructure for cleaning of bare land and abandoned premises in developed areas	MoFED	January 2014
		Continually cleaning and embellishing our island and improving our tourism product		
194	389	Offering a financial allocation directly to participating village councils. They will have to respond to a specified “cahier de charges” with respect to cleaning and embellishment of their villages	MoFED	March 2014
		Stray Dogs		
195	391	Giving an incentive of Rs 300 to every dog owner who brings his animal for sterilisation	MoAgro	January 2014
		Animal Hospital		
196	393	Setting up of a Trust Fund for to promote the construction and management of an animal hospital	MoAgro	March 2014
		BUILDING A SAFER MAURITIUS		
		Natural disasters		
197	396	Provision of funds for the operation of a fully staffed National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre	PMO	January 2014
198	397	Providing for an IT based early warning and emergency alert system	PMO	October 2014
		Flooding		

199	399	Setting up a Land Drainage Agency to take over responsibility for the construction, cleaning and maintenance of the drainage systems across the country	MoPI	March 2014
200	402	Recruitment of 100 fire-fighters	MoLG	July 2014
201	403	Landslide works in Chitrakoot and Vallée Pitot and for relocating families from areas where there is landslide risk in Quatre Soeurs	MoPI	October 2014
		Law and Order		
202	408	Recruitment of an additional 700 trainee police constables	PMO	June 2014
203	409	A Crime Occurrence Tracking System (COTS) in all police stations in Mauritius and Rodrigues	Police	End 2014
204	409	Completing the installation of CCTV Street Surveillance System for Beau-Bassin, Rose Hill and Quatre Bornes, including Sodnac	Police	January to July 2014
205	409	A state of the art Mass Spectrometer for the Forensic Science Laboratory to improve analysis of synthetic drugs	PMO	July 2014
206	411	Renovation of existing district courthouses and construction of new ones	Judiciary	2014 to 2018
207	412	Renovation works at the Supreme Court and New Court House at Port Louis	Judiciary	End 2014

208	413	Increase fines threshold from Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 where judiciary may impose community service orders as an alternative to jail sentencing for those who cannot pay the fine	AGO	January 2014
209	414	Creation of an open prison facility for female detainees adjacent to the present Barkly Women Prison at Beau Bassin	PMO	November 2014
		CONSOLIDATING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NETS		
		Support to our elders		
210	417	Increasing the Basic Retirement Pensions by 3.7 %	MoSS	January 2014
211	418	Providing eligible elderly the option to either continue with the monthly free medical visit or benefit from a cash allowance amounting to Rs 6,000 per year, payable in monthly instalments	MoSS	February 2014
212	419	Provision of personal alarm bracelets or pendants to 1,000 elderly and persons with severe disability	MoSS	October 2014
213	419	Rs 12 m to complete the Recreation Centre at Pointe aux Piments	MoSS	February 2014
214	419	A semi low-floor bus for transporting elderly to the Pointe aux Piments Recreation Centre	MoSS	October 2014
215	419	A fourth Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens at Riambel	MoSS	2014 to 2016

		Social Aid		
216	420	Increasing all social aid benefits by 3.7 percent	MoSS	January 2014
		New Income Support		
217	423	Rs 100 million for an Income Support Programme to cover some 8,000 vulnerable families living below the Poverty Intervention Line set at Rs 6,200, conditional that members of the family meet the requirements of their social contract	MoSS	January 2014
		Carers and Special Allowances		
218	428	Raising the family income ceiling for parents to qualify for Carer's Allowance by Rs100,000	MoSS	January 2014
219	429	Increasing the age limit for special allowances provided to children with severe disabilities, incontinent, bedridden from 15 to 18 years old	MoSS	January 2014
		Social Impact Bonds		
220	430	Introduce the Social Impact Bonds as a new financial instrument which rewards NGOs upon results. The first programmes to be covered by the Social Impact Bonds will be the rehabilitation of ex-convicts and drug addicts	MoFED	July 2014
		Support to Persons with Disabilities		
221	433	Doubling the accommodation capacity for persons with severe disabilities with the construction of 2 additional wings at Foyer Trochetia	MoSS	November 2014
		Action against those who abuse the system		

222	434	Finance Bill will provide for increases in fines to be imposed by the courts for all those who defraud our social security system	MoSS	December 2013
		Protecting Children and Women at Risk		
223	435	Organisation of an 'Assise de la Famille'	MoGender	May 2014
224	436	Amend the Child Protection Act to protect children at risk through the issue of Sexual Risk Orders, similar to protection orders issued in cases of domestic violence	DPP	December 2013
225	437	Provision for 24 additional officers for the Inspectorate Divisions at the Child Development Unit and the Family Welfare and Protection Unit	MoGender	June 2014
		CELEBRATING CULTURE AND SPORTS		
		A Winning Sports Culture		
226	440	Increasing the allowance to High Level athletes by 5%	MoYS	January 2014
227	440	Increasing the number of students under Sports Etude to 450 in 2014 from 70 in 2011	MoYS	October 2014
228	440	Providing for 35 overseas scholarships for High Level and other promising athletes next year	MoYS	Ongoing
229	441	New Sports Act to accompany the development of sports into the next decade. This Act will give impetus to the practice of sports by the masses and enable our high-level athletes to shine in international events	MoYS	April 2014
		Return to old football teams		

230	445	Traditional teams that dominated football to be revived albeit with adequate and appropriate safeguards to ensure their national representativeness	MoYS	April 2014
		Semi Professional Football League		
231	447	Provision of Rs 10 million to establish a “Semi-Professional Football League”	MoYS	April 2014
		National Handisports Tournament		
232	449	Organisation of an “Annual National Handisport Tournament”	MoYS	August 2014
		Bringing sports closer to people		
233	450	Rs 46 m for the construction of 4 new football grounds at Anse Jonchee, Bassin, Belvedere and Glen Park	MoPI	October 2014
234	450	Rs 57 m for the upgrading and lighting of existing football grounds in another 12 localities	MoPI	October 2014
235	450	Rs 10 m for the setting up of football, volleyball and basketball pitches at Vallée Pitot, Phoenix, Rose Belle and Cite Atlee	MoPI	October 2014
236	450	Rs 250 m for the construction of two new Multi Sports Complex at Triolet and at La Source, Quatre-Bornes	MoYS	October 2014
237	450	Rs 24 m for the upgrading of the Maryse Justin stadium	MoYS	March 2014
		Unleashing talent through music		
238	452	Provision of a one off-grant of Rs 100,000 to each participating school for the purchase of musical instruments to form school musical bands	MoEDU	March 2014

239	453	National School Music Contest	MoEDU	September 2014
		Culture		
240	455	Government to provide Rs 40 m to enable completion of Phase 2 of the renovation of the Plaza Theatre	MoFED	January 2014
241	455	Government to provide Rs 13 m for renovation and upgrading works at the “Serge Constantin” Theatre	MoAC	June 2014
242	457	Government to provide Rs 10m towards the cost of renovation works of Tombeau Pere Laval	MoFED	January 2014
243	456	Government to provide Rs 40 m for the reconstruction of the Forum in Curepipe	MoFED	January 2014
244	458	Setting up a “Troupe Culturelle Nationale” to promote all aspects of Mauritian culture	MoAC	March 2014
245	459	Setting up of a “Heritage Company”	MoAC	February 2014
246	460	Setting up of the Sanskrit Speaking Union	MoAC	March 2014
		Private TV Channels		
247	465	Licensing of local broadcasters	IBA	July 2014
		A NATIONAL HOME OWNERSHIP PROGRAMME		
		Housing Empowerment Scheme (HES)		

248	468- 474	Implementing a new Housing Empowerment Scheme for households earning up to Rs 50,000 per month, where banks will require only 5 per cent as minimum down-payment instead of the usual or more 10 per cent currently applicable.	MoFED	January 2014
249	475	Reimbursement of VAT up to an amount of Rs 300,000 to households with monthly income below Rs 50,000	MoFED	January 2014
250	476	MHC will provide at least 12 types of architectural plans for each house of 1,000 and 1,200 sq ft free of charge	MHC	January 2014
		Social Housing		
251	484	576 social housing units will be constructed and 80 serviced lots will be completed for delivery at Henrietta, Camp de Masque, La Gaulette, Pointe Aux Sables and Mare d' Albert and on existing NHDC estates	MoHL	January to December 2014
252	484	Planning for 588 social housing units and 151 serviced lots at Chebel, Pointe Aux Piments, Camp Ithier, Quatre Cocos, Sebastopol and Beau Bois	MoHL	May 2014 to October 2015
253	486	Provision for an additional 450 social housing units to the vulnerable families through the NEF	MoSIEE	Ongoing
254	487	Provision of Rs 250 m to improve living conditions through the rehabilitation programme in NHDC and ex-CHA Housing Estates	MoHL	Ongoing
255	487	Provision of Rs 80 m for the casting of roof slab scheme	MoHL	Ongoing
		Home Ownership for Low Income Families		

256	489	Amending legislation to give to those families who have a housing unit on a building site or on State lands that have been leased to them by Government, the option to buy the land at a nominal price not exceeding Rs 2,000 per plot	MoHL	January 2014
		CITIZEN FACILITATION		
257	500	Amending procurement regulations to facilitate outsourcing of applications, online payment and other software development to start-ups and SMEs, especially those present in Government sponsored accelerators	MoFED	December 2013
258	501	Citizens Inter-active Kiosks will be set up at Post offices around the island to provide a <i>service de proximité</i> for our citizens	MoICT	2014
259	501	Road Traffic Act will be amended to allow drivers to pay their fines at any District Court and by proxy	MoPI	January 2014
260	501	Review the process for the delivery of Certificate of Character to cut delivery time from up to 2 months to only 2 weeks	DPP	Early 2014
261	501	Online application and online payment for streamlining of Work Permits	MoLabour	May 2014
262	501	Real estate transactions will be facilitated by on line application and payment for Parcel Identification Numbers	MoHL	May 2014
		EMPOWERING CONSUMERS TO ENHANCE THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING		
		Enhancing and Protecting Purchasing Power		
		Consumer Protection		
263	515	A New Consumer Protection Bill will replace the Fair Trading Act 1979 and the Consumer Protection Act 1991	MoCommerce	April 2014

264	516	Setting up of a Consumer Affairs Tribunal where redress procedures will be fast and inexpensive	MoCommerce	July 2014
265	517	Establishment of the National Consumer Council	MoCommerce	July 2014
266	518	Setting up a Consumer Welfare Fund to assist consumer protection organizations	MoCommerce	July 2014
267	520	Tea, Milk, Butter, Cheese, Curd, Honey, Soya Beans, Spices, Rice, Ham, sausage, buttermilk, canned or preserved meat products are moved to VAT zero-rated	MoFED	January 2014
268	522	Removing VAT on soya burgers and other vegetable burgers	MoFED	January 2014
		CEB Prepaid Meters		
269	528	Launching of the pioneering prepaid meter services. Prepaid meters will be made available to vulnerable households at no additional costs with a waiver of the Rs 750 installation fee and an initial allowance of Rs 100	CEB	December 2013
		Water Tank		
270	535	Extending the Water Tank Scheme to families with total income of up to Rs 15,000	National Habitat Fund	January 2014
		Protection of consumers of financial services		
271	541	Banks will be required to apply the 'In duplum' rule for all loans granted to individuals after the 1st January 2014	MoFED	January 2014
272	541	Amounts due on credit cards will also be subject to the 'In duplum' rule	MoFED	January 2014
273	542	Regulate the quantum of penalty interest that may be charged by lending institutions such that penalty interest will henceforth be charged at a maximum rate of 2 per cent per annum	MoFED	January 2014

274	546	Regulatory authorities will have the power to regulate advertisement of financial services products	MoFED	January 2014
275	546	Lending institutions will not be authorized to charge a penalty on early repayment of debts	MoFED	January 2014
		MAXIMIZING DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF RODRIGUES AND AGALEGA		
		Rodrigues		
276	550	Increase in grant element to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly from Rs 1.7 Bn in 2013 to Rs 1.95 Bn in 2014	MoFED	January 2014
277	551	Extension of the Special Holiday Package	MoFED	January 2014
278	552	Provision of Rs 25 m in the National Budget to meet the differential of tariffs borne by CHCL on containerized and general cargo to Rodrigues	MoFED	January 2014
279	553	Provision of Rs 24 m for the rehabilitation of the Synthetic Track at Camp du Roi Stadium	MoYS	May 2014
		Agaléga		
280	557	Connection to internet at an estimated capital cost of Rs 5 million and an annual running cost of Rs 4 million for Agaléga	MoICT	June 2014
281	558	Provision of an additional amount of Rs 23m this year for shipping costs to improve safety and security on the transportation of materials and people in Agaléga	MoLG	January 2014
		SECURING A SUPPORTIVE TAX POLICY		
282	566	Extending the excise duty on energy inefficient products to cover air conditioners, tumble dryers and electric lamps	MoFED	January 2014

283	566	Abolishing the 45 percent excise duty on motor cycles of cylinder capacity between 201 to 250 cc with immediate effect	MoFED	November 2013
284	567	Reviewing the CO2 levy rebate scheme on motor cars introduced in 2011	MoFED	November 2013
285	566	Removing VAT on Medical, surgical and laboratory steriliser, X-ray film and photographic plates for medical purposes, Bio-pesticides and Photovoltaic panels	MoFED	December 2013
286	566	Increasing the rate of excise duty on alcoholic and tobacco products by 5 percent	MoFED	November 2013
287	566	Introducing a 30 percent excise duty on fireworks which represent both a health and environment hazard	MoFED	November 2013
288	566	Increasing Registration duty by 30 percent as from 9 November 2013 on motor vehicles except motor cycles of cylinder capacity of less than 250 cc	MoFED	November 2013
		Income tax measures		
289	570	Income Tax Threshold increased by Rs 5,000	MoFED	January 2014
		Corporate Income Tax rate		
290	571	The method for calculating the special levy applicable on banks is being reviewed. The levy will be 10% of chargeable income instead of a proportion of turnover and book profits	MoFED	January 2014
		Property Taxation		
291	574	Regarding property taxation the land transfer tax will be set at a single rate of 5 per cent instead of 5 to 10 per cent	MoFED	December 2013
292	575	The rate of registration duty to be aligned with the Land Transfer Tax, i.e. 5%	MoFED	December 2013

293	577	The registration duty payable on transfer of an RES residence is being changed from USD 25,000 to the higher of 5 per cent of the value or USD 25,000	MoFED	December 2013
		Tax Collection		
294	578	Recruitment of 58 additional officers	MRA	April 2014
295	579	To tackle under reporting and evasion of gambling taxes and VAT	MRA	Ongoing
		A HISTORIC POLICY CHANGE		
296	597	Introduce NINE YEAR SCHOOLING in our education system and end of CPE exams	MoEDU	2015
	A	TAXES AND DUTIES		
	A.1	AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR MIDDLE INCOME HOUSEHOLDS		
297		Land Transfer Tax and Registration Duty : Extension of the Construction of Housing Estates Scheme for another period of one year	MoFED	December 2013
	A.2	CLEAN AND GREEN ENVIRONMENT		
298		Amendment to the Environment Protection Regulations to provide for an increase in the Environment Protection Fee on a mobile/smart phone from Rs 50 to Rs 70; and a full exemption from the Fee for a mobile/smart phone with an import value below Rs 1,000	MoEnv	January 2014
	A.4	BUSINESS/CITIZEN FACILITATION		
299		Registration of Ownership of Motor-Vehicles will be under the sole responsibility of the NTA	MoPI	July 2014

300		Amendments to various legislations to cater for, inter alia, scanning, e-submission of document, e-payment, e-registration and e-searches in connection with the implementation of the Mauritius e-registry project	MoFED	December 2013
	A.6	EXCISE DUTY		
301		Amendment to definition of “liqueur” and “Beer”	MoFED	December 2013
302		The rate of excise duty on sugar content of soft drinks is being increased from 2 cents to 3 cents per gram	MoFED	November 2013
	A.7	VALUE ADDED TAX		
303		The provision on clawback of VAT applicable on building sold before the twentieth year is being reviewed, where a transfer is made between VAT registered persons	MoFED	December 2013
	A.8	PROPERTY TAXATION		
304		The rate of registration duty on acquisition of an IRS/RES residence and land transfer tax on resale is being harmonised	MoFED	December 2013
305		The morcellement fee payable in respect of residential morcellements is being increased	MoFED	December 2013

	A.9	PERSONAL INCOME TAX		
306		Clarification on exemption from income tax of Passage benefits up to 6%	MoFED	December 2013
307		Increase in Value of benefit-in-kind for income tax purposes of a company or official car used for official or business and private purposes	MoFED	December 2013
308		Extension of TDS to cover certain consultancy and management services and interest payments made by financial institutions and other companies to an individual where such interest is taxable	MoFED	December 2013
	A.10	CORPORATE INCOME TAX		
309		Clarification regarding the statutory exemption granted in respect of income derived by the owner of a foreign ship from its operation includes income obtained from the charter of such ships	MoFED	December 2013
310		Income tax exemption for holders of a Private Freeport Developer License at par with Freeport Operators . The income tax regime for holders of Third Party Freeport Developer License will remain unchanged	MoFED	December 2013
311		Amending the Income Tax Act to treat all fees derived by non-residents from Mauritius at par with fees derived by residents	MoFED	December 2013

312		Exemption from land duties and taxes in respect of the merger or takeover of an ailing manufacturing company which has accumulated income tax losses and on the same terms and conditions relating to safeguard of employment as provided for under the Income Tax Act	MoFED	December 2013
313		Corporate Social Responsibility (2%) will apply to resident sociétés on their net profits adjusted for income tax purposes that is excluding exempt income	MoFED	December 2013
	A.11	GAMBLING		
314		<p>Amending the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act to specify the conditions to be applicable for the operation of Limited Payout Machines</p> <p>Betting duty is being extended to cover bets on football matches</p> <p>Provision is being made to allow for an occasional licence to be issued to organizers of wedding and other events</p> <p>EFD(Electronic Fiscal Device) from the MRA will be extended to cover all horse-racing bookmakers and football bookmakers</p>	MoFED	<p>January 2014</p> <p>July 2014</p>
315		<p>The fixed amount of registration duty is being increased from Rs 200 to Rs 300</p> <p>Stamp duty and transcription fee are being merged and increased by 30%</p>	MoFED	December 2013

316		Amendments to the Shooting and Fishing Lease Tax	MoFED	December 2013
	A.12	TAX ADMINISTRATION		
317		Introduction of a Tax Administration Bill	MoFED	July 2014
318		Improvement in the Customs Administrative Penalty System	MoFED	December 2013
319		Simplified tax returns	MoFED	December 2013
320		Corporate tax returns for companies having accounting year ending on 30 June may be submitted up to 15 January of the following year where there is no tax payable	MoFED	December 2013
321		Harmonisation of payment dates for the various taxes and other remittances to the MRA	MoFED	December 2013
322		Introduction of an Arrears Payment Scheme at the Registrar-General's Department.	MoFED	December 2013
323		The penalties imposed in connection with registration duty and stamp duty for late submission of documents will be streamlined and harmonised	MoFED	December 2013
	A.13	OTHER AMENDMENDS		
324		Amendment to the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority Act to ensure that all distillers-bottlers make the contribution to Mauritius Sugar Syndicate for distribution to planters	MoAgro	December 2013

325		Relevant amendments will be brought to the Tourism Authority Act and the Registration Duty Act relating to Pleasure Crafts	MoFED	December 2013
326		Trade facilitation measures in connection with the bunkering project	MoFED	December 2013
327		Amendment in the conditions relating to contribution to Consolidated Fund for Hotel Projects	MoFED	December 2013
	B	FINANCIAL SERVICES		
328	B.2	The Banking Act will be amended to facilitate banking operations	MoFED	December 2013
329	B.3	The Bank of Mauritius Act will be amended for better regulation and supervision	MoFED	December 2013
330	B.4	The Companies Act will be amended for fine-tuning purposes with regard to registration of documents and working in harmonization with the Financial Reporting Act	MoFED	December 2013
331	B.5	The Financial Reporting Act will be amended to allow the Financial Reporting Council to issue Code of Practice to regulate the auditing profession as well as the Public Interest Entities and exempt public sector accountants from the payment of renewal fees	MoFED	December 2013

332	B.6	The Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act will be amended to broaden the definition of Public Interest Entities to include the statutory bodies which are Government Business Enterprises	MoFED	December 2013
333	B.7	Insolvency Act will be amended to streamline the procedures concerning the winding up of a company	MoFED	December 2013
334	B.8	The Financial Intelligence and Anti Money Laundering Act will be amended to comply with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) recommendations	MoFED	December 2013
335	B.10	The Sale by Auction Act will be amended to increase the limit on the number of auctioneers	MoFED	December 2013
	C	OTHER LEGISLATIONS		
336	C.1	The Public Procurement Act will be amended to improve the procurement process	MoFED	December 2013
337	C.2	The Competition Act will be amended with a view to strengthening the institutional framework governing the operations of the Competition Commission	PMO	April 2014
338	C.3	The Employment Rights Act will be amended to provide for the definition of “earnings” and other clarifications in the Act	MoLabour	December 2013
339	C.4	The Interpretation and General Clauses Act will be amended to provide flexibility for the conduct of meetings of Statutory Corporation or any board/committee	MoFED	December 2013

340	C.5	The Pensions Act will be amended to clarify provisions in respect of the Defined Contribution (DC) Pension Scheme introduced in the public sector in respect of new entrants as from 01 January 2013	MoFED	December 2013
341	C.6	The National Pensions Act will be amended to provide for refund of non-citizen employee contributions to the National Pensions Fund	MoSS	December 2013