



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2013

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Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 34 of 2013

Sitting of 28 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)

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S. O. 10 (2)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): 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.

Dr. A. Kasenally rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(NO. XXIII OF 2013)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Consideration of the Appropriation (2014) Bill (No. XXIII of 2013) was resumed.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing and Lands was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Members, you should not only catch my eyes, but also those of the Clerk because we are having a list of all those who have questions so that no one is left out. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 322, item 22030 - *Rent*, there is an amount of Rs10 m. which has been budgeted. May we know where this space is being rented, the floor space area and also to whom this is rented?

The Chairperson: If hon. Members can identify the item, that would be appreciated; just give the page and the item number.

Mr Ameer Meea: I just did it. On page 322, the first item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*, there has been a substantial increase of Rs6 m.; may we know why such an increase?

The Chairperson: Sorry, hon. Member, did you say page 322?

(Interruptions)

The item is? Just a minute, there is some confusion.

Mr Ameer Meea: *Personal Emoluments.*

The Chairperson: All right! Hon. Minister, would you like to take all questions at one go?

Dr. Kasenally: At one go.

The Chairperson: Alright!

(Interruptions)

Let me see how it goes.

Mr Obeegadoo: If we have all answers as well at one go, there is no problem.

The Chairperson: Of course!

Mr Obeegadoo: On the Programme 641, I will have a question at page 327, under the vote item *Minister*. Since, this programme is concerned with policy and planning, therefore, I would wish to know whether for the expenses to be incurred next year for the Minister, are we to understand that the hon. Minister will come up with a precise plan assessing the demand for social housing in Mauritius and laying out how many houses will be built in 2014 and 2015?

The Chairperson: Would the hon. Minister like to take two questions or three questions?

(Interruptions)

Alright! I want to inform hon. Members that for each programme code, we have 20 minutes. So, we should work it out in such a way that the time is reasonable for both sides, for

the hon. Minister and the hon. Members wishing to put questions. So, let us start with three questions.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to page 322, item 22120 - *Fees*, Rs615,000 has been earmarked for this year and Rs700,000 for 2014. Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision has been made.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I want some silence; do not interrupt the hon. Member who is putting a question.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 317, one of the major constraints is: *Provision of legal, institutional and regulatory framework for land use planning and land management to meet development goals*.

So, can I ask the hon. Minister whether provision has been made to cater for that major constraint?

Dr. Kasenally: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: I was referring to item 22120 - *Fees*, on page 322, and my question is whether these *Fees* make allowance to attend to that major constraint - provision of legal, institutional and regulatory framework as mentioned at page 317.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, this item is for rental of building at Ebène which is Rs1,553,713 monthly and a rental for office space at Moorgate House at Rs149,000 monthly.

The office space at Moorgate House is being retained for use as a *pied-à-terre* for my office where I hold meetings, sometimes daily. Moreover, to attend Cabinet Meetings and Sessions of the National Assembly, High-Level Inter-Ministerial Meetings are attended by representatives from different Ministries and Departments located in Port Louis. This space is presently being shared with the Land Transport Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping for occupation of space on a cost sharing basis.

Number two, is emoluments. Now, you know this increase in emoluments, of course, is due to the fact that we have had to implement the PRB.

As far as *Fees* is concerned, the hon. Member will find the item *Fees* in a lot of the programmes and these are meant for payment of fees to Chairperson, Members of Board of Committees and fees to resource persons for training, capacity building and in-house training. As far as what hon. Obeegadoo has mentioned, this is being dealt in the Programme 642. When I come to that I will take it up.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Just for clarification, the hon. Minister stated in *Personal Emoluments*, we have PRB for 2014, but in the figures of 2013 as well, we do have the figures of PRB included. How come if we have PRB in 2013 and 2014, we have just an increase? On the same issue, *Personal Emoluments*, if we go to page 327, under *salary code Senior Chief Executive*, we had in the post by December 2013: one person and then there is no funded position by December 2014, 2015 and 2016. May we know the reason why there wouldn't be any Senior Chief Executive at the Ministry of Housing and Lands?

The Chairperson: No, we are taking three questions! Or the hon. Minister wants to reply! Hon. Jugnauth has asked first.

Mr Jugnauth: On page 322, item *Rent 22030*, in the past the Ministry of Finance decided that when the Ministry of Housing and Lands would move to Ebène, they would vacate all the space in Port Louis so that there is no duplication in rent. May I know why the officers are still being kept at Moorgate House?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 322, item *22100 Publications and Stationery*, can the hon. Minister say whether there are any publications which are issued from his Ministry and if so which ones?

The Chairperson: Yes, we have three questions! The hon. Minister may now answer!

Dr. Kasenally: As far as the post of SCE is concerned, I have a SCE. As far I understand he is not moving from my Ministry and the figures have been computed by the Finance Division of my Ministry and, of course, approved by the Ministry of Finance. I am not going to query about the amount of money. Mr Chairperson, let the House be assured that every rupee...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Whose phone is this? It is not allowed! You have to apologise!

Dr. Kasenally: I apologise. Every rupee which is being spent under the vote of my Ministry is being well spent. If it is not, we do not spend it.

Mr Ameer Meea: What I meant for the Senior Chief Executive, that nothing is budgeted in the funded position by December. It is nil there for 2014, 2015 and 2016. On page 327!

Dr. Kasenally: There might be some problems in it as far as I am concerned. It is funded. I have got a correction. It is being paid by the Prime Minister's Office. I take up the point raised by the hon. Member. I know, I think as Minister of Finance, he overruled that the Ministry of Housing and Lands should not have a *pied à terre* and as you can see, Mr Chairperson, this is a very modest contribution and as I have been saying, I come to Port Louis regularly and sometimes as you know we have long hours here.

(Interruptions)

If they want, I can go and sit, where will I sit!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Just answer!

Dr. Kasenally: I have to sit on the pavement there near the Theatre.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I want to go to page ...

(*Interruptions*)

Dr. Kasenally: Sorry, my hon. colleague. This is for printing of stationery, paper materials, printing and stationery publications and publicity.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I wanted to take the hon. Minister back to the Strategic Note of his Ministry and refer to page 317, *Priority Objective and Major Services*. I wanted to know whether there is a dedicated team which works regarding policy and management and, if so, who forms part of that dedicated team and how often they meet and whether any report is published or is made public?

The Chairperson: No, this question has nothing to do with expenses here. It is administrative! No, I said it! Next question on the expenses! You will be given a chance. If you have any question on expenses...

Mr Roopun: May I take it with the Human Resources. It is going to be on page 327, under programme 641. We have got a list of Human Resources here. I wanted to know within those staff whether there is any dedicated team who meets regularly to decide upon planning issues and how often they meet and who form part of that policy and management team?

The Chairperson: That's a good question!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 317, *Major Services - Provision of legal, institutional and regulatory framework*, can I know from the hon. Minister on the item Fees, whether the Ministry has had recourse to private legal advices on an ad-hoc basis, if yes, can we have details and if no, no problem?

The Chairperson: A third question! Yes, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 322, item 22180 *Overseas Travel*, there is an amount that has been budgeted. May we have some clarifications on details of this amount?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, as far as the Planning Department of my Ministry is concerned, they have got a very, very capable lady who is the Head of the Planning, but there is always consultation, not only among colleagues, but also the hierarchy and very frequently I chair the meeting together with my Senior Chief Executive and we ventilate because she

produces all the reports and we see how it can be adapted to suit the interest of this country especially care for the poor and the underprivileged. We give priority to this section of the population. As far as private legal adviser is concerned, we tend to rely mostly and almost exclusively on the State Law Office.

The Chairperson: If there is no more question, I may put the question.

Dr. Kasenally: No, there is overseas travel as well. As you can see, the sum which is put for overseas travel is meant for officers of my Ministry who go to attend invitation of International Organisation, seminar and also, for capacity building. There is a fair number of my officers who do that and as far as Overseas Travel for the Minister is concerned, this goes from Central Fund and has to be approved, first, by the Ministry of Finance and then by the hon. Prime Minister. I must say so far I have gone to only one overseas mission this year.

The Chairperson: You are still on page 322, item 22030 - *Rent*?

Mr Ameer-Meea: Yes, if you allow me. I did not quite get the answer of the hon. Minister. If he could please tell us the monthly rent that is being paid at the Ébène building. He has the figure.

Dr. Kasenally: Well, I have to do some arithmetic. You just have to divide the sum which I have said by 12, and you will get it. The sum is Rs1,553,713. So, if I divide it by 12, it's about Rs140,000.

Mr Ameer-Meea: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue. That is why I asked that question. If the rent at Ébène is Rs1.5 m. per year, and the rent for Moorgate is Rs100,000 per month, that is, equal to Rs1.2 m. a year, the total must be around Rs3 m. But, here, we have a budget of Rs10 m. for rent. Can the hon. Minister give us the breakdown?

Dr. Kasenally: This is why we moved out of Port Louis to go to Ébène, where it is economically better for us, and with better environment. Rent, as an item, appears in different programmes. When I will come to it, I will mention it to you.

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, you may come with a PQ if you are not happy.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 641: Policy and Management for Housing And Lands (Rs71,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on programme 642, page 320. Regarding the indicator, SS1 - *Completion stage of housing units*, we have a target of 50% for Batch I and 50% for Batch II for 2014. But when we refer to the Budget Estimates of 2013, we see that, for 2013, it was a target of 40% for Batch I, and Batch II, 30%. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this target has been achieved, and the number of houses which have been completed during 2013, as well as the locations of all these housing units?

Mr Ameer-Meea: Mr Chairperson on page 324, under the item *Infrastructure for Social Housing*, we have infrastructure at Military Road, and then we have a sub-item *VAT element for Military Road*. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the total cost of the project of Military Road, including infrastructure cost, and the VAT element?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 324, item 28222004 - *Infrastructure for Social Housing*. I see at page 316, in Major Constraints, the hon. Minister says there is delay in obtaining land under the Government MSPA Agreement. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the sum proposed for 2014, which is Rs1.6 m., includes any relocation of squatters?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, this does not include the relocation of squatters. It is done under special other funds. I am glad the hon. Member has mentioned that. Under Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed, as you can see - the delay in implementing, as far as what hon. Mrs Labelle has said - there are bullet points there. If you would care to have a look at it, there is a delay in obtaining approval for projects through the statutory project assessment and screening process. In that context, regular meetings are held with concerned parties. It has to go through the PPC, and it has taken some time. Thanks to my colleagues, the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and the hon. Minister of Finance, we have set up a mechanism where you go for a fast track, because it was normally taking six or seven months. You would agree with me, it was particularly frustrating for me. In 2010, there were

about five projects for 600 houses. Some of them were approved, and there was a challenge with the IRP, and then the Central Procurement Board also cancelled.

For that year, none of my projects came to fruition. This was particularly annoying and frustrating. We have changed the tactics, and now I can say that currently we are launching all the consultancy contracts and some of the contracts for construction on a wide scale, for at least 700 houses. In fact, my Ministry is starting a project at Henrietta on a pilot process, and we are going on an extremely fast track. So, I hope, within six months, we will have about 77 houses at Henrietta, which will cater for the region of the upper Plaines Wilhems.

Military Road, again, we had a lot of problems. There was cost escalating at one stage and, in fact, I must say the hon. Member also was not very keen that we start a housing project there. He was misguided, and I had to persuade him that it was in the interest of the people. This project has also seen some escalation. I don't have the precise figure, but I will probably circulate it.

Mr Roopun: I want to take the hon. Minister to page 324, item 28222013 - *Rehabilitation of Infrastructure of NHDC Estates*. I wanted to have a breakdown of how that sum of Rs60 m. has been spent this year, and which housing estates have been rehabilitated.

Mr Jugnauth: Page 323, under item 25110004, I see that there are losses with regard to loans that have been taken; Malaysian loans Rs16 m., and then for the other loans, we have Rs15 m., and projected for next year also Rs20 m. Can we be enlightened on why we have incurred those losses?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 317, out of the 10,000 housing units which are scheduled to be constructed, can I know from the hon. Minister how many have been earmarked for Cité Chebel in the Chebel region? There have been low-cost houses built by the NHDC recently, and yesterday there have been flash floods. So, can I draw the attention of the Minister that the site where, actually, houses are being constructed are found in low range area, and whether he will look into that particular problem and see to it that while constructing these houses at Chebel drains be also included?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, you are making a suggestion. You are not putting a question.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to know whether drains are provided in the project.

The Chairperson: Yes, now you are putting a question!

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I start with Chebel. In fact, we have been paying particularly attention to Chebel because, again, it is for the people of the lower category, those who are not particularly rich. I think there is also a project there which was, as I said, aborted 18 months ago, but we are going with that and there is land. We are also incidentally putting up a football ground there.

As far as exchange losses on other loans are concerned, this is what my Ministry has inherited. This is subsidy to NHDC on exchange losses. This is difference in exchange rates between the actual rate at the time of payment of installments and contractual exchange rate in respect of loans contracted by the NHDC to finance construction of houses. These loans were contracted from the Exim Bank in October 2002 to finance the construction of some 1,474 housing units at 16 localities in the years 1999/2002 as follows. There were 108 housing units at Bois Mangue, 72 at St. Pierre, 52 at Dagotière ...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, I think you have sufficiently answered the question. We have to have time for other Members also. Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: On page 324, item 28212023 *NHDC - Grant to Syndics for Maintenance of NHDC housing estates*, from the figures given on the other pages, we have 41 estates. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are any, or new Syndics which are envisaged in the year to come in other estates? I don't think that all estates have a Syndic today.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: On page 324, item 28222012 *Casting of Roof Slab Grant Scheme*. Last year, an amount of Rs80 m. was voted. I would like to know the amount disbursed, so far?

For next year, no provision has been earmarked. I would like to know if the programme will be discontinued.

Mr Uteem: On the same item, on page 323, we are told that items to cover the casting of roof slab and rehabilitation would now be under the National Habitat Fund. In the National Habitat Fund, there is no provision for 2014. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether for casting of roof slab and rehabilitation of infrastructure for 2014, this amount appears in another item?

My second question is whether...

The Chairperson: Only one question!

Mr Uteem: This is a clarification to have...

The Chairperson: I have a list of Members who are waiting with their questions.

Mr Uteem: This was on the same issue.

The Chairperson: Try to be short!

Mr Uteem: Yes. I just wanted to know whether any provisions have been made in that programme for the people who will be displaced from Vallée Pitot and Tranquebar following the ring road?

The Chairperson: The Minister may answer the three questions.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I will start with the last one, because it is a very important project, which interests particularly the Deputy Prime Minister and the PPS, Mr Hossen and, obviously hon. Uteem who is also a constituency representative. We have assessed all those who need to be moved and we have secured a piece of land in exchange with the SLDC, which is providing the infrastructure. It is a very important piece of land which is centrally situated at La Tour Koenig and they will be moved there. The National Empowerment Fund will be undertaking to build the houses for all these people. However, there will be a number of people who will not be relocated, because these people have squatted on private land. As you

will all agree, I cannot take responsibility for people who have squatted on private land, because they have been warned many times that they are not supposed to do so and it is against the law.

Now as far as the slab grant is concerned, this is obviously being maintained, because it is one of the most important empowerment tools for people of medium to middle class to build their own houses. As from July onwards, a list of all applications for casting of slab, the second housing unit and building materials will be forwarded to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions for clearing of income criteria, that some of them should be in the SRM. The applicant will then call at the NHDC for screening of all non-income criteria. As at date, it is as follows -

- 571 cases referred to Social Register for Mauritius, and
- 300 applications have been scrutinised and forwarded to the NHDC for payment.

As for 2014, a sum of Rs80 m. has been earmarked for the casting of roof slab.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, if I heard the hon. Minister correctly with regard to the social housing units, he mentioned the launching of consultancy for 700 houses. Mr Chairperson, when we look at the service standard indicators during the past years, I think for the three to four years, the Government has announced that the priority objective is to provide 10,000 housing units during the next 10 years, and this has been announced during four years now, because in the Budget Estimates of 2013, it is the same sentences as in the Budget Estimates of 2014. May I ask the hon. Minister whether Government will review this figure of 10,000? With your permission, Mr Chairperson, the 700 housing units, is it the batch...?

The Chairperson: I have launched an appeal that questions should be short and specific and answers equally so that all Members may have time to put questions.

Mrs Labelle: Because we have two batches.

The Chairperson: Be short!

Mrs Labelle: Because the service standard indicators, Mr Chairperson, mentioned -

Batch 1 - 500 units;

Batch 2 - 700 units,

Batch 3 - 700 units.

Are we putting aside two batches and is it only Batch 2 of the 700 houses, where the target is 50%?

The Chairperson: Question No. 1. I have a list and according to my list it is hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can I just point out that the question I had put under Programme 641, which the hon. Minister was to answer under Programme 642 has not been answered yet. My question is: following from hon. Mrs Labelle, I would like a clear answer from the hon. Minister. How many houses, on the one hand, and how many sites and services will be delivered and made available to the public in year 2014?

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Chairperson, at page 324, on the same issue that the hon. Minister just explained, item 28222012 - *Casting of Roof Slab Grant Scheme*, I need some clarifications because at page 320 under *Social Housing Development, increased access to affordable housing*, it is stated that there is a target number of beneficiaries validated by SRM for 2014: 1,500; 2015: 1,200 and 2016: 1,100. I would like to know why there is no sum earmarked for these years.

The Chairperson: The way the questions are being put and the length of the questions asked will make it difficult for the hon. Minister to answer because we have 20 minutes per programme. How can I accommodate all Members if a Member is going to put a lengthy question? Hon. Baloomoody is waiting for his turn. You may answer Minister!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Kasenally: I'll respond to hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines. In fact ...

(Interruptions)

As we go along, we are going to increase it. We have, in fact, overreached our target and we will probably be giving more because the mechanism is now well oiled. In fact, I have, at times, even intervened with the Ministry of Social Security to ensure that all these people who have to be cleared by the SRM are cleared. We are making progress. *Nous avons atteint notre vitesse de croisière.* The hon. Member will be surprised to know that many people who are qualified, we are inviting them also to come up. Cabinet also impressed upon me to ensure that this method goes in very fast. We are setting up all the mechanisms.

As far as housing projects are concerned, there are currently six sites which will be going on at the moment at Pointe aux Piments, Sebastopol, Quatre Cocos, Camp Ithier, Beau Bois and Chebel.

(Interruptions)

The total extent to be developed is 65 *arpents*. The project and construction make provision for 467 housing units of 39 meter square, 121 units of 57 meter square and 151 serviced lots. The cost of the project will be Rs833 m.

(Interruptions)

Yes, Chebel.

The Chairperson: Do not interrupt because time is already up!

Dr. Kasenally: The Consultant was appointed and the works are expected to start in 2014, but, I am sure, although they have said it will be completed by March 2015, I am determined that the houses will be built before the end of 2014.

(Interruptions)

Once it is built in 2014...

The Chairperson: Please, do not interrupt the Minister. Allow him to complete his answer!

Dr. Kasenally: No, but I am alright.

The Chairperson: Please, answer the questions!

Dr. Kasenally: Under batch two, there are six sites, namely: Melrose, Mon Goût, Petit Bel Air, Souillac, Surinam and Khoyratty. The total extent of land to be developed is 54 *arpents* 55 *perches*. The project is for construction of the provision of 225 housing units. I am going slowly so that hon. Members can follow carefully. 225 housing units of 35 metre square. 76,000 units of 57...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, if you have a long list, you better circulate it. Time is up!

Dr. Kasenally: But they want to hear it!

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 642: Social Housing Development (Rs80,962,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Housing and Lands – Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning was called.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on that programme, can I take the hon. Minister to item 22130003- *Land Use Planning and Management*? Can I ask the hon. Minister as in the Budget we have stated that owners whose house is on the State Land will be allowed to buy that piece of land, whether provision has been made for that same principle to be applied to Rodrigues?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, Rodrigues has got its own autonomy and I have spoken unofficially with the Chief Commissioner, but I think he has expressed serious concern about this and there has to be some consultations because land at Rodrigues is at a high premium and, frankly, he is not in favour of this project because he said he will be overwhelmed. Therefore, we have to respect the autonomy, the wish of the Regional Assembly and the people of Rodrigues.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 326, last item 31410801 – *Acquisition of Land*, may I know from the hon. Minister the percentage of land acquired so far which is still not utilised for the purpose for which it has been acquired?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, question number two!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 324, item 22130003 – (c) *Review of District Outline Planning Scheme*, can the hon. Minister provide some clarifications as to why this project has been postponed to 2015?

Mr Bhagwan: On the same item, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the Urban Outline Schemes. Are all the Urban Outline Schemes actually in force, are legal outline schemes which have been approved by the President of the Republic? If he could also give us some details about the District Outline Planning Scheme as to whether with the setting up of the new District Councils where matters stand concerning the outline scheme of the new District Councils?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I will start with the District Council. Four District Council Outline Schemes were approved in 2006 and modified in 2011. They are to be used as the main reference for development permits until 2050. The Local Government Act provides for splitting of twin District Council areas into single entities. Due to the recent modification exercise in 2011, next revision is scheduled for 2014. Preparation of the seven District Council Schemes for each of the seven rural planning areas is expected to be carried out as from 2014 and appropriate funding to the tune of Rs8 m. has been earmarked to that effect.

As far as the outline scheme of the Municipal areas is concerned, there is a need to align proposals of the National Development Strategy and latest Government policies in outline schemes. As most schemes were prepared in the early 90s, the revision of the Municipal Scheme Outline started in June 2011. The status of these outlines is: more than 75% of the review of the Urban Outline Planning Schemes has been completed; the three major deliverables have been submitted; planning policy guidelines to provide design criteria for development; Interim Draft Outline Planning Schemes which include Town Centre Upgrading plans and Final Draft Outline Planning Schemes. All Urban Schemes are statutory as they have already been placed in public deposit.

Afterwards, the first final draft of planning schemes was deposited on 20 April 2013 for general consultation and public comments for a period of three months. The latest reports are as follows -

“The schemes are being amended in light of the comments received. 98 representations were received for five Council Areas including bulk representation, rezoning for residential purposes and modification to existing policies.”

The next deliverable is the second final draft Outline Planning Scheme which would be submitted by the end of the year. Approval procedures would be initiated once all recommendations are approved by the Town Country Planning Board (TCPB). Thereafter, Cabinet clearance would be sought, approval by the President of the Republic by February 2014. The full study is expected to be completed by March 2014.

I think there was something else. Well, there are other things which, I think, are superfluous, that is, how much it costs, but I would not go into that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 326, we have the *LAVIMS Project*. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the total cost of the project up to now - because we can see it's an ongoing project, it is budgeted until 2016 - and how much more is needed to be spent on this project? And also, if he can give us a status on the project; how successful it has been, because recently there has been a communiqué from the Registrar General that title deeds did not necessarily have to have pin code for it to get registered there as there were problems at...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I have said short questions!

Mr Ameer Meea: ... the office to issue pin code.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Perhaps, it is my last chance to remind the hon. Minister that I am still awaiting the answer to the question on the first programme where I asked the hon. Minister, on the vote *Minister*, whether next year he intends to make an assessment of the National demand for social housing. That was my question on study conducted under the Minister to assess that.

Now, my question under this item concerns...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: With regard to the first question, you know, this has already been voted. I will invite the hon. Minister to circulate the information prayed for by the hon. Member! Put your question with regard to Programme Code 643.

Mr Obeegadoo: But, the hon. Minister said he would answer it under Programme Code 502 when I put it under Programme Code 501.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No. It has been voted.

Mr Obeegadoo: But, out of courtesy...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I have said circulate the answer on the item which has already been voted. Right! Now, put your question under Programme Code 643.

Mr Obeegadoo: Alright! My question is: at the bottom of page 325, there is mention of a new institution - a *Regional Centre for mapping of Resources for Development*. Would the hon. Minister tell the House what this is about?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 325, item 22130002 - *Hydrographic Surveys by Indian Navy*, last year, we voted a sum of Rs700,000 and I see that for next year until 2016, the same amount is being voted. I would like to know what is the status of the survey, has it been completed and, if yes, will the hon. Minister lay a copy of the survey on the Table of the Assembly?

Second, next item ...

The Chairperson: You are putting too many questions!

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Two questions only, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: No, one question.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: The same question for the following item. More information is needed.

The Chairperson: Hon. François!

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I refer to page 324, item 22130003 - *Land Use Planning and Management*, part (c) *Review of National Land Development Strategy*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any review of the NLDS in 2013 and any fees paid to whom and, if yes, to state if the report has been finalised and he will circulate same?

The Chairperson: This is proper for a PQ. Next one should be hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. The hon. Minister has not answered my question about the percentage of land that has been acquired but not put into use so far?

The Chairperson: It is under Programme Code 643?

Mr Uteem: Yes. I just asked this question. The hon. Minister has not answered it. That's on page 326. So, my question now is on page 321 Sub-Programme 64302: Land Management, Survey Division, S1: Lease of State Lands, SS1: Average processing time. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of lease over *Pas Géométriques* that has been processed this year by his Ministry?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 325, item 26313091 - *Current Grant - Town and Country Planning Board*, can I ask the hon. Minister why there is an increase from Rs6.9 m. to Rs9 m. and how much allowance does the Chairperson and the members draw?

Dr. Kasenally: Well, I think I have six questions. I will go one by one. As far as the National Land Development Strategy is concerned, the current one was prepared in 2002 and became legally enforced in 2005. It sets down, as you know, the Government strategy and vision

for the territorial development for a 20-year period. Therefore, it has to align existing policies and proposals with new Government.

Now, a review has become a necessity and it needs to be carried out ten years; sooner, if changes in the economic situation so required. It has, therefore, become imperative to carry out a midterm review of the NLDS status project. The revised terms of reference for the NLDS has been finalised this year with the assistance of the World Bank. The World Bank has recommended that the NLDS study be carried out together with the road assessment management plan so as to integrate land use strategy with the transport strategy. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development will make arrangements for bidding and funding and it is expected to launch tender early next year.

As far as the TCBP is concerned, there has been an increase to cater for the PRB recommendations. The Chairperson and members are all paid in accordance with established rates.

Now, I will give some extra information about the NLDS. It costs Rs25 m. and the tendering and bidding exercise with the study period is expected to last over 24 months.

Now, as far as the *LAVIMS Project* is concerned, I think I will have to circulate it. It is a long...

The Chairperson: Yes, circulate, please.

Dr. Kasenally: I will have to put it together. I give you a very comprehensive workup on that. I will just give you an idea. The total cost revised project is 20,451,894 US Dollar. That is, about Rs634 m. out of which 19,900,760 US Dollars, that is, Rs616.9 m. has already been paid to the contractor. The outstanding balance is about Rs17.1 m.

Now, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCRMD) is an intergovernmental organisation based in Nairobi and the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. It has 18 members including Mauritius since 1994. Mauritius has resumed its active participation to the benefit of its services and will start to pay its annual contribution of 55,000 dollars which is Rs1.8 m. annually. Mauritius also gain from the RCMRD in terms of advisory and consultancy services for the establishment of the National

Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) of Mauritius and for services in respect of surveying, mapping and management of the geospatial projects. Mauritius is participating actively in the technical committee meetings of the RCMRD and its governing council meetings annually in member state countries since 2010. Recently, my Chief Technical Officer actually attended this meeting. Now, with the Land Management Hydrographical Surveys by Indian Ocean, there is a provision of Rs700,000. This project came to being soon after the 2005 elections following a Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of India and Mauritius signed by the hon. Prime Minister. Now, Mauritius has benefitted tremendously from this close cooperation and the Indian team is not only carrying out hydrographical surveys, but is also training our people here. Recently, about two months ago, three officers from the Indian Navy have been seconded for duty to ...

(Interruptions)

Let me answer. This is what I am going to tell!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I have said earlier that questions should be short and specific and answers equally should be short and specific. It appears that nobody is complying with my guidance. And some questions are put in the nature of a PQ, then you can expect to get a long answer! But I would expect your answer should be relevant to the question!

Dr. Kasenally: I bow to your decision so I will surgically excise this answer. So far, successful completion of 25 hydrographical surveys have been carried out namely, the survey of Port Louis Harbour and approaches, survey of fishing port at Bain des Dames, survey of Agalega island and surrounding, deep sea water sampling for Land Based Oceanic Project (LBOP) and survey of Port Mathurin harbour and approaches. As you can see, it has been a very fruitful project which we are having with the Indian Government.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 326...

The Chairperson: Try to be fast because I am being flexible!

Mr Bodha: The very last item Acquisition of land, may I ask the hon. Minister for the two projects, that is, the Ring Road Phase II and Dream Bridge, where matters stand as regards the acquisition of land, plots which are needed for these projects?

The Chairperson: Exactly, I have to repeat again. This is a question in the nature of a PQ.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Chairperson, I will seize the opportunity to respond to hon. Uteem who has asked a question twice. As far as lands which have been acquired compulsorily is concerned, my Ministry has got a policy for a couple of years that no land is compulsorily acquired unless whatever Ministry proves that it has a project and has got funds to undertake this. There has not been any survey made to see which one. However there are very few...

The Chairperson: I am sorry, this is Committee of Supply. Your answer should be limited to expenses. No matters of policy are allowed.

Dr. Kasenally: That's what the hon. Member asked!

The Chairperson: Yes, but I have said!

Dr. Kasenally: Okay, I bow to your ruling.

The Chairperson: I said the question is in the nature of a PQ. The hon. Minister should understand that he may not answer! Time is up.

Ministry of Housing and Lands - Programme Code 643: Land Management and Physical Planning (Rs572,965,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs was called.

The Chairperson: No extra time! Time has not yet started! Time starts from 12.48 p.m.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, at page 340, *sub programme 502*, item 27210014 *Income Support Programme for the Poor*, I find that there is no vote for year 2013 and yet on page 331, in the achievement, first bullet point talks about 107,000 persons benefitting from income support. May I ask the hon. Minister what is the sum that has been used for that

particular income support programme and why it has not been included in the vote for social assistance here?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am starting with the first programme 501 not 502.

The Chairperson: Yes, 501!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on this programme we are called upon to vote some Rs100 m. When I go to page 333, the *Major Services* to be provided are the effective implementation and supervision of policies and programmes. Effective implementation! Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Minister from the sum we are voting is there a sum allocated for capacity building to avoid the problems raised by the Director of Audit such as Domiciliary Visits to persons who have passed away. To avoid such circumstances are we planning to have capacity building so that we can attain the objective of this programme 501?

The Chairperson: Yes, if there is no more question. Do you agree that we should go three questions by three questions or two by two?

(Interruptions)

Let's make it clear! Let's go two by two! Two questions have been put, answer the two questions!

Mrs Bappoo: Concerning Income Support, Mr Chairperson, the new item that has been mentioned by the hon. Member that is Income Support Programme for the Poor; this is a new item which has nothing to do with the income support for rice and flour where we have mostly some 107,000 beneficiaries. This one is a new programme that I have explained in my speech on the Budget and the other one will be kept in its own item which is the Social Aid benefits to people who can continue to apply for income support. So, these are two different items. Capacity building, this is an item which goes across various programmes of the Ministry whether there is new intake of staff or not, they have training programme and capacity building programme. This will be ongoing to curtail whatever weaknesses in the various programmes of the Ministry.

Mr Obeegadoo: Programme Code 501, at page 333, the primary objective of this programme is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection. I, therefore, ask the hon. Minister, under the vote relevant to salary of Minister on page 346, whether, for 2014, the Minister intends to commission a study on the efficiency and effectiveness of the social protection system in Mauritius.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Under Programme Code 501, Mr Chairperson, I will just ask the hon. Minister some clarification on that particular programme.

Mrs Bappoo: Study on the Social Programme. Indeed, Mr Chairperson, all along the year, we have had from the last Budget, new social programmes for helping people, vulnerable families, and people in need of empowerment programme. And, for this reason, we have launched the programme, which is the Social Register of Mauritius. The Social Register of Mauritius, which is the main objective and mission of the Ministry, to see how to adapt, whichever new social programmes that are to be devised for the need of these people. We had one new scheme in the last Budget, and we have still another new one coming in this Budget 2014.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on the same issue. The social register mechanism is a mechanism precisely to have all the persons earning less than so much money to benefit from social system schemes. My question is whether, for next year, under the salary of the Minister, the Minister is envisaging, at long last, having an overall and global assessment, maybe with World Bank assistance, of the efficiency and effectiveness of our social protection system.

The Chairperson: Well, this is a matter of policy.

(Interruptions)

It is a matter of policy! I have ruled! Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. The hon. Minister has just referred to the social register mechanism, following the question of my colleague. The social register is under Programme 502. We are talking about the efficiency of the objective of Programme 501. So, for the efficiency and effectiveness of Programme 501, and knowing that this has not been attained,

according to the Report of the Director of Audit, the question is whether there is a particular mechanism that will be set up so that we can attain this objective.

The Chairperson: Now, I am going to ask the hon. Member a question. How do you relate your question to the items of expenditure? Do you differentiate between policy matters and expenses, or not? I want a link here between your question and the estimates.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With your permission, I am trying to answer the question that you have just put to me. I am relating to the fact, because we have the indicators, the outcome, what is expected out of the money. This is the PBB budget. We are voting this sum to reach, to attain an objective. This is why I am relating it to the information given in the Budget Estimates.

The Chairperson: I have not seen any provision for the subject matter you are talking about. No more question on item 501?

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions – Programme Code 501: Policy and Management for Social Affairs (Rs109,095,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions – Programme Code 502: Social Protection was called.

Mr Bhagwan: I have a very short question, Mr Chairperson. At page 340, item 27220 - *Social Assistance Benefits in Kind* - I am taking it from this year's estimates - there is a sum of Rs15,610,000, and it remains the same for next year. We have had victims of flash floods during the year, and yesterday also we have had another flash flood. Can I know from the hon. Minister, whether from this year's vote, provision is being made so that people can benefit out of this vote, these victims of the flash flood of yesterday, following enquiry by the Police and other authorities?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, page 340, item 27210 - *Social Assistance Benefit in Cash*. May I ask the hon. Minister what is the amount of this vote which has gone to the income support, in terms of food aid, to the 107,000 people mentioned in the Estimates? Secondly, may I ask...

The Chairperson: One question at a time! If you are going to put too many questions, then others will not have the chance to question. Yes, hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to page 341, *Sub-programme 50202*, item 26313093 - *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*. Could we have the composition of the Board first of all? Can we have a breakdown between training and employment, to know how many disabled persons have been trained?

Dr. S. Boolell: I am referring to page 342, *Sub-programme 50203, Protection and Well Being of the Elderly*. Under the item *fees*, I would be grateful if the hon. Minister could provide a breakdown of all fees paid to Medical Boards and domiciliary visits. And I would be perfectly willing if she could circulate it.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, indeed, concerning payment of social aid, there are various problems that crop up, and in time of flash flood or even in times of fire, we do assist under this item.

Income support for rice and flour is in budgetary item social aid, where we make use of this item for the payment of income support on rice and flour. We have had 107,000 beneficiaries at the rate of Rs267 monthly. And this is item 27210002 - *social aid*.

With regard to the item *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*, I have the composition of the Board, Mr Chairperson, which I will table and circulate. It will be easier.

Concerning the breakdown for fees concerning the Medical Board, we have all the details. I am going to table and circulate them.

Concerning the TEPD Board, with the new legislation that we have had, etc, the last figures which have been given with regard to the number of persons with disabilities in employment, the census speaks about 8,400. The TEPD Board has employed, from January to November, some hundred people with disabilities, plaud them in employment in different companies, and we have even put up a dynamic register for persons with disabilities. It is dynamic and is being updated every day. Also, the register for the employers and from these now the assessment panel is working on the number of companies that shows interests for employing people with disabilities. There are further details to that same issue which I will, Mr Chairperson, circulate, because they are so helpful.

It is good also to mention that what has come out in the Audit Report is from the Internal Control Report of my own Ministry where an internal audit on the system has started. It was only a sample audit that has been done for a few months, and from this report the Internal Control happened to identify one Doctor. In fact, it has been effected to people who are already deceased. The report was sent to the Director of Audit and that is what was mentioned. We have now submitted everything to the Police and an enquiry is on. The Internal Control now is carrying the whole DV service investigation and from there we are going to take appropriate action according to the findings.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 341, under *Sub-Programme 50202: Integration of Persons with Disabilities and Strengthening of the NGOs*, item 22120 - *Fees*. May we know the reason for that increase in fees?

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: At page 342, under *Sub-Programme 50202*, item 31111403 - *Extension of Foyer Trochetia Disability Centre at Pointe Aux Sables*, I would like to ask the hon. Minister the status of this project and what justifies the increase from Rs4,245,000 to Rs20 m. in year 2014?

Mr Uteem: On page 340, item 28211 - *Current Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, may I know from the hon. Minister what criteria are used for providing those finances and to circulate a list of the charitable institutions and religious Bodies which obtain these subsidies?

Mrs Bappo: Mr Chairperson, the item concerning *Fees*, it is mostly provision made for payment of fees per sessions to doctors and nurses attending to the 45 inmates found at the *Foyer Trochetia*, and also the item covers fees for Chairman and members of Board and Committees concerning the NGO Trust Fund and the Elderly Welfare Committee. It includes also fees for training. There is an extension of the *Foyer Trochetia* itself; at the initial stage there were 32 inmates, then we came up with a new wing catering for another 16 inmates for ex foyer Namasté, but now we have only 14. There are so many demands for elderly people with severe disabilities and also younger people with disabilities, so provision has been made for the extension of two additional wings to accommodate 32 more residents. Construction is going to start early 2014; this is a joint PPP Programme which is the Ministry and one NGO which is the Arya Sabha.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 341, under *Sub-Programme 50202*, item 26313069 - *NGO Trust Fund*. There is a sum of Rs18 m. May I ask the hon. Minister if she could circulate a list of

NGOs with their respective projects that have benefitted from this Fund during 2013? With your permission, can I ask the hon. Minister whether she can inform us where matters stand regarding the MACOSS Training Centre - the foundation stone was laid in September 2011, I think, by the hon. Minister herself - because we are giving fund to MACOSS? On page 342, under item 28211046 *MACOSS*, it is still under the same Sub-Programme 50202 I am referring to. Can I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand regarding the MACOSS Training Centre?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On page 341, *Sub-Programme 50202*, item 26313093 - *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*. May I ask the hon. Minister, firstly, the number of training programmes carried out by the Board during year 2013, the number of persons having been trained there; secondly, the capital project that has been carried out by the *Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board*?

Mrs Ribot: I am referring to page 342, under *Sub-Programme 50202*, item 27220 - *Social Assistance Benefits in Kind*. I would like to know the form of the social assistance and the number of parents of disabled children who benefit from this assistance. One very last question, on page 343, under *Sub-Programme 50203*, item 28212013 - *Gifts to Centenarians*. Could we have a breakdown of the number of centenarians in 2013, and the gift that has been given to each of them?

Mrs Bappo: I was asked about the grant given to charitable institutions, the list and criteria, etc. Mr Chairperson, it is a long list; I am going to circulate it, even the criteria also.

Concerning MACOSS headquarters, the input of the Ministry is that the Ministry for Social Security has provided the land. The agreement was that Government provides the land and it is the responsibility of MACOSS to go for the construction. It is not the Ministry which is embarking on the construction.

Regarding Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, I stated just before, the list of people with disabilities who have got employment.

Concerning the series of capital projects and other training that is on at the Calebasses Resource Centre, I am going to table a list thereof.

For *Social Assistance Benefits*, this provision is to refund the transport of disabled students. It is an incentive also to parents to accompany their children with disabilities to school

or any other Day Care Centre. The refund of the transport in reference to the bus fare is being given to the parents. This help is in our policy for education and daily living skills being given to the children with disabilities.

The last figure of centenarians is 104 with 90 females and 14 males, and 4 are in Rodrigues. At the date of their birthday, there is the official programme of the Ministry where Members of Parliament from both the Government and Opposition sides are being invited and they all know about the various benefits that they are being given.

(Interruptions)

On est arrivé à 104. For the total, it fluctuates day in day out but for the whole of 2013, we have reached 104.

The Chairperson: No question from a sitting position; hon. Members are wasting time. I wish I could give hon. Obeegadoo the chance to put a question!

Mrs Bappoo: The last figure is 104.

The Chairperson: Yes, you may put your question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, the heart of this programme is the SRM, this new Social Register of Mauritius. It appears in the objectives and in the outcomes. I want to ask the hon. Minister concerning the staffing, how she is going to address the huge problems being caused by the SRM because there is a lack of staff. To have the field inspections, it takes a lot of time. The staff say they are overwhelmed. And then when it comes to her Ministry, it takes a huge amount of time for the processing and results to be communicated to the applicants. How is this going to be addressed next year?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, do you have any question? I am giving you the chance to put a question. Come on! Be fast!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I am going back to item 22130002 - *Social Register of Mauritius Service*. May I ask the hon. Minister how many beneficiaries have been registered till now and how many among them qualify for the new social assistance?

The Chairperson: Yes, the hon. Minister has 3 minutes to answer!

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, but that is a policy issue. It has a lengthy answer that I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Right!

Mrs Bappoo: But the issue of lack of personnel and staff has been taken on board at the beginning of the year. Now, we have 20 additional Social Security officers; actually the PSC is doing the interview exercise.

Then, we have the Service to Mauritius graduates who have been attached to the Ministry, supporting the registration and the Social Security officers going in the field visits for the different processes of the SRM to define the eligibility of the household or the family that is applying for any programme.

The last programme was the Rs750 child allowance. I gave the last figures in one of the Parliamentary Questions that was set as to how many people have applied. There are 6,700 children attending pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary, and the specialised schools have received the benefits and the total amount paid till now has amounted to Rs24 m.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We are left with one minute!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, thank you very much. The hon. Minister has mentioned that we have in total 104 centenarians, but we would like to know how many celebrations we had for 2013 which justify the expenditure of an amount of Rs1 m.

The Chairperson: Right! The hon. Minister may circulate this answer because time is up!

Mrs Bappoo: Each centenarian has her or his...

(Interruptions)

Cela dépend de combien de centenaires on a!

(*Interruptions*)

Cela dépend mais je ne peux pas dire.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson : Silence !

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Bappoo : *Le ministère m'a indigné que pour l'année 2013 nous aurons 50 centenaires all along...*

(*Interruptions*)

Up to now 104, *mais j'aurais encore...*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Right! Time is up!

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institution – Programme Code 502: Social Protection (Rs1,742,100,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

This is a proper time to break. I suspend for 1hr 15 mins.

At 1.17 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 503: National Pension Management was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 344 Programme 503, item 22120001 - *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether she could circulate a list of Medical Officers who have effected these visits together with the amount paid to them with their respective fees?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 344, under item 27210105 - *Child Allowance*, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of beneficiaries of the child allowance and the criteria used for qualifying for this allowance?

The Chairperson: Let's listen to the question of hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Under this Programme 503, one of the major challenges that have been mentioned is delay in processing. I note that there is an outcome indicator that says that the number of weeks for processing claims - I am referring to page 338 outcome indicator for processing of claims. I want to understand this. In 2012, it took us four weeks to process a claim and now, with the Budget that we are being requested to approve, in 2014 it will still be four weeks. Despite additional staff, despite computerisation, it's only in 2015 that we will get down to three and a half weeks.

Now, knowing the hardship that is caused to the very poor by the delays in processing of claims, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if there is no hope at all that there can be shortening of the gap between application and processing in regard to the allowances?

The Chairperson: Administrative matters!

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, to start with, of course, I will be circulating the list of Doctors and the amount paid to the Doctors. That was the first question. Concerning child allowance; children under 10 years, there have been 5,212 children to the amount of Rs1,059 per child which amounts to Rs71 m. and those over 10 years - 12,730 children amounting to Rs187.5 m. making a total of Rs259.25 m.

Concerning delays, of course, the most important thing is that we are now working on the e-Government Master Plan and I wish that with all these computerised system, things will be better because, of course, processing takes a lot of time. For example, if we take a basic retirement pension, it takes two weeks for the processing of it. Then, if a basic invalidity pension comes along, it is another four weeks, the medical boarding, the time they schedule the programme and even if there are appeals, it goes to the tribunal. So, with the new e-Government system, I believe that things won't be too much delayed with a new IT system.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Same Sub-Programme, Mr Chairperson, under item 27210106 - *Other Basic Pensions*, would the hon. Minister inform the House what are the other basic pensions apart from those already mentioned in the item?

The Chairperson: Just a minute! Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 344, item 22120001 - *Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*, can we have a list?

Mrs Bappoo: I have just circulated it.

Mr Seeruttun: No. I am just asking because you are changing from a system to a new system as announced in the Budget with regard to payment as an allowance of Rs500 to beneficiaries of that scheme, is not it? Are not you changing the scheme as announced in the Budget?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, it is a new measure. We are going to work on that.

Mr Seeruttun: My question is when do we intend to implement that new scheme with regard to ...

The Chairperson: No, Implementation of a scheme has nothing to do with the expenses. You may or may not answer!

Mrs Bappoo: It is coming.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs Bappoo: The list of different pensions, Mr Chairperson. I am going to table it.

The Chairperson: Do you have a question?

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to Basic Retirement Pension, on page 344, may I know if there has been any study with regard to sustainability? I am asking about the study, if any, then if it could be circulated.

Mrs Bappoo: Till now there is no study.

The Chairperson: You have a study!

Mrs Bappoo: No, we don't have any study, Mr Chairperson, because all the basic pensions that we have, we are committed to these and in spirit of our mission, vision and welfare state; our beneficiaries are benefiting their pensions.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am back on this item. Page 344, *item 22120001- Fees for Medical Boards and Domiciliary Visits*. Mr Chairperson, it is being stated in the audit reports that the Ministry will review the operation of this unit. May I ask the hon. Minister if she could indicate the main strategies to review? What has been done?

The Chairperson: It is a matter of administration! You may circulate the answer if you wish.

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, of course.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 503: National Pension Management (Rs11,996,201,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 504: Probation, Social Rehabilitation and Suicide Prevention was called.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson. I am referring to programme 504, item 28211- *Current Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. Could we have a list of those non-profit institutions that have benefited from grants and secondly, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, can we know which surveys and studies have been carried out and if any has been carried on suicide prevention?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, the grant provided for the running expenses of probation home for girls is Rs1.3 m. and the probation hostel for boys Rs1.2 m. The studies and surveys, of course, it is the one on suicide when we decided that the Ministry will approach the Mauritius Research Council to carry a study on adolescent suicide. We have completed negotiations. The contract is being signed and we are going to embark on the study. 50% of the expenses will be paid on signing the contract and the rest on submission of the report.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am still on the programme 504 -

“Priority Objectives -

- Reduce the level of recidivism for offenders.
- Promote positive living and reduce the rate of suicide”

I am also referring to the Achievement because when we talk about achievement under this programme, we are being told the percentage of cases which has been successfully attained. I would like to know from the hon. Minister regarding the mechanism put in place. Which items are we voting which will support this mechanism to reduce the level of recidivism for offenders and also this question of successful cases of those who have attempted suicide?

Mrs Bappoo: Concerning reducing recidivism, we have a research and development programme which has demonstrated that we are going on community based programme where offenders participate in structured activities. At the level of the community there is group interaction which has been very effective at curtailing negative behaviour and preventing recidivism. So, there is a more professional and holistic approach that has been adopted with the setting up of the attendance centres where probationers follow close social skills programmes. We have also introduced counselling sessions for community service workers. So, these are giving good results because the priority under this programme is to reduce the level of recidivism for offenders. Then there are details about the programme which, of course, I can circulate.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 345, sub programme 50402: item 22010 - *Cost of Utilities*, there is quite a substantial increase in the amount earmarked for 2014. May we know what does comprise the cost item and what justifies that increase?

The Chairperson: Yes, you may answer! Hon. Labelle, you may put your question and, in the meantime, the hon. Minister will find the answer!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on programme 504, page 345, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, I think I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning that there will be a survey, but we are referring to the amount of Rs1 m. for 2013. May I ask the hon. Minister whether a survey was carried out in 2013 because we don't have any fee for 2014?

The Chairperson: The sum voted for that!

Mrs Labelle: Yes, which survey has been carried out of this fund?

Mrs Bappoo: The sum voted, Mr Chairperson, I mean during 2013, it has taken us some time for discussing with the Mauritius Research Council to find out what would be the methodology to be used for carrying the study and it is now that the contract is being signed. For issuing the contract, part of the Budget will go for it, and then the survey will start. The methodological approach of the study has now been defined and we can now embark on the survey.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: In the staff details on page 349, there is an increase in the number of Probation Officers. Would the hon. Minister kindly explain why that is so? If it is the number of cases that are being referred to the probation service, that is on the increase, will the hon. Minister kindly provide us with figures for 2012 and 2013 to date and tell us how these additional probation officers, when they are recruited and posted, how will they impact on the services? This is not a policy issue. I am asking a justification for us to approve the additional expenditure it entails.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On page 338, *Programme 50401*, when talking about the overall suicide rate, I have noted that it has been targeted to reduce the suicide rate over the years to come. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a suicide unit and the number of officers operating this particular unit?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, Programme Code 504 on page 338, *Outcome Indicator*, the percentage of cases dealt with successfully within six months - and we are provided with the percentage. I have put that question before, but maybe I was not clear. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the criteria used to say that the cases have been dealt with successfully. On the same trend, when we have *Sub-programme 50402 - Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders...*

The Chairperson: A question at a time!

Mrs Labelle: It is together.

The Chairperson: One thing I have to guide you. If you wish to question on a matter of administration or policy, you have to link it up with an item of expenditure. Otherwise, your question will not be admissible.

Mrs Labelle: When I was talking about percentage of cases dealt with successfully, we are called upon to vote for this amount for rehabilitation and suicide prevention. So, what have we received out of this amount that we are going to vote?

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, how do you link this issue with an item of expenditure? Which item of expenditure are you dealing with?

Mrs Labelle: In the Budget Estimates, we are saying that, with this amount, we are going to have this result. This is why I am linking it.

The Chairperson: In spite of my remark, nevertheless I will invite the hon. Minister to either answer the question or circulate the information.

Mrs Bappoo: I don't think I need to give answers to all the questions, because two or three answers can be circulated. But, concerning the question put by hon. Steve Obeegadoo about the additional posts, the six additional posts will be to cope, of course, with the increase in the volume of workload. There are enquiries, supervision, prevention works, counselling, and involvement in projects such as crime prevention in schools, colleges, social welfare centres, clubs, and additional works in connection...

The Chairperson: If it is a long list, please circulate it, hon. Minister.

Mrs Bappoo: This can also be circulated.

The Chairperson: If you don't have the figures, you may circulate them. Yes, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: I am still waiting for a reply to my previous question.

The Chairperson: Repeat your question then.

Mr Seeruttun: Page 345, item 22010 - *Cost of Utilities*, under *Sub-programme 50402*, I asked if we could have some details about what this cost item is comprised of, and what justifies the increase for 2014.

The Chairperson: That's a good question.

Mrs Bappoo: With regard to cost of utilities, I am informed that it is provision made for payment of the utility bills involved in the Probation Offices, and the funds are provided according to the actual trend of expenditure. So, it is the payment of these utilities in the centres for boys and girls.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I am still waiting for the answer about Life Plus Unit or Suicide Unit; the number of officers manning the Unit?

Mrs Bappoo: I was to circulate it.

The Chairperson: I have already said that if you can't link this issue with any item of expenditure...

(*Interruptions*)

Identify the item, so that the hon. Minister may know.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Page 338, item 50401- *Probation, After Care and Suicide Prevention Services*; Life Plus Unit, Overall Suicide Rate - the rate is given - and the targeted rate for the coming years also is mentioned. I would like to know from the Minister the number of people working in that Unit, and how they came with the prediction, the target that they have placed.

Mrs Bappoo: I will circulate the number of persons working in the unit. But, at the head of it, you have one Principal Probation Officer and one Probation Officer. Presently, the suicide rate is not as alarming as we think, because in 1994, it was 14 out of 100,000 population, and in 2012 it was only 6.9%. So, it is not an alarming situation. With the policy programme that has been put in place, it is giving results.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson. I am referring to item 22090, under *Sub-programme 50401* at page 345. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, which company is responsible of the security, and why the sum budgeted has decreased.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 345, *Sub-programme 50402 - Rehabilitation of Juvenile Offenders*. I put this together with the *Service Standard (Indicators)*. We are called upon to vote Rs19 m. - we have been given a percentage. May I ask the hon. Minister how many

juvenile offenders have been rehabilitated during the year 2013, with the amount of Rs19 m. that we voted, and what is the plan for next year?

Mrs Bappoo: I will certainly circulate the number of juvenile offenders, because I need to get it. But, as far as security is concerned, I am informed that this provision is made for the rental of security alarm system to the Probation Headquarters in Beau Bassin, and this is payable to Brinks company. I will circulate the number of juvenile offenders convicted on remand and rehabilitated.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to know whether the budget for next year provides for the expansion of the capacity of the CYC and the RYC.

The Chairperson: Could you indicate the page and item, hon. Member?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am referring on the one hand to the *staffing*, which is on pages 349 and 350, giving the staff composition for the RYC, and then I am referring also to the budget that is proposed under *rehabilitation of juvenile offenders* on page 345. Since the hon. Minister seems to indicate that there is increasing demand, increase in work pressure, and so on, an increase in the number of cases - we know that it is difficult for people to get admitted - I am asking whether the budget provides for an expansion of the capacity of the RYC to accommodate juvenile offenders, and if not, why not.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Chairperson, we are fully satisfied with the capacity of the infrastructure that we have for both the RYC girls and RYC boys in Beau Bassin. We can't do anything about CRC as it is for the PMO, the prisons department. We don't have anything to do with it. We are responsible for the probation home and the RYCs. The CRC goes to the Prison Department.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Chairperson, at page 345, under *Sub-programme 50402*, item 22060 - *Maintenance*, we know the significant increase in the cost of maintenance for the year 2013. We would like to know what justifies this increase.

Mrs Bappoo: There has been an increase in the contract for maintenance. It is not only for the building, because you have to take care of the grounds, the premises. So, this makes an increase in the maintenance.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, under the same item 22060 - *Maintenance*. May I know from the hon. Minister which company is providing the maintenance services?

Mrs Bappoo: I am informed that, through tender exercise, the contract has been awarded to one Mrs Dolchand at Rs10,000 monthly.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I think I heard the hon. Minister say that for maintenance it is Mrs Dolchand, with Rs10,000 monthly, but for the year we have a sum...

The Chairperson: Put the question, please!

Mrs Labelle: We are being asked to vote Rs330,000 and the contract is for Rs120,000?

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Bappoo: That was for 2013. Now we have to work for 2014.

Mrs Ribot: Excuse me, Mr Chairperson! I would like to come back to that question again. If Mrs Dolchand has got, in fact, for Rs10,000 a month, how can we vote for Rs330,000 for next year?

Mrs Bappoo: For the building it is Rs200,000, secondly, the plant and equipment: Rs7,000, the IT equipment: Rs3,000, the grants: Rs120,000. So, the total should match ...

(*Interruptions*)

No, everything! The contract is awarded to Mrs Dolchand. *Il y a quatre items différents.*

(*Interruptions*)

C'est la même personne.

The Chairperson: We have one minute left!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: I want some clarifications here. Is it the increase because the other contract has expired or is it a new contract? I want to know.

Mrs Bappoo: It is being specified that concerning Mrs Dolchand it is for the ground only. As far as the building, the plant equipment and IT equipment are concerned, I need to get the specification from my staff.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions - Programme Code 504: Probation, Social Rehabilitation and Suicide Prevention (Rs82,151,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 421: Policy and Management for Education and Human Resources was called.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, you will tell me when the 20 minutes start running.

The Chairperson: You can start now.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 359, under the second set of Service Standards - if the Minister follows me - S2: *Review of policies*, and the next column which is the third column, says *SS1: CPE examinations including the current system of certification and allocation of seats reviewed. Implement new system (2014), and new exams (2015)*. So, this is related to the global Budget under this programme that we are voting. I want to know from the hon. Minister, since we are concerned here with policy for the Ministry, what we will be voting for specifically. What I would like to know from the hon. Minister is what is going to happen in 2014 since there is a target of January 2014? Are we extending seventh, eighth, ninth year as from 2014, which schools? How will the admission take place? Will he tell us what is happening? What are we funding for in 2014?

The Chairperson: The question is about funds? So, we are more concerned with funds. Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: Funding in regard to CPE, because we are funding many things in the Budget.

The Chairperson: Yes, you may answer the question!

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute, hon. Obeegadoo! Let the Minister answer the question!

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the Budget Speech has mentioned that, and I have also spoken on what we are going to do with the CPE. I have announced that, in the name of Government,...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Aimée!

Dr. Bunwaree:...the review will take place as from 2015. The hon. Member mentioned about what is on page 349. In fact, we have introduced in the CPE examinations, including the current system of certification, allocation of seats be reviewed. So, it is the whole process going on. We have not waited for the CPE to phase out to bring amendment to what it is presently. In fact, we have already started a number of measures to lighten the CPE exams ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, no cross-talking!

Dr. Bunwaree:...the pressure that it puts on children. I am not going to mention all, because I will need too much time. For 2013, we have started; for 2014, we are going to have resit. For example, one of the important things we are doing is that on 20 December these children will have to be mixed up with those who have passed the CPE for the allocation of seats and so on and so forth. So, we have so many things that we are going to do in 2014. We are reviewing the curriculum itself for the exams in 2014, that is, it will not be the same. We are introducing a dosage of what is learned in the Enhancement Programme in the examination that will take place in 2013. Of course, we are reviewing the CPE itself, because after 2014, it will not be the CPE as it used to be now and as it used to be in the past, it will be a new CPE. Now, if the hon. Member wants more details, of course, I can send him many briefs on what we are doing.

The Chairperson: Yes, but we are concerned with funds. Please, no policy, no explanation of policy or whatever.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is funding, Mr Chairperson. On page 359, there is the service standard indicator. So, we are offering the Ministry of Education funds having regard to that indicator, and the target here is January; it says clearly *noir sur blanc* January - January having regard to the reviewing of the CPE system of certification and allocation of seats. So,

what are we paying for? Are we going to get a report? Are we going to get a new system? What are we funding for in January 2014?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said we have lots of things which we are going to do. I mentioned a few. I said deloading of curriculum...

(Interruptions)

Of course!

The Chairperson: No interruption!

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said we are reviewing the syllabus and the development of papers that will be set for next CPE exams. It starts in January, it goes till December; in November you have the exams. There is a continuous assessment which has already started and, as from this year, it will be strengthened for next year. There are so many things. I can write a big book and send it to the hon. Member.

Mrs Ribot: I am referring to page 366, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultant on (Adult Education)*. We are asked to vote for a Budget of Rs1 m. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Consultant has already been identified and, if yes, could we get his name, and more details about that study?

Mr Seeruttun: On page 365, item 21- *Compensation of Employees*. I can see a drastic reduction on the amount earmarked for 2014, and yet, the number of employees for that programme is on the rise. May we know how we reconcile the fact that the number of employees is going up and the salary is reduced?

Dr. Bunwaree: What is the item number?

Mr Seeruttun: The first one - *Compensation of Employees*, it goes down from Rs162 m. to Rs121 m. and the *Number of Employees* is going up in 2014. May we know why?

The Chairperson: Yes, two questions have been put.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am giving the reply to hon. Seeruttun. In fact, when we look at the Budget, we find that because of the PRB implementation, there have been some surplus funds which have been ventilated in other sub programmes. So, this is why when we see this one, we

find that it is less, but when we look at others we will see that it is more. If the hon. Member wants more details, he will have to be specific on the items. But it is the presentation which is like that. In fact, there is ventilation of funds in other items of the Budget. For example, the hon. Member will see other programmes where the funds are in excess.

Concerning *fees to Consultant (Adult Education)*, I think the question was put. In fact, the Budget has made provision for the setting up of an Adult Education Unit at the Ministry of Education and it is intended to support adults to re-engage in education for continued education and lifelong learning. We are going to target adults above 19 years of age and a consultancy given the fact that adult education is provided by various agencies, *on fait ça un peu en ce moment même*. There is therefore the need for further improvement to meet Education For All (EFA) goal.

With regard to adult literacy, it is being proposed to enlist the services of a consultant to work out a strategy enrolled map for the implementation of a comprehensive and sustained adult education programme. So, we are going to appoint the consultant.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 366, item 26313099 – *World Hindi Secretariat*, we are being asked to vote Rs2,810,000, can we know from the hon. Minister where we are actually with that Secretariat and whether it has taken shape, and as far as the building is concerned, where matters stand concerning the construction of the Headquarters of the World Hindi Secretariat?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 366, item 22120 – *Fees*, because we are called upon to vote Rs8.4 m. and Rs1 m. is for this *Adult Education* the Minister has just answered. May I ask the hon. Minister what the balance, that is, the Rs7.4 m. will be used for what purpose and for which fees?

Dr. Bunwaree: Which item?

Mrs Labelle: Item 22120 – *Fees*, because there is only Rs1 m. which is being allocated to *Adult Education* and there is a balance of Rs7.4 m. what will this sum be used for? Following that, we have *Studies and Surveys* Rs3.5 m., may we know which surveys and studies are we talking about?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: Which surveys and studies? I see that we have the voted provision. On one side, we have the fees to Members of the Board, the Chairman and so on of the National Equivalence Council. Is it that? The question is for Adult Education.

(Interruptions)

It is Rs6 m. plus a new item - *Capacity Building Programme* and provision for payment to service providers is Rs6 m. and the *Capacity Building Programme* is added on that as a new item.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No question from a sitting position!

Dr. Bunwaree: Which service? We are going to start the programme in the course of the year, Mr Chairperson!

The Chairperson: Let's move forward! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

No question from a sitting position! No, I do not agree!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: The hon. Member has put the question.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No, I say no. If the hon. Member wants to put another question, we will put his name down and he will get the chance.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: He had put the question. I can?

The Chairperson: Does the hon. Minister want to answer?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member had put the question to me. I replied for the second one but he had put the first one.

(*Interruptions*)

The construction....

(*Interruptions*)

The present venue of the World Hindi Secretariat is a rented building in Forest Side and the Government of Mauritius has provided a plot of land adjacent to the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture at Phoenix, of an extent of 8,441 *mètres carrés* to the Secretariat for the construction of its building.

The Government of the Republic of India has appointed one dedicated Project Officer at the grade of Second Secretary, namely, Mr Singh, in July 2013 to oversee the project. The preliminary cost and design of the project are awaiting final approval from competent authorities in India. *Nous faisons un peu de pression mais on ne peut pas faire plus que ce qu'on fait.* Simultaneously, instructions to bidders are also being finalised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India. The project is, therefore, almost at tendering stage and we cannot do more because we are not Mauritius only, it is a joint programme...

(*Interruptions*)

Oui mais c'est joint. We are doing our part but we have to wait for the other side also.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 366, item 22180 – *Overseas Travel (Mission & Capacity Building)*, can the hon. Minister inform the House for what reason the amount earmarked has increased by nearly 250%?

The Chairperson: A second question by hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 365, there is the item 22030 - *Rent*. May I know from the hon. Minister which building is being rented, where is the building, the floor space area and also for what purpose we are renting this building?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: There are so many explanations to give to hon. Jhugroo, I prefer to circulate the paper so that he will see for himself and he will find the reason there.

Secondly, the building for....

(Interruptions)

What is the number? Rs20 m.?

(Interruptions)

Provision is made for the rental of office space for four sheltered parking slots and additional space on level 1 of the MITD House, the Head Office and rental of new office space at NPF Building at Rose Hill to accommodate the Quality Assurance Directorate for about 25 Officers. This is a new Directorate. We are lacking space.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: The question has been replied already, thank you.

The Chairperson: Okay, and now hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am coming back to the item 22130 on page 366 – *Studies and Surveys*. A sum of Rs1 m. had already been earmarked for the year 2013. I would like to know whether any study and survey has been carried out already and the subject matter of the survey and study and the reason for the significant increase since the sum of Rs3.5 m. has been earmarked for the year 2014.

The Chairperson: The second question hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 366 item 22100 – *Publications and Stationery*, whereby we see there is an amount of Rs6.5 m. Can I ask the Minister whether there has been any publication from the Ministry to explain what his Ministry is doing in terms of policy to the public?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you have 4 minutes to answer!

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, as regards the study, I think hon. Mrs Ribot mentioned that. In fact, we have a very important problem that we have identified for the past few months which is the underperformance of boys at all levels of education and therefore the study is only on gender equality in learning outcomes. This item is taking...

(Interruptions)

It is in the process

(Interruptions)

Non.

The Chairperson: Yes, you have four minutes to answer. Now, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 366, item 22120 - *Fees*, for the year 2014 some Rs8.4 m. have been earmarked.

The Chairperson: Which item?

Mr Seeruttun: Item 22120 - *Fees*, Rs8.4 m. is earmarked for 2014. We have been given here that Rs1 m. is for the *Fees to Consultant (Adult Education)*. May we know the remainder of that amount goes for what?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you have two minutes to answer.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I am waiting for a reply to item 22100.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister has two minutes to answer the questions.

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, I need to check what is left for that. There should be some other thing, but I will give the information to the hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I refer to the last two items raised by my colleagues, *Studies and Surveys* and *Publications and Stationery* at page 366. We note that the Budget has proposed phasing out of CPE. We know that the primary objective of this programme is policy

formulation. I would like to put it to the hon. Minister how come for the first time in the history of this country such an important change has been proposed and there is no policy document that has been published. So, will he tell the nation, very clearly, whether, with the funds he is asking under these two items, there will be a document to tell the anguished parents and teachers out there what exactly he has in mind and when will that document be published?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Don't put a long question!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: This is a matter of policy and...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence! Allow the hon. Minister to answer, please!

Dr. Bunwaree: The problem is that my hon. friend knows well what is going on, but seems not to be knowing here. So, what I want to say is that we have a strategic document that has come out in 2009 and which is under implementation. It is the strategic plan for Education and Human Resources in Mauritius 2008-2020 and this plan was applauded even by the hon. Member and the hon. Leader of the Opposition. *Tout le monde était d'accord.* We are implementing this plan. So, now coming here and saying that he does not know, *c'est dommage*.

The Chairperson: Yes, one minute left.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I am still waiting for a reply to my question.

The Chairperson: Yes, repeat your question.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, if I may repeat, I asked on page 366 item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*. I asked for the year 2013 whether the whole amount has been used till now and which publications have been...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let the hon. Minister answer!

Dr. Bunwaree: But, I have answered just now. I said I will look into it and let the hon. Member know.

The Chairperson: Alright!

(Interruptions)

He said he will look into it, so the hon. Member should follow.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Then, I will place it in the Library.

The Chairperson: Time is up.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources - Programme Code 421: Policy and Management for Education and Human Resources (Rs191,029,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources - Programme Code 422: Pre-Primary Education was called.

Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, first!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Pre-Primary Education, Programme Code 422, on page 367, under item 26323071 - *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of Pre-Primary Schools, private and public, that will be benefitting from the one-off grant, the amount of grant to be given to each school and the purpose of that grant?

The Chairperson: Two questions and then, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: If I may take up from where my hon. colleague has just left off. I am referring to page 367, items 26313 or 26323, the hon. Minister will tell us which it is. Now, the Budget Speech refers to Rs100,000 to each of the 125 private underprivileged pre-primary schools. Will the hon. Minister, please, tell us what the private underprivileged pre-primary schools are? Is there a register of underprivileged pre-primary schools that has been established by the Ministry and according to what criteria?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Chairperson, in fact, in order to reduce the systemic inequity between schools at this level, we have made provisions for all Pre-Primary Schools in identified pockets of poverty. A work is being done with other Ministries - *intégration sociale, sécurité sociale*, etc. We have a list and then, we are going to finalise it, but all the schools that are found in these pockets of poverty will be benefitting from this item of Rs100,000.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Page 367, item 26313071, (c) *Private Pre-Primary Schools*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many of these Private Pre-Primary Schools have been registered and are getting these grants from the Ministry?

The Chairperson: Second question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I would like a clarification because the Budget Speech, paragraph 305, talks about 125 private pre-primary schools. Now, I think I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning schools which will be identified and he will give the list. If the Budget mentioned 125, I would have thought that the list of these schools is ready. May I ask the hon. Minister if he can provide us with a list of these 125 schools mentioned in the Budget? Maybe there will be other schools that will be identified, will the hon. Minister submit us the list of those already identified?

Dr. Bunwaree: I thank the hon. Member because she has already replied for me. In fact, 125 schools have been identified; there is an authority which takes care of that. But over and above that, we have to review and check because there could be others that are not included. So, 125 schools out of - I think the question was put how many schools - 850.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you Mr Chairperson. I am on page 367, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, Rs1.6 m. for 2013. And then, turning to page 380, for Programme 422: Pre-Primary Education, I don't see any position being...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Page 380, last item, Programme 422.

Mr Uteem: Under Programme 422: Pre-Primary Education, I don't see any human resource list. So, may I have an explanation from the hon. Minister, what is this amount being paid for?

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I will go back to the question that I asked, item 26323071 - *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, I am moving to section (c) *One-Off Grant to Private Pre-Primary Schools*. So, I would like to ask the hon. Minister, the amount of the grant to be given to these Pre-Primary Schools and the purpose of the grant?

Dr. Bunwaree: The amount of the grant is Rs100,000 per school. 125 schools have already been identified, there could be a bit more.

(Interruptions)

Well, in fact, we started last year, by giving, we did not include pre-primary, but we gave to so many schools. This time, we are renewing for primary and secondary, but we are extending to pre-primary. There are so many that we can't give all of them, but we have chosen these schools which are in disadvantaged conditions. I have to say that the question was put about the *Personal Emoluments*.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem, put your question!

Dr. Bunwaree: The thing is that there is an increase. The question of PRB comes in.

(Interruptions)

I will look into that and circulate!

Mr Obeegadoo: To go back to the question of hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoommun, we now know that the Ministry of Education will spend, at least, Rs12.5 m. on this so-called underprivileged private pre-primary schools.

Dr. Bunwaree: So-called!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, because they are, in fact, in underprivileged zone. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what is the purpose of this expenditure? What are the criteria that have been set? What are the objectives that are to be achieved to ensure that we are properly spending this money?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have already replied this question. I said we have the experience with primary and secondary already. We are going to go along the same criteria. We are going to work together with the Parent-Teacher Association and the Management of the school to upgrade. There are so many things to do and we have already started doing that last year - I am saying for primary essentially.

Mr Baloomoody: Just to continue from what my learned friend, hon. Uteem, has said with regard to the personnel for the pre-primary education, we don't have the list. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, on that list, there is a child psychologist?

Dr. Bunwaree: Which one!

Mr Baloomoody: On the list of the Emolument, Staff for the Pre-Primary, compensation of employees. We don't have the list. Can I know whether there is a child psychologist on that list to visit the pre-primary schools?

The Chairperson: We shall take a second question! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the same page, following up from what my friend, hon. Obeegadoo, has stated with respect to this One-Off Grant to Private Pre-Primary school, may I know from the hon. Minister whether it would be a cash grant or it would be a grant "in kind" given by the Ministry to various courses?

Dr. Bunwaree: No, it is cash and given under control. We just don't give like that. We go along to what they are going to do. In fact, maybe, I have to add that One-Off Grant is essentially to support the schools on pedagogical and learning environment to promote equity among the children. This is mainly meant for that. So, we are going to see in what way they will make their proposals and then, we will look into that and go accordingly. Now, that question that was raised, I think, hon. Baloomoody came back to that: compensation of employees, I am informed that it is essentially the social contributions and the increase as per *tranche*. Now the

question of child psychologist, there is no psychologist attached to the pre-primary schools, but we have psychologists at the level of the Ministry in all the zones who take care of all psychological problems even for pre-primary.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I think my colleague has put a question as to why the staffing funded position for this programme does not appear as for other programmes. I don't know whether we have an answer to that. But my main concern right now, still under the programme 422, we were told in the Budget Speech that the upgrading of existing *crèches*, because we are talking about pre-primary, Early Childhood Care. Let me refer item 26313071- *Early Childhood Care and Education Authority*, we were told that the programme of upgrading of existing *crèches* - I take the words from the Budget speech for an amount of R200,000 will continue this year too. It was on last year. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can circulate the information about the number of *crèches* who have benefitted? This is the word I am taking.

(*Interruptions*)

Do you have a problem with that?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No interruption!

Mrs Labelle: These *crèches* were supposed to receive Rs200,000 and how many have benefitted from this scheme and where, in the Budget, will the Ministry funds this particular item?

Mr Obeegadoo: Page 339, *Compensation of Employees* item 21, the Minister is surely aware that because there has, as yet, not been complete standardisation of conditions of employment of teachers attached to the ECCEA, this may have caused a lot of frustrations. Are we to understand that within the estimates for next year, funds are being provided for the full and final standardisation of all conditions of employment of all teachers working under the authority whether they come from previous PTA schools, Village District Councils so that all teachers with equal qualifications are at par in terms of conditions of employment?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, much has been done in that aspect. This question has been in the limelight for years, as we know. When I was the Minister of Labour, there was one employee, one teacher employed on contractual basis and there also, needful is being done to place her on permanent and pensionable establishment.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: You should address me. Address the Chair and no interruption!

Dr. Bunwaree: Once the teachers are placed on PPE, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

Let me give this information, Mr Chairperson. I said that there is one teacher and once the teachers are placed on PPE, therefore all of them immediately enjoy all the benefits to which they are entitled: pension rights etc. and they are drawing salaries as per PRB 2013. *L'honorable membre n'a aucune inquiétude à se faire* for the teachers. Now, for the attendants: In the year 2011 and 2013, the situation of 178 school attendants...

(Interruptions)

...were regularised. 178! They were placed on permanent and pensionable establishment and are drawing salaries according to PRB 2013. Casual workers working under the ECCEA: 21 persons working on an *ad-hoc* basis as school attendants against payment of an allowance and my Ministry is looking into ways and means to regularise their situation. I don't know whether it is for that category that the hon. Member was referring to. For hon. Labelle: Crèche will not appear here because it is zero to 3, therefore it is not covered within the purview of my Ministry. This is the Ministry of Gender which, in fact, takes care of that, but we liaise with them everyday and whenever there are things to do, we do. But the main responsibility is for my colleague, the hon. Minister of Gender Equality.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 367, item 26323071 (c) *One-Off Grant to Private Pre-Primary Schools*. May I ask the hon. Minister how many private schools will benefit from this one-off grant from Rodrigues being given that the Statistics Office says Rodrigues is one of the least developed region in Mauritius?

Dr. Bunwaree: For Rodrigues, I don't have the figures. Certainly they are coming, but I can say to my hon. friend - he knows, in fact - that we never leave Rodrigues out. Whenever they are in pockets of difficulties, they will qualify certainly.

Programme Code 422: Pre-Primary Education (Rs230,577,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 423: Primary Education was called.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: In fact, I have the same question for four items on page 368. The question is: can the Minister explain...

The Chairperson: Please give the item number.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Can the hon. Minister explain the reasons for such huge increases in the estimates for next year? So, same question for the four items. The items are as follows: 22030 - *Rent*, from R780,000 to Rs7 m.; item 22060 - *Maintenance*, from Rs53m. to Rs56m.; item 22670 - *Cleaning Services*, from Rs15 m. to Rs26 m., and finally item 22090 – *Security*, from Rs18m. to Rs27m.

The Chairperson: That's four questions in one. Yes, second question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I will move on to the same Programme, item 26323 - *Capital Grant to Extra-Budgetary*, and sub-item 26323034 - *Mauritius Examinations Syndicate*, on Page 368. May I know for which purpose this capital grant has been made to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate?

Dr. Bunwaree: Let me try to give the replies to the four in one question. *Security Services*: the award of the contract with effect from July 2010, for a period of three years, renewable yearly up to June 2013 to RSL Security Services Ltd. Contract is being renewed on a month to month basis as from 01 July 2013, owing to a Court case against Rapid Security Services. So, a Court case is going on, and, therefore, this decision has been taken.

Now, for increase in rental of buildings, in fact, as I said earlier, it is mainly for shifting to Zone IV to Ébène Heights. A building is being rented there. There is also for the Store Section of Zone I, which is going to SILWF building, 301m², and the other one 9,700 square feet.

The question was also concerning rental space for one primary school, Moonoosamy Building, Triolet, to house Sewraz Government School, where work is being done. The school is being redone completely.

There was also a question put concerning maintenance. For maintenance, Rs300,000 has come to Rs750,000 for 2014. Out of this, we have plant and equipment, Rs160,000, as it was last year, and for IT equipment, the increase is mainly there. Last year, it was Rs140,000, and this year Rs590,000. For cleaning services, I don't have the information. I will give it as soon as I have it.

The Chairperson: In the meantime, we shall listen to the question of hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I would like to go to the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire Schools*, which is *Sub-programme 42304*, and on page 361, on the top of the page, we have the dismal success rate of the ZEP schools which, under this Government, has become the *Zone d'Echec Prioritaire*. I would like to know, now that the Minister of Finance, rightly, is proposing that we approve an additional Rs40 m. for the ZEP schools, what measures the Ministry is taking to ensure that this sum is efficiently and effectively spent, so that it translates into better results that, which the Ministry has been incapable of doing over the last eight years?

The Chairperson: I would appeal to hon. Obeegadoo to be fair in putting a question. You may put a question, and don't pass a judgment on the hon. Minister. Yes, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 368, under *Sub-programme 42302*, item *28212004 - Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, we know that there is an increase in the amount. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, since we have problems with Bambous, if there has been any tender exercise, and who has been awarded

the tender. I would also like to know if, in the contract, a penalty will be included in case of food poisoning.

The Chairperson: It is a good question for a PQ, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to *Sub-programme 42303 - Private Aided Primary Schools*, on page 369, item *2110 - Personal Emoluments*. There is quite a significant increase from Rs37 m. to Rs89 m., but later, we see that the number of funded positions has remained the same, that is, 182. Can the hon. Minister justify the significant increase?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 369, sub-item *31112402 - Upgrading of Toilets*. All MPs know about this problem, which is related to all schools in all constituencies. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether there has been a list or a survey which has been done for that particular project? If the hon. Minister could circulate a list of what has been done, so that we can know where there are problems in our constituency whenever we are called upon, and in which schools there will be upgrading for the coming year.

Dr. Bunwaree: To reply to hon. Bhagwan, I can circulate the list that we have. This is very interesting. A regular survey goes on. Sometimes, schools are added, and sometimes schools are removed when they are already done. I am placing the list in the Library.

There was also a question put on the increase in personal emoluments from Rs37,000 to Rs89,000. I am informed that the increase is mainly due to implementation of the PRB and Anomalies Report of 2013, and transfer of funds for Government oriental language teachers working at the RCA schools, actually paid under Programme *42302 - Public Primary Schools*. It also includes increment of 2014. So, this gives the reply to Mrs Ribot who has put the question.

Now, with regard to the question of ZEP schools, it was a question of policy. I don't want to enter into this, but then I will certainly inform the hon. Member by other means about all that is being done. I am going to circulate for him the various things that we are doing, but I recall that I did mention the ASA Foundation. I think the hon. Minister of Finance also talked about that the other day. The ASA Academy is going to help us to launch a very daring programme for

ZEP schools, and we have identified six pilot schools for next year, where we are having a grant from the African Development Bank of about Rs60 m. to make this happen. And once this happens, it will be extended certainly, with the help of our own Government, to all the other ZEP schools of the country.

I think a question was put on the Cleaning Services. This includes cleaning in all primary and secondary schools, all administrative institutions, and also the cleaning of toilets, of course. I am told that the scope of the cleaning of the premises of the school institutions starts from the entrance and covers all the areas of the compound. Now this is new, it did not exist before. I'll have to look into the matter, but I am told that these are the various components of the cleaning aspect.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 368, item 28212004 - *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*. Being given that an amount of Rs24.5 m. is earmarked for this year, can the hon. Minister inform the House what amount has been used for this year? Can he table a list of all those who were involved with this School Feeding Project?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will certainly circulate this information for hon. Jhugroo. I think Mrs Radegonde-Haines also mentioned about the School Feeding Project. In fact, I forgot to tell her that we are going to opt for the hot meal again. No contract has been given yet, but the contract has been prepared and it is going to be launched very soon.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 369, item 31112402- *Upgrading of Schools (a) O. Beaugeard Government School*. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the total contract value of the project? When is it scheduled to be completed and, in the meantime, what is the rent being paid by the Ministry for the alternative sites where the students are studying?

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item 31112402 - *Upgrading of Schools*, Mr Chairperson, I don't see the name of Renganaden Seeneevassen Primary School, at Réserve Street, Port Louis. Do I take it that there will be no construction, extension or alteration of the building, because now the project for the dream bridge is not going ahead?

Dr. Bunwaree: I am talking from memory, but, in any case, I have already mentioned that the school children and the PTA should not be anxious, because we are going to take good care of all of them. There will be, next year, under the item upgrading I have been told, but we

have to take into consideration that there will be that big development and we are going to see how we are going to manage with the school which is already there; we are not going to close it.

With regard to O. Beaugeard Government School, the project is for the construction of 15 classrooms, toilet and renovation works, with a project value of Rs45.7 m., and the expected completion date is May 2014. The reason for the delay is that the first contract was awarded in 2006, works stopped due to Court Order and new design after consultation with the Ministry of Arts and Culture and the National Heritage Trust Fund. Tenders were floated in 2009, but the contract was not awarded as validity of bond of bidder had lapsed. There was a new exercise in 2012 and works started in July.

However, there was a new action in Court on 25 November of this year from *Société de l'Histoire de Maurice*, so an Interim Stop Order was issued. So, you see the difficulties that we are having. There is now an injunction on the construction of O. Beaugeard Government School, unfortunately.

Mr François: I refer to page 368, item 28212004 - *Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this feeding project which is to be paid from the Rs26.5 m. will include natural food crops like *manioc*, *cambar*, *patate douce*, etc. for a healthy school population?

Dr. Bunwaree: I can assure the hon. Member that this work is done in conjunction with the specialist dieticians of the Ministry of Health.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 368, item 22070 - *Cleaning Services*. I come back to that item because the Minister does not tell us who the contractor is and whether there has been a tendering exercise. If the hon. Minister does not have the information, he can circulate it; same for *Security*.

Dr. Bunwaree: Provision was made according to the contracts awarded. I have just been given a list of contractors. They are -

- Mauriclean Service Ltd.;
- New Cleaning Service;
- Best Super Clean Co. Ltd., and
- Moolchand Cleaning.

Mauriclean Service Ltd. for a certain number of schools!

Mr Jugnauth: On Page 369, under *Sub-Programme 42303: Private-Aided Primary Schools*, item 28211061- *Performance Grant to RCEA Schools*. Although we are going to vote for this estimate for next year, the Ministry will still need to seek the authority of the Ministry of Finance for that amount. May I know if the criterion for the grant has already been discussed with the Ministry of Finance and, if so, can the hon. Minister circulate this criteria?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I have so many questions that I have to choose. Under *Sub-Programme 42302, item 28212004 – Primary School Supplementary Feeding Project*, and the feeding project under *Sub-Programme 42304: Zone d'Education Prioritaire School* respectively. May I know from the hon. Minister this feeding project consists of what? What do we give to the children under this project and what amount has been spent for 2013, particularly when we know that the initial project was changed? What amount has been spent for ZEP schools for 2013 and for the other schools it consists of what?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, it consists of a menu which is varied. I will circulate the menus which these children are offered.

For the ZEP schools, it is a bit special, I must say. I will find the figures and circulate it definitely.

Now, a question was put by hon. Jugnauth with regard to grant for the RCEA schools. I must say that we keep working and discussing with the Ministry of Finance. A new agreement for the period 2015 is being worked out by a technical committee set up at the level of the Ministry and will be finalised shortly. I will circulate the performance indicators.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Chairperson, on page 370, item 31112002- *Construction and Extension of Schools*. Mr Chairperson, I don't understand why Serge Coutet Government School, which is a school found at Baie du Tombeau – the school that I attended when I was a child - the demand is very low there...

(Interruptions)

I don't understand why there is construction or extension of schools. In fact, I think it would be better under Upgrading of Schools, because there is no demand for that school in Baie du Tombeau, because of the poor performance at CPE level.

The Chairperson: Is it a question or a statement? Hon. Mrs Ribot!

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Why it is under Construction and Extension and there is no demand there?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: That's a question. Thank you. Yes!

Mrs Ribot: Mr Chairperson, I just want to get a clarification from the hon. Minister. I asked a question earlier on the *Personal Emoluments* of the *Private Aided Primary Schools* at item 21110 and I think I heard the hon. Minister reply that that sum included the fees to the oriental language teachers. I just wanted to have a confirmation because according to me this is not the case since the fees to the oriental language teachers is found in another programme and amounts to Rs28,000.

The Chairperson: Too long a question! Long question!

Mrs Ribot: That was just a clarification. And the question I wanted...

The Chairperson: If the hon. Member clarifies lengthily and puts question then ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Ribot: Now I come to my question. *Summer/Winter School Programme* item 22900935 on page 367. I would like to get the name and number of schools engaged in that programme, the names of students per school at the beginning and at the end of the year and the justification for the decrease of the grants from Rs5 m. to Rs4 m. and as a conclusion, we are just a bit surprised that we do not find any budgetary provision for the *Enhancement Programme*, has it simply disappeared?

The Chairperson: Your question has an introduction and a conclusion!

(*Interruptions*)

Yes, hon. Minister!

(*Interruptions*)

No, no more questions!

(*Interruptions*)

Time is over but the Minister will have to answer!

Dr. Bunwaree: Winter and Summer Schools, *il y a une petite confusion, j'espère que cela va se régler rapidement parce que ce qu'on appelle les summer schools et les winter schools, ce sont des écoles qui existent déjà mais qui pendant summer et...*

(*Interruptions*)

Parce qu'on me demande depuis le début de l'année jusqu'à la fin mais ce sont des écoles qui existent.

(*Interruptions*)

L'Enhancement Programme n'a pas disparu, au contraire.

(*Interruptions*)

Pour Serge Coutet à Baie du Tombeau je vais voir quel est le problème là-bas parce qu'on me dit que *for special schools because there is a work which is done*, la demande vient de la base. Les experts vont et on travaille ensemble pour voir. J'allais donner cette réponse-là mais je vois que les *specialist rooms* pour le *computer*, la *science lab*, etc. Mais on prend les enfants d'une autre façon ; avec les techniques modernes, ils se développent très vite.

Mais je vais prendre en considération ce que l'honorable membre m'a dit. Si on a décidé de le faire, c'est qu'il y a une belle équipe qui a dû travailler là-dessus mais, j'ai dit que je vais prendre en considération pour voir parce que je crois aussi dans ce que pensent les autres.

As regards the Oriental Language (OL), I was informed that it was like that, I will look into it and reconfirm.

The Chairperson: There is one question for hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun which has to be answered.

Dr. Bunwaree: Which one?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister about the *Capital Project for MES*? I did not have an answer about what it was meant for the sum of Rs800,000 which was given to the MES.

Secondly, for the *Zone d'Éducation Prioritaire* school,...

The Chairperson: One question! I have allowed the hon. Member one question, please!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: ...the *Fees* item 22120...

The Chairperson: No, one question only!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: The Fees were not provided for in the last year's Budget, but Rs9.5 m. was earmarked for the next year, that is why I wanted to know what those fees are meant for.

Dr. Bunwaree: For the MES, the funds will be used for the acquisition of equipment and furniture such as computers, printers, server, office desks, etc. *Ça c'est pour le MES*. The other question was about the Enhancement Programme. It is on. *Cela continue*.

The Chairperson: Now, time is over!

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 423: Primary Education (Rs3,953,774,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 424: Secondary Education was called.

Yes, time starts at 16.06!

(Interruptions)

Don't worry; you will get your minutes and your seconds!

(Interruptions)

I have given 4 minutes more for the last Programme Code. Do you want to stop the clock?

(*Interruptions*)

So, those who are interested, please, let us see! Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mrs Labelle: We start?

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I go to page 375, sub programme 42402 – *Pre-Vocational Education*. I am going to stay with item 21 – *Personal Emoluments*. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether this amount includes payment to pre-voc supply teachers who have been working for 8 years and I think following Parliamentary Questions, the hon. Minister told me that they are going to be appointed, since two years he told me that. May we know whether finally these poor pre-voc teachers will be appointed and whether there is provision for their emoluments in this Budget?

The Chairperson: Yes!

Dr. Bunwaree: The answer is yes. Provision includes implementation of PRB, etc. increment 2014 and filling of vacancies, pre-voc education.

(*Interruptions*)

Very soon! *Je vais regarder cela.*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: If it is going to happen like this, we will be wasting time and others will not get the chance to put questions! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I rise on the sub programme 42042 – *Pre-Vocational Education*. The staffing provision is at page 385 and the global budget is at page 375. So, I rise on the *Compensation of Employees* and also the staffing positions at 385. As we approve this Budget, we are told there are major impending changes for the pre-vocational that is to be phased out. Will the hon. Minister tell us what is going to happen to these posts that we are going to fund in 2014 inasmuch as the teachers out there are in a state of anguish?

(*Interruptions*)

Inasmuch as the teachers out there are in a state of anguish and asking what is going to happen! They are in the dark!

Dr. Bunwaree: Je suis un médecin qui guérit les *anguished*, M. le président.

(*Interruptions*)

Je peux les rassurer. This year is going to be a year of transition. We will have to understand. Of course, the pre-voc will be taken up in the reforms that are going to come. But, no one will be left out, *au contraire, tout le monde va être un peu mieux par rapport à ce qu'il y a. Mais c'est une histoire de* policy, so, I will ask the hon. Member to be patient and bear with us.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 372, item 28221007 *Secondary Schools...*

Dr. Bunwaree: What page?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: At page 372 item 28221007 – *Secondary Schools (Acquisition of Musical Instruments)*, I see for 2014 an amount of Rs10 m. has been provided, but when I look at page 383, I see no posts have been created or no posts exist for the teaching of music. Can I know what will happen?

Dr. Bunwaree: *Toutes les écoles secondaires ont des professeurs de musique déjà.*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Ribot! We have finished. I say no more! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I am referring to

Dr. Bunwaree: L'instrument...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Ribot: I am referring to page 372, item 26216...

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you are making things difficult for the Chair!

Dr. Bunwaree: I am sorry!

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Page 372, item 26210152 – *Contribution to OECD (Programme for International Student Assessment)*, we would like to get some clarifications on that item and the justification of the increase regarding item 26313122 and 26313123 – *Rabindranath Tagore Institute and Mahatma Gandhi Institute* moving from Rs1 m. to Rs13 m. and Rs5 m. to Rs20 m.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, I will wait for the explanation for the increase in Budget. There are certainly things that are being done for both RTI and MGI. For the OECD, I must inform the hon. Member that, in fact, in the domain of reading and also in other domains, for example, mathematics, we work with international institutions that carry assessments and so on for Mauritius. In fact, we are doing well, I must say. Apart from OECD there is also PASEC, all these are institutions that take care of our system and assesses what the children of Mauritius are doing. So, I don't know exactly what the hon. Member wants to know, but I will give her all the details, I will circulate all the details regarding these institutions.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 373, under Sub-Programme: 42404, item 28211 - *Other Current Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, I would like to know why there is a significant increase from the year 2013 to 2014?

Dr. Bunwaree: What page?

The Chairperson: Page 373, item 28211.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Rs7,600,000 was earmarked for the year 2013 and Rs21,600,000 was earmarked for 2014 and then, a reduction again. Can I have some explanation?

Dr. Bunwaree: The explanation is that the grant to Public Secondary Schools, payment of grant to registered PTA of Public Secondary Schools, basic grant, matching grant, per capita grant and one-off grant to Public Secondary Schools for upgrading, the Rs200,000 per SSS which is Rs14 m. by itself. So, I will circulate that breakdown. I think it would be better.

The Chairperson: Next question, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: On page 375, item 31112002, with regard to the *Construction and Extension of Schools*, being given that there was an amount of Rs43.3 m. which was earmarked for this year for the *Construction and Extension of Schools*, can we have an idea of the status of work carried out in each school?

Dr. Bunwaree: In each of the five schools. Yes, I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: At page 375, Pre-Vocational Education. Under item 31112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools*, I see there are five training centres under renovation and construction. One is the Mont Roches Training Centre which is in my Constituency. My question to the hon. Minister is that the state of affairs and the environment, the building itself at Colonel Maingard, Beau Bassin has been converted into a training school. I don't see that in this list. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the intention of Government is to close that institution at Maingard or whether there are plans for further renovations, I think, in the coming years or in the coming months?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't think there is any question of closure. I have never heard that at the level of the Ministry. There should be certainly works, but I will look into the matter and then inform the hon. Member.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 373, item 31112402 - *Upgrading of Schools, (f) R. Seeneevassen SSS*, may I know from the hon. Minister what does the upgrading works relate to? What is the total contract amount and when is the scheduled completion date?

Dr. Bunwaree: For R. Seenevassen SSS, I will certainly be tabling it in a few seconds. I have to add for Colonel Maingard - because I have just got the information to the question put by hon. Bhagwan - the School has been transformed into a SEN school. So much the better and the status is that the work has been completed, but I will look into the other aspects of the environment, as he mentioned.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 372, under item 22900006 - *School Requisites (including Specialised Language Schools)*, can I ask the hon. Minister which schools have been identified for this project and whether there are specialised staff trained for that purpose and whether language labs have been included in these institutions?

Dr. Bunwaree: This question of Specialised Language Schools is very important. It is a revolution, and we already have two languages in Mauritius, English and French, learnt by all the students apart from oriental languages and other languages.

The Specialised Language Schools will have to take care of a third language for our students and the measure will target Secondary School Students in eight State Secondary Schools, two per education zone. Well, I will circulate the list. We have eight of them as has been mentioned. The languages that are going to be taught will be most probably German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Russian, and these languages will be taught in Lower Secondary Forms I, II and III. Well, they want to know the names, if the hon. Member will bear with me I will just mention the eight names.

The Chairperson: If it is a long list, you may circulate it.

Dr. Bunwaree: I will place it in the Library.

The Chairperson: Yes, it is better to circulate it. Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 375, Sub-Programme 42402, under item 26313027- *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (Prevoc)*, the amount for 2014 has gone up to Rs14.4 m. May we have some details for what expenditure this Rs14.4 m. is going to cater for?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will circulate all the details because there are many things. But, I will mention only one, at least, that the MITD is going to take care of. The new thing that is going to start in Mauritius is the maintenance of airplanes which is going to take place in the region of the airport, that is, in Beau-Vallon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am on Programme 42402, the hon. Minister has mentioned that the supply teachers of pre-vocational will be appointed, but when we look at the position funded, there is no increase. There is even a decrease of position funded as compared to figures in the Budget Estimates of 2013. These supply teachers who have been working on contract during the past eight or ten years; so, there is no provision for them to be appointed during the coming year?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Chairperson, the Ministry is considering the regularisation of posts, as the hon. Member mentioned. There are 31 supply teachers who have been serving the pre-vocs streams since January 2004, in fact. It is proposed to amend the Scheme of Service - this is being done - so as to facilitate the absorption of 31 supply teachers on the establishment of the Ministry. Provision has been made in the year 2014 for 46 funded positions in the grade of Teacher Secondary Pre-Vocational. So, funds will be sought for four additional posts once the scheme of service for the post of Teacher Secondary Pre-Vocational is prescribed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am a bit at a loss; if this programme is 424.

(Interruptions)

Yes. The programme is 424. At page 355, I read that the primary objective is to make sure all children successfully complete Form VI or alternative programmes. Then, I look at - and of course, I have in mind the nine-year schooling, one graduate per family - page 361, the figures that the hon. Minister has given, Mr Chairperson; percentage of students entering in Form 1 and graduating in Form V: 56%; percentage of students entering Year 1 and completing pre-vocational cycle: 79%. Can the hon. Minister give us one good reason why we should vote this global budget of Rs7.7 m. with such a failure rate and a drop-out rate?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't know whether the hon. Member is aware of what the drop-out rate was when he was in my place.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Ribot!

Mrs Ribot: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to page 375, item 26313027 *MITD*, the estimates for the year 2014 are increasing. I just want to ask the hon. Minister whether he does not consider that a waste of money since more and more schools are discouraging the Prevocationnal students to go to MITD.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am not aware of this. I would like to meet the hon. Member in my office, if possible, to come and explain to me whether this is a fact. What I can tell you, Mr Chairperson, is that the MITD is progressing very rapidly *et de nouveaux créneaux sont en train d'être ouverts pour ces enfants.*

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 384, *sub programme 42404-Public Secondary Schools*. May I know the reason for the increase in the number of Rector and Deputy Rector for next year? Are there going to be new schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: In fact, we need more Rectors and Deputy Rectors. We are expanding in all schools. The scope of work is increasing and we are going in line with the new trend, that is, even career guidance is being done in the secondary schools. Entrepreneurship education is taking place. Sports and physical education have already become an examinable subject. So, the load of work is increasing. The number of posts will have to be increased and we have to adapt.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister on page 374, item 32145 - *Loan (Disbursement)*, what are the eligibility criteria for the loan disbursement to the Private Secondary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think in the Budget last year, it was mentioned a new loan scheme and the criteria has already been ventilated. They are the same criteria. *Ils ont été finalisés avec le ministère des finances.* Now, it has already been approved and the loan is going to start to be disbursed.

The Chairperson: Yes, we are still left with two minutes! Any question!

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 424: Secondary Education (Rs7,743,810,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 425: Technical and Vocational Education and Training was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, page 376, item 26313027 - *Mauritius Institute of Training and Development*. We are being asked to vote Rs485 m. My point is that during this current year, the MITD has been in a lot of controversies in Parliament and outside Parliament. Can I ask the hon. Minister – I won't go into all the details which have been lengthily discussed here – whether it is not time to have a rebranding of all the institutions and whether there is a new Head...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Don't interrupt!

Mr Bhagwan: ... who has been appointed to replace Mr Dubois, whether the Board will be renewed - a sort of rebranding for the image of the institution itself - giving a new impetus to this very important organisation?

Mr Obeegadoo: We don't have staff details, of course, concerning the MITD because, I suppose, this is a parastatal. I would be very interested to know. Last year we had to move for a reduction in the Budget because of what hon. Bhagwan just described. I would like to know whether the Ministry put some order in the MITD. Do we still have psychologist on the establishment since the psychologist got suspended? Do we still have secondary teachers with dubious credentials? What is the situation exactly for us to approve this Budget for the MITD?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Member to which item are you referring to?

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Let me explain, Mr Chairperson. Page 376, there is the global vote...

The Chairperson: My question is quite specific. You have made a statement. I want to know it's related to an item?

Mr Obeegadoo: Items 26313027 and 26323027 on page 376. I pointed out that this is the global budget and no staffing details.

Dr. Bunwaree: About the staffing details, there is a Board there, they work and there is a management. Only the funding comes from the Ministry. The hon. Member was Minister, he knows.

(*Interruptions*)

Ti éna pire, mo kapav dire twa!

(*Interruptions*)

You want me to mention!

(*Interruptions*)

Mo éna ène rapport pédophile mwa!

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No, I don't allow this conversation between the hon. Minister and the hon. Member. What will appear in the Hansard?

(*Interruptions*)

Have you finished!

Dr. Bunwaree: No, Mr Chairperson. In fact, there has been an open advertisement for the post of Director. I think the interview is taking place and there will be a new Director. In fact, that was very important. That was one of the *faiblesse du MITD parce qu'il n'y avait pas un Directeur qui pouvait prendre la chose en main*. What has been mentioned by the hon. Member *a eu lieu dans le passé parce qu'il y avait une faiblesse dans le management. On est en train de revoir cela. Il y a une équipe avec des représentants du Board qui couvrent un peu le management en attendant que le nouveau directeur soit nommé*. Then, there is also a strategic plan that is being prepared by the MITD and I wish to thank hon. Bhagwan for this question. I think this is the way we have to take it. *C'est de cette façon qu'on va réussir avec le MITD.*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on the same item 26 - *Grants to MITD*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any Audit report carried out on MITD in respect of its stock in particular, any wastage, and whether he is prepared to table such a report?

Dr. Bunwaree: Il y a eu des enquêtes qui ont été faîtes régulièrement. J'ai répondu à toutes les questions au niveau de la Chambre *and audit is being carried out regularly*.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, being given that a sum of Rs485 m. has been earmarked for next year and there is no detail regarding the staff, will the hon. Minister give the House the guarantee that all vacant posts will be advertised and qualified people be recruited?

Dr. Bunwaree: I thank the hon. Member for this question. In fact, they have come many times at the level of this Assembly, but never put the question so simply. *En fait il y a eu et je l'ai dit plusieurs fois ici dans cette Chambre qu'il y avait un système que moi même je n'approuvais pas.* How many times I have said to the hon. Leader of the Opposition that I was not happy *et on a mis un frein à cela.* Concerning the appointment of the Director, there will be no one who is going along the other system *qui était peut-être acceptable parce que c'est l'ancien directeur qui avait accepté ce système qui est peut-être acceptable mais qui n'est pas moral.*

Mr Baloomoody: On the same item MITD, Mr Chairperson. We are being asked today to vote Rs485 m. for the Current Grant, that is, the running cost, and Rs1 m. for the Capital Grant. I am sure, before coming to these figures, the hon. Minister must have received a list of the current expenditure, a list of those people who are employed and their position. This is why we are asking the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to lay on the Table, today, a list of those who are employed at the MITD.

Dr. Bunwaree: Il n'y a pas de problèmes là-dessus. Seulement, comme je l'ai dit, nous sommes responsables de l'*overview* et du financement. Mais eux, ils ont leur *Board*, ils ont leur *management*. Si vous posez des questions, il n'y a pas de problèmes ; on est très ouvert pour donner le nombre de personnes qui travaillent, à quoi va servir le *grant* de R 1 million. Seulement, le budget aurait été volumineux si on avait mis tous ces détails. Vous posez des questions ; vous allez avoir des réponses !

Mr Bhagwan: From what we gather from the reply of the Minister, it is a motion of blame that he is putting on the previous Director, Mr Dubois, who is now the Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Finance. My question is: out of this budget, can the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let us listen to the question! Put your question!

Mr Bhagwan: My question is about the sum of Rs485 m. Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House, the country, the nation and the population ...

The Chairperson: Still the country, the nation and the population! Carry on!

Mr Bhagwan: - one of the main problems is recruitment - whether directives will be given that all recruitments will be made in a transparent way and islandwise? 20 constituencies, not only one!

The Chairperson: I don't know whether it is a proper question!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking whether, out of the Rs485 m., recruitments will be made for the whole of Mauritius to have the chance to go and work.

The Chairperson: That's a good question. Yes, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: Je vais rappeler à l'honorable membre qu'on a passé récemment un *supplementary expenditure* pour le budget de l'année dernière. Et le MITD était la seule institution sous le ministère de l'Education où on était venu avec un budget supplémentaire. Parce qu'ils ont été très serré, je dois dire ; on a contrôlé toutes les dépenses, et ils avaient manqué de fonds. Donc, pour vous dire que le travail se fait correctement.

I can give the assurance to this House, but I don't have time to go into the details. The hon. Member would have understood very quickly that recruitment is done very transparently, insofar as I am concerned. Now, whatever has happened before, whatever has happened in my back, this is something different. *J'ai entendu les mots 'Carreau Esnouf' mentionnés par l'honorable membre dans une position assise...*

The Chairperson: Just forget it!

Dr. Bunwaree: Je dois dire que c'est une institution qui avait été ouverte par l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth quand il était ministre des Finances, avec le concours de l'UE, qui était resté fermée. Je ne le blâme pas, parce qu'il n'a pas su. C'était resté fermé. L'honorable Jhugroo était membre avec moi, et il sait très bien qu'on a rouvert cela. Pendant quatre ans ce bâtiment est resté fermé. On a ouvert un nouveau bâtiment à Carreau Esnouf pour faire le travail du MITD. On a transformé cela en un centre de MITD, mais, bien entendu, quand on ouvre un centre dans

un endroit comme ça, c'est les personnes aux alentours qui seront employées. On ne va pas prendre des personnes de Coromandel pour venir travailler à Carreau Esnouf. Par exemple, dans la circonscription de l'honorable Bhagwan, il y a des centres de MITD, et il n'y aura pas des personnes qui sortiront de Mahebourg pour aller travailler là-bas ! Donc, c'est normal !

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence !

Dr. Bunwaree: C'est la réponse que j'avais donnée à l'honorable leader de l'opposition. Quand un centre s'ouvre dans la région, vous allez voir des personnes de la région qui vont travailler dans ce centre. C'est normal!

The Chairperson: Hon Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Thank you, Chairperson. At page 376, same item *MITD*, following the question of my colleague, hon. Baloomoody, I want to ask the hon. Minister whether he can table the list of those people employed by *MITD*, with their qualification. I am adding qualification.

Dr. Bunwaree: I want to tell the hon. Member that, when I table it, if he finds something wrong, he can come to me.

Mr Jugnauth: Toujours *MITD* ; le ministre a dit que lui-même n'était pas d'accord avec la façon de faire sous l'ancien directeur. Étant donné que nous avons déjà dépensé une certaine somme pour cette année-ci, est-ce que le ministre peut nous donner la garantie qu'il va prendre des sanctions contre ceux qui ont fauté, ceux qui n'ont pas suivi les procédures qu'il fallait, et qu'il n'était pas d'accord.

Dr. Bunwaree: Moi, je ne suis pas d'accord. J'ai envoyé ça où il faut. L'enquête se poursuit et puis on verra ce qu'on va faire.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, as you know, on page 376, we are asked to vote this amount of Rs486 m; Programme 425. The whole amount goes to the *MITD*. I wanted to know from the hon. Minister where is the Unit in the Ministry, which works on TVET, having regard to the overall supervision and policy dimension of TVET. Where, in the Budget, are we providing funds for dedicated staff within the Ministry to handle the TVET?

Dr. Bunwaree: Ce n'est pas comme ça que ça marche au niveau du ministère. Quand il était là, est-ce qu'il y avait ça ? Je n'ai jamais vu ! Il est en train de dire des choses qui viennent de son esprit.

The Chairperson: That may be a matter of policy!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Il y a un *directorate* ; ce sont des jeunes qui sont payés au niveau du ministère. Ils s'occupent du MITD, de la formation, du TVET. Il y a des personnes, il y a un PS, il y a des membres, il y a une équipe qui fait ça.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo, do you have a question?

Mr Obeegadoo: *Tout ce que je dis vient de mon esprit, c'est sûr !* I am very serious about it; if you look at the first pages of this Budget, on page 354, the third bullet says that the objective is to provide an efficient and effective TVET system. So, I am asking the hon. Minister whether all of the policy issues are left to the MITD; that's why the whole of the budget goes to the MITD. Otherwise, who, in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources - it is not just Education, as it was in my time - handles this overseeing, the development of an effective TVET system?

The Chairperson: It is a matter of policy. You are free to answer or not to answer.

Dr. Bunwaree: I said that there is a directorate. It's a policy matter.

The Chairperson: Time is not yet over, but there is no question. So, I put the question.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 425: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Rs486,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 428: Special Education Needs of School Age Children was called.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 376, item 28211023 - *Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres*, there is an amount of Rs60 m. Item 31112002 - *Construction and Extension of Schools* where is budgeted an amount of Rs32 m. Mr Chairperson, I would like to know whether this amount of Rs32 m. includes Rs20 m. for the rehabilitation of Sewraz Government School at Triolet, as mentioned in the Budget Speech, and the Rs32 m. for the construction of the three

schools mentioned? In the Budget Speech we were told that three schools will be constructed to the tune of R32 m. So, this goes for that. Where is the amount of Rs20 m. for the rehabilitation of the Sewraz Government School of Triolet? Where is the Budget allocation of Rs20 m., from which item?

Dr. Bunwaree: Sewraz Government School is something different.

(*Interruptions*)

C'est under Sub-Programme 423. I talked about that a few minutes ago. *C'est l'école primaire de Triolet. Ici, on parle des écoles SEN.* Il y a trois SEN schools qui vont être construites. *On l'a dit dans le budget.* These are provisions made for the cost of non-residential buildings, setting up of two additional SEN Resource and Development Centres and one integrated unit. Raj Kumar Gujadhur: Rs21 m.; Rivière de Anguilles: Rs10 m.; Burrenchobay Integrated Unit: Rs1 m., making a total: Rs32 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 376, item 28211023- *Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres.* This is the increase of Rs30 m. that the Minister of Finance mentioned in his Budget, speaking of parity in treatment. We, on this side of the House, are very doubtful about that. Could the Minister, therefore, before we vote that amount, explain to us how parity is reached in terms of per capacity spending for fully able children in public schools or in private aided schools and in these centres or Day Care Centres, the per capita spending, whether at primary or secondary level?

Dr. Bunwaree: Je crois que l'honorable membre doit être d'accord qu'au moins on est arrivé à parité. Il a peut-être des doutes, mais on va éclaircir cela. Tant que ma mémoire me sert correctement, on a pris en considération le *recurrent cost*, ce qu'on dépense de façon récurrente pour un enfant dans une école normale, un *mainstream* habituel, et pour un enfant dans ces écoles spécialisées. Et puis on a pris une partie du *capital grant*, c'est-à-dire le *wear and tear*, parce qu'il y a des maintenances à faire, des meubles qui doivent être réparés, etc. On n'a pas pris les constructions des écoles, ça c'est quelque chose en dehors. Quand on a pris ces items - tant que ma mémoire me sert correctement - on est arrivé à la parité. Cela veut dire qu'on dépense pratiquement de la même façon *per head* dans une école *mainstream* tout comme dans

une école spécialisée. Je pense que c'est une révolution. C'est la première fois dans ce pays que nous avons...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No interruption!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Obeegadoo!

(*Interruptions*)

Please! If there is going to be interruptions, we will be wasting time, because you have 20 minutes per each Programme Code. Let the Minister answer !

Dr. Bunwaree: Ils ont fait des efforts, mais ils n'avaient pas réussi là-dessus. C'est la première fois. Aujourd'hui même, j'ai eu une lettre de l'APEIM qui maintenant veut travailler avec le ministère car ils ont compris que ce qu'on faisait c'était pour le bien-être de tous ces enfants qui sont en difficulté. On est arrivé maintenant à la parité, et c'est la première dans ce pays qu'un enfant handicapé n'est pas considéré autrement ; il est considéré exactement comme un enfant dans une école normale.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, on page 376, item 28211023 - *Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres*. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of institutions which will be benefitting from this vote and the number of students concerned?

Dr. Bunwaree: Le nombre d'institutions c'est 37, si je ne me trompe pas.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister can circulate the information if he does not have it at hand, or if it is available, he can provide same.

Dr. Bunwaree: I will submit to the House the number of children as well.

Mrs Ribot: I am referring to page 376, item 31122821- *Acquisition of Braille PC for Visually Impaired Children*.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: There is too much talking on my right. Yes, put your question!

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister the number of visually impaired children who have benefitted and who will benefit from the Braille PC, and if all visually impaired children are going to benefit from such a PC.

Dr. Bunwaree: *Certainement ! Il n'y a pas de problème là-dessus. Ce gouvernement ne fait pas de différence entre les malvoyants ou les non-voyants.* I must tell the hon. Member that the aim of the project is to enable the Ministry to attend its strategic objective to provide equal opportunities for learners, and all children in Mauritius will be enjoying access to the relevant high quality education.

Il y a 58 enfants *with visual impairment who will benefit as follows: 21 blinds and 31 with low vision.* Je dois quand même dire – c'est la note officielle – qu'il y a des personnes malvoyantes et aveugles qui sont venues me voir pour attirer mon attention vers une possible difficulté en ce qui concerne la façon dont les mathématiques ou certains autres sujets sont enseignés, et que ce n'est peut-être pas la façon idéale. La décision a été prise, on va prendre cela en considération. Mais il faudra aussi que ces personnes utilisent efficacement les appareils qui sont mis à leur disposition.

Mr Obeegadoo: I go back to an issue which I raised earlier. On page 376, item 28211023 - *Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres.* I would like to know from the Minister how he proposes to disburse the amount of Rs60.8 m. which he is asking us to approve, inasmuch as there is now an association of all the schools for disabled children that has written to the Minister, and to the Minister of Finance, with precise proposals, with a formula as for the private secondary schools offering a partnership, which has been largely ignored by Government. So, I want to know. Now that this money has been voted – and we are very happy, it is there – how will it be disbursed? Will it be disbursed unilaterally, will it be disbursed in partnership or will there be a formula as for private secondary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, there is a report which has been prepared by a very competent group at the level of the Ministry with certain expert persons and this has been discussed with the Ministry of Finance. It is on the basis of this that the decision has been taken to go in the direction I have mentioned just now. I must say that we have taken care also of the personnel

who work in these schools. We have sent the request to the Ministry of Labour to see to it that all workers who work there are paid *comme il se doit, selon les règlements de la loi. Donc, on va avoir la possibilité d'avoir des personnes qui sont payées pareil. En plus, on a fait une ouverture extraordinaire...*

(Interruptions)

Mais pour le personnel.

(Interruptions)

Mais le personnel doit être payé !

Mr Obeegadoo: Maybe, the Minister misunderstood. Let me ask again. I am not talking about the personnel. We are asked to vote a Budget; I want to know from the Minister how this is going to be disbursed. What is the formula? The schools have made a precise proposal which has been totally ignored, they have offered partnership; they have offered the same formula as for private secondary schools – PSSA. Will that be adopted?

Dr. Bunwaree: *I said they have discussed regularly with us.* On a travaillé ensemble avec eux. L'honorable membre vient de me dire quelque chose, mais en dehors de cela, nous sommes en très bons termes avec toutes ces personnes. Aujourd'hui même, j'ai reçu une lettre d'eux pour me dire qu'ils remercient le gouvernement, parce qu'avant ils n'avaient pas tous les renseignements. Donc, ils vont être payés comme ils avaient l'habitude d'être payé, mais seulement on met des conditions, il faut que les profs soient payés comme il se doit ; il ne faut pas avoir des personnes qui travaillent et qui ne sont pas payées à leur juste valeur. En plus, maintenant il y a des profs qui travaillent dans ces écoles, qui n'ont pas les certificats, parce qu'ils n'ont pas été formés comme cela, mais ils ont de l'expérience. Là aussi on a mis *recognition of prior learning*. C'est-à-dire que ces personnes pourront avoir un diplôme avec une petite formation. Donc, ils auront les mêmes salaires que ceux qui sont payés au niveau du système gouvernemental. Donc, on a mis une égalisation dedans. Donc, l'honorable membre doit être content.

The Chairperson: Okay. Too long! Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on item 31122821...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Uteem: At page 376, under item 31122821- *Acquisition of Braille PC for Visually Impaired Children*, may I know from the hon. Minister whether those PCs will be given to the visually impaired children or to the institution and whether the scheme of providing laptops albeit with specialised keyboard will be provided to these...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Silence!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Uteem: ... visually impaired children as well?

Dr. Bunwaree: According to Government Programme 2012-2015, provision is made for all children with visual impairment, not for the school, but for the children.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to the first item on this programme - *Compensation of Employees*? We are being asked to vote a Budget of Rs18,470,000. But when we look at page 385 for the same programme, we find that there is no personnel as such. We have only two Inspectors in specialised needs schools and three Head School Teachers. So, can I know from the hon. Minister what is the position with regard to the personnel?

Dr. Bunwaree: *En ce qui concerne le personnel, je ne pense pas qu'il y ait des problèmes parce qu'on est en train de suivre cela. Moi-même, je suis très attaché à cet aspect.* The provision that appears here is meant for the salary of the 29 additional Educators in SEN schools in 2014.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I come back on Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres, item 28211023...

The Chairperson: 023.

Mr Ganoo: Yes, 023. The question that I want to put to the hon. Minister is the following: I heard him replying to hon. Obeegadoo about this question of parity, how has this figure of Rs60,800,000 been reached? But my point is that when we look at the Estimates for 2013, it is clear that this sum has been doubled and we reached the figure of Rs60,800,000. But the question I want to put to the hon. Minister, the way to calculate the estimates if we want parity should have been –

- (a) how many children are attending the Special Needs Schools and Day Care Centres, and
- (b) what is the quantum being allocated today to the children going to mainstream schools.

And the difference between these two figures times the number of children attending the SEN schools, then we would have reached the figure. But does that figure, when computed, reach exactly Rs60,800,000?

Dr. Bunwaree: If you say exactly to the cent, I do not know. But it is approximately the same. I do not know whether the hon. Member was here, I have explained how we have come to those figures. We have taken into consideration what is spent recurrently for these children in those schools and we have also taken into consideration what is spent for the wear and tear...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I can circulate the figures. No problem! It is in the report.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 376, item 31122821 – *Acquisition of Braille PC for Visually Impaired Children*, there was an amount of Rs9 m. last year. May we know whether this amount has been spent on this item and how many have benefited and there is a decrease compared to the amount we are voting for this year? It is now Rs1.5 m. and last year it was Rs9 m. Can we know whether this amount has been used and how many children have benefited for the current year 2013.

Dr. Bunwaree: A second tender was launched - because there was a first one and a second one - on 18 June 2013 for Braille PCs screen reader and screen magnifier. The bid evaluation is ongoing.

(Interruptions)

As soon as it is done, it will be spent. The provision of Rs1.5 m. is made to cater for additional number of children in the coming year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo, do you have a question?

Mr Jhugroo: At page 376, Programme Code 428, item 2, following the question asked by my friend, hon. Baloomoody and the reply from the hon. Minister that 29 new Educators will be recruited by next year, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether these posts will be advertised?

The Chairperson: Whether the posts will be advertised.

Dr. Bunwaree: They are SEN Educators, there could be some specific conditions, but, of course, it will be very transparent and open.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Under item 31112 – *Non-Residential Buildings*, I am sure this sum refers to the three SEN resource centres that were announced in the Budget. Will the hon. Minister confirm that these three SEN centres are, in fact, resource centres? They will not be schools with a permanent school population but they will be resource centres made available to teachers or students who wish to make use of facilities there.

Dr. Bunwaree: C'est une question qui risque de me prendre beaucoup de temps. Je vais essayer de le dire en deux mots. Il y a deux choses qu'on fait. Premièrement, c'est un centre de ressources effectivement qui va aider des enfants handicapés qui fréquentent d'autres écoles pour une forme d'éducation qu'ils ne peuvent pas avoir dans leur école.

(Interruptions)

Oui, permanent. Et deuxièmement, comme ces centres, par exemple, à Ferney c'était un bâtiment qui a été transformé où il y a beaucoup d'espace et aussi parce qu'on n'a pas tellement de personnes pour fréquenter l'école hyper spécialisée, une partie de l'école est utilisée pour régionaliser un peu le domaine des écoles pour les handicapés dans les domaines qui existent déjà. Donc, au lieu que les aveugles, par exemple, sortent de la région de Grand Port pour aller à Curepipe tous les jours, ils iront à cet endroit là. Donc, on régionalise parce qu'on a les moyens. Mais, essentiellement ces écoles, *they are meant for specialised schools*.

The Chairperson: Yes. We are left with one minute!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, in that case, if I follow on page 385, Programme Code 428 where is the trained, experienced staff to man these resource centres if they are going to accommodate a permanent school population?

Dr. Bunwaree: Oui, on est en train de travailler au fur et à mesure. Il y a des étudiants de l'université qui sont là-bas et qui ont déjà eu leur diplôme. Au fur et à mesure que ces centres vont être mis sur pied on aura le personnel. Même s'il faut prendre de l'étranger, j'ai dit que je prendrais mais il faut travailler dans cette direction.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 428: Special Education Needs of School Age Children (Rs118,180,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: That will be the last programme under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, then we will break.

Ministry of Education and Human Resources – Programme Code 429: Human Resource Development was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, on page 377, item 28212008 – *Scholarships to foreign Students*, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of foreign students having benefited from this scholarship and the institutions to which they have been sent?

The Chairperson: Yes, it is a direct question, Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: What does the hon. Member want to know about that?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I would like to know the number of students who received the scholarship and the institutions to which they have been sent.

Dr. Bunwaree: I will have the figures and circulate them.

The Chairperson: Yes, second question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I do not know whether you have looked at page 386...

The Chairperson: Page 386?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, page 386, Programme Code 429. I am very, very troubled.

The Chairperson: Troubled?

Mr Obeegadoo: For this programme which is Human Resource Development...

The Chairperson: You should not be!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am very worried, Mr Chairperson, and I will explain why. The Ministry is called Ministry of Education and Human Resources. If you look at Human Resource Development there are only seven persons in that Unit. Now, we are being asked to vote a Budget and the sum, as you know, Mr Chairperson, is on page 377. Last year, I raised this question and we discovered that all the posts were empty, Director, Senior Analyst and so on, and I asked the hon. Minister how it was and he said: "Don't worry, it will be restructured". Now, instead of being restructured, it has disappeared altogether.

In other words, Human Resource Development, within the understanding of the hon. Minister, is limited to seven persons employed in Careers Guidance. So, I am asking, what is this Budget we are voting? Where are human resources? Should the Ministry change its name?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, this question was, in fact, put to me last year and we were in the thinking process and, at the same time, trying to see what could be done to restructure, because it is a very important part of that Ministry. Now, for the time being, I don't know, things may

change, but up to now, we are manning that Unit wonderfully well. So, we have not found the necessity to appoint people as we had seemed to propose in the first instance. But, the time will see what the best thing is, but I can say that I am getting satisfaction for the time being with the work that is being done insofar as this unit is concerned. We have the Careers Guidance which is being revamped completely at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, and we are working also with the HRD Council together to find a better way to guide our students when they are in Secondary Schools. But, there is not only career guidance; there is the whole development process of human resource.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Page 377, item 28212025 - *Financial Assistance Schemes to Students*, I have noted that there is no vote for year 2013 and that the sum for the next year is Rs3 m. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this assistance goes to children who look for assistance to go to the University of Mauritius? Is this the amount, the assistance provided to Mauritian students attending our local universities?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are various ways of helping students in difficulties who go to the University. This is one way, but there are so many others. I will inform the hon. Member that 582 students whose scholarships have been extended under the ex-HRD Fund are taken care of and the new scholarship for children, the question that is being put, coming from vulnerable families who qualify through the Social Register of Mauritius and who have a minimum of 21 marks at HSC level are going to be taken care of with Rs100,000 maximum per year per student.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 377, in relation to item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, under *Careers Guidance*, may I know from the hon. Minister how many career fairs have been organised by these employees?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, career fair is not organised by the Ministry. We do help people to organise fairs, but we don't organise the fairs ourselves. There are so many institutions that do it. But, *ici c'est différent*. There is the setting up of a Career Guidance Desk at the level of every Secondary School. *A n'importe quel moment un élève de secondaire veut avoir des*

renseignements etc., il y a une équipe spécialisée qui travaille avec le HRD Council pour orienter ces enfants. Mais je ne vais pas entrer plus dans les détails, parce que ce n'est pas encore bien rodé, je dois dire, mais on a déjà démarré cela pour aller dans cette direction.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to page 378, item 26 – *Grants*? This year, we are paying, in fact, more than Rs40 m. that we did last year to the MIE. I am sure, like in the case of the MITD, the hon. Minister must have been submitted with a list of staff, their position and their running cost and also, what they intend to do for the capital grant of Rs24,700,000? Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is prepared to lay on the Table the list of the staff of the MIE, their position and qualification and also the intention of the MIE with regard to the use of the Rs24,700,000 for capital grant?

Dr. Bunwaree: *In fact, là-aussi je dois dire, M. le président, que le MIE est en train de faire un travail formidable parce que pour les *Special Needs Educators*, là-aussi c'est une réforme pour la première fois à Maurice. On forme ces *Special Needs Educators* qui...*

(Interruptions)

Non, mais c'est le MIE.

(Interruptions)

Excuse me. I want to give you what I want to give you.

The Chairperson: No! I disagree with the hon. Minister. If the question requires you to give a list, you have either to give the list or not.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am going to give the list, Mr Chairperson - I am sorry for the mishap - but I see extension to MIE buildings Rs20 m., electrical infrastructure in all MIE buildings and office furniture and equipment. But I have to add that we have to give support to MIE for the formidable work that they are doing in the process of the renovation and innovation in education.

The Chairperson: And, the list?

(Interruptions)

You may circulate it, hon. Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I want some clarification...

The Chairperson: There is a question coming?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. At pages 377 and 378, we have all the different Sub-Programmes under this vote.

Dr. Bunwaree: Page 377.

Mr Obeegadoo: At pages 377 and 378, there are all the budgets in respect of each Sub-Programme. I am asking the hon. Minister how this tallies with what we see at page 386 where there is staffing only for Careers Guidance.

In other words, we are voting funds under Scholarships and other Financial Assistance Schemes to Students. There is a sub-programme, we are voting the funds, but there is no staff to manage. Look at page 386. There is nobody in post and there is nobody to be in post by December 2014, on page 386.

Now, similarly for School Staff Development, Research and Curriculum Development, the hon. Minister has chosen to place the sub-programme within this programme. Where is the staff as at page 386? Similarly, for Financing of Training and if I may go one step further, what has happened to the *Human Resource Development Council* at item 26313023 where there is no monies attributed? Has that been transferred to another Ministry? Who is handling the HRDC?

Dr. Bunwaree: Le HRDC *se débrouille très bien par eux-mêmes d'ailleurs. Mais*, there is a directorate, at the level of the Ministry, for HR; there is a directorate for scholarship. All these people are already working there. They have not found the need...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: There is some noise! Silence, please!

Dr. Bunwaree: There is no need, for the time being, for additional staff, but there are already people working there.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Obeegadoo: On a point of clarification, this is budgetary procedure. The hon. Minister is former Minister of Finance, just to clarify, can we have a programme with monies budgeted here under this programme, but then, the staff under corresponding to the sub-programme is nil and the staff is somewhere else, how can we tally the funds with the staff?

The Chairperson: But, the Minister is no more the Minister of Finance!

(*Interruptions*)

How can he answer for the Minister of Finance?

Mr Obeegadoo: In respect of his Ministry now.

The Chairperson: I don't know. He is the Minister of Education and Human Resources, not the Minister of Finance. But, being given his experience, he may answer though it is not in order for him to answer.

Dr. Bunwaree: Should I answer?

(*Interruptions*)

I will just tell the hon. Member what I have said in the beginning that he must look at the Budget *pas seulement avec ces deux bouts, il faut regarder complètement*. There is staff ventilated in other programmes and in other sub-programmes, staff of Government Department, but not of parastatal that are reflected in the HR. *Il était ministre, il devrait savoir.*

Mr Uteem: On page 377, still under programme 429: *Human Resource Development*, under item 21 – *Compensation of Employees*. Unlike in other programmes there is no line Budget for studies and surveys. So, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the people in his Ministry responsible for Careers Guidance, has made any study or survey about the demand projection for Mauritius and for how many years ahead?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is the responsibility of Human Resource Council and they do the survey and research. In fact, if I have time, I would have told you, but I am going to circulate it for the benefit of hon. Members, the surveys that have already been carried in the course of last year, to be able to say in what direction Mauritius is going on the point of training for the years that are in front of us.

Mr Obeegadoo: Before we vote this Budget, the hon. Minister will surely help us to understand what is the mystery? Are we to understand - I am still under item 26313023 - that the HRDC is now a standalone institution that does not benefit from any State funding, whether from the Ministry of Education or any other Ministries and if that is the case, I am asking the hon. Minister, how is it that the Ministry, for which we are voting the Budget proposed, is entrusted with policy development, has got rid of all its Human Resource Analysts and is now leaving the task to the HRDC? How can we vote this Budget when this Ministry came from a fusion of Education and Skill Development with a number of Human Resource Analysts who have all disappeared?

The Chairperson: I do not see the relevance of this question.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes.

The Chairperson: To what item it is? Hon. Mrs Labelle, put your question!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Let us listen to hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am under *Programme 429: Human Resource Development*.

The Chairperson: Do not disturb the hon. Member!

Mrs Labelle: When I go to the different sub-programmes, and on page 386, I can see the funded positions for the different sub-programmes; be it for sub-programme 42901 and for the others, which are parastatal and the Minister will circulate. My question is: under the *Programme 429* - is it possible for us to have a list of personnel under this programme.

Dr. Bunwaree: *Il n'y a pas de problème là-dessus.* To make things clearer, I come back to one question that I have replied *légèrement*. It is not intended - I say - for the time being to fill the vacant post in 2014 for Human Resource Development. It is the responsibility for the unit which devolves on a team comprising a Permanent Secretary, a Deputy Permanent Secretary, a Director Education who is in charge of HR Directorate, relevant support staff, including the Analysts, which the hon. Member was mentioning just now. The work is being done professionally and efficiently and it is yielding results.

Now, the HRD Council is not getting any money – I think two years – from Government. They are managing on the levy that they get from the other sectors. *Ils sont en train de faire leur travail. Mais ils avaient aussi des réserves que le ministère des Finances a cru, qu'ils doivent d'abord utiliser. S'ils ont besoin,* over and above that, they can always come to the Minister of Finance through the Minister of Education, if they need money.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 377, items 28212009, 28212010, 28212011 and 28212012. I would like to ask the hon. Minister that we are spending a huge amount of money on these scholarships, what motivated his decision not to compel these students to come back after their studies especially as the Budget has mentioned that Mauritius needs to attract a pool of talents?

Dr. Bunwaree: If the hon. Member puts a proper question in PQ, I will answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Do you have a question or not?

Mr Obeegadoo: I do. Yes, Very much so!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Put your question!

(Interruptions)

I know it is tea time, but we will have time to finish this.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want some clarifications from the hon. Minister under this general programme, human resource development. I have read at page 353 that the first major constraint identified by Government is the need to reduce the mismatch of skills. I have noted at page 356 that Government wishes to improve, facilitate employability and is seeking to develop an overall strategy. My question is to ask the hon. Minister of Education since there is no staff at page 386, but we are being asked to vote a budget, whether his Ministry for 2014 has any technical staff - what used to be human resource analyst – trained to do this job of developing policy as regards human resource development overall at the Ministry of Education or has this role been completely relinquished in favour of the HRDC?

Dr. Bunwaree: The unit I mentioned just now with the PS etc. is the unit responsible – the whole unit, there is at the Head a PS – for all policies and strategies with regard to HR, TVET and training and it is working properly and efficiently. For the question of mismatch and so on, I don't know whether the question was put to me.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister is fully aware that we are not dealing with policy matters.

Dr. Bunwaree: I am going to circulate for the hon. Member to know what is happening.

The Chairperson: Okay, circulate. Time is up!

Programme Code 429: Human Resource Development (Rs 479,130,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I suspend for half an hour.

At 5.20 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.06 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security -Programme Code 481: Policy and Stategy for Agro-Industry and Food Security was called.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Page 398, under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, an amount of R13 m. had been earmarked. Last year, the Minister stated that provision was made for payment of consultancy services for the setting up of a national wholesale market. Can the hon. Minister

say who was the consultant who was recruited, whether he has given his report and whether the whole sum has been spent for 2013?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, I am advised that there was a consultant whose services were retained last year, and he has submitted a report for consultancy services to assess the feasibility of the project, and to advise on the operations of the national wholesale market, which has already been launched, and contract will be shortly awarded to Cabinet Greysard Consultant by the AMB.

Mr Ganoo: Same page, item 26323202 - *Food Security Fund*. The estimates for this year have been Rs27 m. Can the hon. Minister provide to the House as to the use which has been made of this sum allotted for the item food security?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, under this item, the Rs27 m. which was voted last year, has been removed this year, because it is being voted in different programmes for food crop project, and also for projects in the farming sector.

Mr Ganoo: How was it spent this year?

Mr Faugoo: There are different schemes which are in place under the food crop. So, this vote is going to finance the schemes which are already in place under the food crop, and also for livestock sector. There are lots of schemes which are in place for livestock sector. There are no less than 12 schemes for food crop sector, Mr Chairperson. There are also eight schemes under the livestock sector. The amount which is being voted under different vote items is going to finance these projects.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, with regard to the item *studies and surveys*, the hon. Minister said that, for the wholesale market, the study has been completed. May I ask the hon. Minister whether a site has been earmarked for this project, what is the cost of the project, when it is going to be implemented, and works are going to start?

Mr Faugoo: This relates to policy, Mr Chairperson, but still, in two words, I can answer. I think the site which was earmarked in the beginning was at AMB in Moka; in the compound of AMB. I don't know if they are going to move out from there, but initially that was the site. In fact, the consultant is going to advise on the model, and then work out a budget for that.

Mr Lesjongard: On page 398, under *Programme 481*, item *22130 Studies and Surveys*, again, we find that there is an increase of almost Rs5.5 m. for the year 2014. Can we get an indication from the hon. Minister as to what are the studies to be carried out in 2014?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, this amount is meant to finance Consultancy Service in favour of MCIA, that is, the price of molasses, bagasse and also harvest logistics. As to the wholesale market, we are going to pay part of it from here.

Mr Seeruttun: On *Programme 481*, page 398, item *26323202 - Food Security Fund*, where a sum of Rs27 m. was estimated for the year 2013, may we know how much has been spent, so far, and how many small planters have benefitted from that Fund?

Mr Faugoo: The total amount spent, so far, is Rs668 m., but the amount of Rs27 m. which was voted, is already committed for programmes which were running in 2013. Since we started the programme under the Food Security Fund, the number of beneficiaries altogether stands at 4,985.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I came in a few minutes late, so I hope I am not repeating. On page 298, item *31132401 - e-Government Projects (e-Agro-Industry)*. This is a new item budgeted for 2014 with projected increases for the following years. May we have some indication from the Minister about the nature of these projects?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, provision is made for the implementation...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No phone is allowed in the House!

Mr Faugoo :... of e-Agriculture as per the strategic plan of the Ministry of IT to provide better coordination, collaboration, planning and improved areas of information for better decision making. Tenders will be launched next year.

Mr Bodha: On page 398, item *22120 - Fees*, we have a sum of Rs8 m. for this year and another sum for next year. May I ask the hon. Minister how this sum was spent this year and is it going to be spent next year?

Mr Faugoo: This is meant for payment of fees to Chairperson and Members of Committees, also Members of Departmental Tender Committee (DTC), the Bid Evaluation

Committee and also a committee which looks after the Food Security Fund. So, it is fees in connection with these committees. An amount of Rs3 m. has been spent, so far, for this year.

Mr Obeegadoo: I did not catch the answer of the Minister concerning the e-Government projects. Do I understand this to be website development, ease of communication within the agricultural sector or is it more computerisation of the Ministry?

Mr Faugoo: It is at the level of the Ministry.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 398, item 22100 - *Publications and Stationery*. There is a substantial increase in the amount earmarked for 2014. May we have a list of publications that are proposed to be published during the year 2014?

Mr Faugoo: There are publications at the level of the Ministry at Headquarters and also by AREU, but I understand the increase reflects the price of magazines and newspapers today. Also, I understand that Assistant Permanent Secretaries are also being provided with newspapers and magazines.

Mr Obeegadoo: A Member before me raised the issue of *Studies and Surveys*, and I believe mention was made somewhere in the Budget Speech. Concerning organic farming, I want to ask the Minister whether under this vote – we are concerned, of course, with policy and strategy – there is any particular initiative that is being taken next year concerning organic farming or, I think, the Budget Speech referred to control of use of pesticides by planters.

Mr Faugoo: Not under this vote, Mr Chairperson.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Yes, we have a list here. So, it is hon. Bodha.

(*Interruptions*)

Your name is here too, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

(*Interruptions*)

There is a list which we have established and we have to abide by it.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. We are still on page 398, item 21111002 - *Travelling and Transport* and item 21111100 - *Overtime respectively*. For *Overtime*, we have a

Budget of Rs3 m. and this has been reduced to Rs1.5 m. May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten us on this? As regards *Travelling and Transport*, can he also give us an idea as to how these funds are spent?

Mr Faugoo: Can the hon. Member repeat the question, please?

Mr Bodha: I am speaking on items *Travelling and Transport* and *Overtime*, because there is a reduction on overtime for next year, from Rs3 m. to Rs1.5 m.

Mr Faugoo: Which item?

The Chairperson: It is on page 398, item 21111002 under *Sub-Programme 48201: Monitoring of the Sugar Crop*.

Mr Faugoo: That is another programme.

The Chairperson: It is *Sub-Programme 48201*. Yes, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On same page 398, item 26323202 - *Food Security Fund*. The Minister just said that the total number of beneficiaries is around 4,800. Can we know, out of this, how many small breeders benefitted from the Food Security Fund?

Mr Faugoo: I can circulate same, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Seeruttun: Still on page 398, allow me to go back on item 3113241 - *e-Government Projects (e-Agro-Industry)*. I can see that a sum of Rs45 m. has been earmarked for the next three years. May we know from the hon. Minister whether there is already a Consultant working on that project to determine the design of that project and, if so, who is that Consultant?

Mr Faugoo: Not yet. Tenders will be launched next year, Mr Chairperson.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 481: Policy and Strategy for Agro-industry and Food Security (Rs190,255,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugarcane Sector was called.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson. On page 398, item 21111002 - *Travelling and Transport*, and item 21111100 *Overtime respectively*, can the hon. Minister enlighten us as to how the funds are going to be spent and as regard to *Overtime* how will it be reduced?

Mr Faugoo: This reflects, in fact, that some expenses are going to be incurred by MCIA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 399, item 28225001 – *Other Capital Transfers – Accompanying Measures for Sugar Sector Derocking of Small Sugarcane Planters' Lands (including FORIP and Fair Trade projects)*, last year again, the Minister stated that abandoned lands are being recovered and rehabilitated under FORIP. Can the Minister say what is the extent of abandoned land, which has been recovered and what is the number of planters involved?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, following the budget of last year, Mr Chairperson, we initiated a programme whereby we invited all the land owners to express their intention if they are willing to lease their land which has been abandoned to other people who are asking for land to cultivate or to do other farming activities. But, I am afraid, Mr Chairperson, not many of them came forward. There were only about 30 planters, if I am not mistaken. But, we are still working on this.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 399, item 28225001 regarding derocking. Being given that there was a sum of Rs390 m. earmarked for this year and for next year, it is Rs400 m. which has been earmarked, can the hon. Minister inform the House for what reason the small planters of Holyrood, Vacoas have not benefited from the derocking scheme so far because I have mentioned since year 2005 and, up to now, they have benefited nothing from this scheme.

Mr Faugoo: They could be in the waiting list. There is a list of planters which represents about 1,200 hectares of land. They have applied for that and they are waiting. But, I must say, Mr Chairperson, all the same that our target until 2015 is to derock 12,000 hectares of land. We have already completed about 60% out of this 12,000. I must also say here that the programme is bearing fruits and that is why there are so many planters coming forward. Holyrood, I understand, is for next year. So, it is in the pipeline and it is coming.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, on the derocking still, may I ask the hon. Minister how many acres or hectares were under fine derocking and how much were under normal derocking?

The Chairperson: Next question. In the meantime the Minister will look for the answer. Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 399, under Current Grant for Irrigation Authority, there has been an amount of Rs100 m. which has been budgeted for 2014 up to 2016. May I ask the hon. Minister why this amount has been budgeted because in the last Budget it has been announced the merger of the Irrigation Authority and the CWA?

Mr Faugoo: There was only Rs30 m. earmarked last year because it was understood that the merger would come earlier. But this year we know that it is taking some time, even the Bill has not come before this House, Mr Chairperson, this is why we are providing Rs100 m.

Regarding the previous question by hon. Bodha about fine derocking, it is 40%. It should be 40% out of 7,380 hectares that we have completed so far: fine derocking 40% and normal derocking 60%.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on the same page, I come to item 28212018 – *Accompanying Measures for Sugar Sector – VRS*. There are no estimates for this year and the coming years. I would like to ask the hon. Minister why is this line included in the Budget as no estimates have been provided for. And can I also ask the Minister what are the cases which are still awaiting? I am talking about the VRS projects which have not yet been completed and the number of employees who are still waiting for their VRS.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Still at page 399, item 28212018 – *Accompanying Measures for Sugar Sector – VRS*, although there are no provisions which have been made there, still I raised that question on Adjournment where VRS has been given, but land entitlement has not yet been made for certain employees like at Bel Ombre and St Felix Sugar Estate. Can the Minister say what is the status for these planters?

Mr Faugoo: For the questions raised by hon. Ganoo, I think it pertains to the same question there. I have got an update of all the pending VRS schemes at different estates, so I am tabling this.

Mr Ganoo: But there are cases which are pending?

Mr Faugoo: I think it is in process. Some of them are waiting for *morcellement* permits from the Ministry of Housing and Lands; some of them are doing the infrastructure works. So, the brief which I am tabling gives all the details.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 399, item 28213021 – *Other Current Transfer – MCIA*, Rs52 m. have been earmarked for 2014. May we have some details as to how that money is going to be spent and for what expenditure items?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, with the merger of the six SPIs the CESS which was funding all the 6 SPIs stood at Rs519 m. before the merger, and after the merger it has been reduced to 4% which amounts to Rs287 m. But since it is the beginning, they were not able to do with that amount of Rs287 m. so Rs52 m. is an interim which is being given to them as fund to support their Budget.

Mr Bodha: As regards the accompanying measures, Mr Chairperson, some of the funds were to be allocated to planters growing sugarcane on land which had to be conserved for environmental reasons. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a scheme to promote this policy, that is, the fact that they should not abandon their lands because of the stability of the eco-system? There was a scheme which was to promote *le maintien de l'activité agricole pour des raisons du maintien de l'environnement*. I would like to know whether such a scheme has been promoted and whether there has been a budget for that scheme.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, this is a question of policy. I would be more than happy to answer if a Parliamentary Question is put to me.

Mr Ameer Meea: Going back to the *Current Grant for the Irrigation Authority*, there has been an increase from Rs30 m. to Rs100 m. from 2013 to 2014. May we know the reason as to why there has been such an increase?

Mr Faugoo: I explained from Rs30 m. it has gone up to Rs100 m. I already replied. Capital Grant is only Rs8 m. which is the same for next year.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 399, under item 31113407 – *Upgrading of Site Infrastructure for Rehabilitation of Sugar Camps*, I see there has been no amount earmarked for this. Yet this item has been maintained in the budget. I understand that almost all the sugar

camps have been phased out. Can the Minister say whether he feels there are still some sugar camps which need rehabilitation, and that is why he is keeping this item?

Mr Faugoo: As far as I know, it has been completed, Mr Chairperson, but I will find out and table the information required.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, at page 398, item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*, there is a provision of Rs57.2 m. for next year. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a unit in his department which is put in place to assist the small planters who have abandoned their sugarcane plantation almost everywhere?

Mr Faugoo: There is a unit in the MCIA, not at my Ministry, but there is a team which is working on this, Mr Chairperson.

As far as the question of hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee is concerned, no funds have been provided for the sugar camps because there is a budget at the level of the MCIA for that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Still on page 399, on sub-programme 48201 item *22120 - Fees*, there was a sum of Rs450,000 estimated for 2013 and nothing for the year onwards, may we know first who are those who are benefiting from that fees and why there is no more provision for the years after 2013?

Mr Faugoo: Is it at page 400?

The Chairperson: At Page 399, item *22120 - Fees*, start from the top, the fourth item.

Mr Faugoo: Yes. Fees - I answered earlier; it is for Committee members.

Mr Seeruttun: My question was that there is no provision made for the year 2014 onwards.

The Chairperson: And, the hon. Member wants to know the reason?

Mr Faugoo: I think it's transferred to MCIA, now. That was fees for Committee members of the ex Arbitration and Control Board. So, now it is under MCIA.

The Chairperson: Any more questions?

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. As regards, again, field productivity, may I ask the hon. Minister - as he is aware that there has been a substantial decrease in the number of sugar planters - whether a survey has been carried out as to the number of planters who have abandoned sugarcane crop, what is the acreage which has been abandoned and the reasons why, and whether we could still promote sugarcane plantation.

Mr Faugoo: There is a survey and I will table the information.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 482: Competitiveness of the Sugarcane Sector (Rs624,016,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 483: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Chairperson, I will go to page 400, code 25 - *Subsidies*, Sub Code 25210009 - *Subsidies to Fruit Growers (Bat net)*. Is there any studies going on to combat those bats, because the nets that are being provided for are very difficult to apply and I learned that 'chauve-souris pé gagne les dents, pé coupe net.'

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, Mauritius is a member of, I must say, many international conventions and as a party to the conventions, we are not allowed to cull bats. This is why this is being done. In all the countries that we have to find other means and it is for the first time that we have carried out a survey of bats in Mauritius, Mr Chairperson. We have found out that there are approximately about 55,000 bats. This is because we did not have a cyclone for the past 10 years.

(Interruptions)

Yes. All the same, we note that this poses a serious problem to farmers, especially litchi growers, Mr Chairperson, and we have, through this programme, managed to increase export and production of litchis by nearly 35% to 40%. So, this is working. It is a question of habit; people will get used to it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 400, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*, in 2013, an amount of Rs4.6 m. was earmarked. Can we know whether the whole amount has been used and for which studies and surveys please?

Mr Faugoo: Yes. This is for the implementation of some micro projects for AREU following activities by IFAD, Mr Chairperson.

In fact, we had commissioned a study to be done by IFAD on abandoned land and they did a preliminary study. They have submitted their report and following that report, we are going to commission a study to be done on abandoned land.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I go to item 25210006 - *Subsidies - APEXHOM*, a sum of Rs400,000 has been budgeted for the coming year and the years to come. Can the hon. Minister elaborate on the reasons that this sum is being allotted to this organisation and for the subsidies granted and what use has been made of these subsidies for this year?

Mr Faugoo: I am advised, Mr Chairperson, that this has been the case for quite some time. This is an organisation which, sort of, promotes production and exports of certain fruit crops. This is a standard amount which is being given. This is exactly what it is meant for.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Mr Chairperson, I am on page 400, item 22150 - *Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies* and we are called upon to vote Rs4 m. for next year. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this includes equipment and supplies for the GMO Testing Lab and whether this lab is now operational?

Mr Faugoo: It is not meant for GMO.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, at page 400, item 22090 – *Security*, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the name of the company which is providing this service and whether there has been tender procedures before allocating this contract and, if so, can we know when?

Mr Faugoo: There is no company providing services of security, Mr Chairperson. In fact, this amount is budgeted to pay general workers of the Ministry who are carrying on the work. There was a tender launched and then, after the conclusion of the exercise there was a case which was entered before the Supreme Court. It is still pending.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Page 401, Mr Chairperson, under item 31113032 - *Setting up of Quarantine Facilities*, can the hon. Minister give us an indication where these facilities will be situated?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, it is going to be on the seaport and airport, Plaisance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 400, item 26313086 - *Current Grant Tea Board*, I can see that a sum of Rs4 m. was earmarked in the year 2013 and there is no more provision made for that. Are we doing away with that Board from now onwards?

Mr Faugoo: We have done away with Tea Board a long time. It does not exist anymore.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, as regards item 25210010 - *Subsidies to Agricultural SMEs (Premarket test)*, may I ask the hon. Minister how many planters benefitted from this subsidy and what were the crops which were involved for the payment of this subsidy?

Mr Faugoo: For the previous question, I think I did a mistake, Mr Chairperson. In fact, for the Tea Board, I was confused with Tobacco Board. Provision is being made under programme 481, under service to Mauritius programme, NAPRO.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to try my luck again. I was referring earlier to paragraph 250 of the Budget Speech which is - “funding provided to control and measure the extensive use of pesticides and other chemicals in agriculture.” I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is under this programme that funds are being provided and, if so, under what item and to what effect? If not, maybe, the hon. Minister would be kind enough to indicate where this matter is addressed?

Mr Faugoo: I will provide same later.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 401, item 28225006 - *Capital Transfers under FSF - (f) Rainwater Harvesting*, may I know from the hon. Minister how many enterprises have benefitted from this rainwater harvesting and what are the criteria for such benefit?

Mr Faugoo: I think this scheme is still on. I don't have the figures as far as how many planters have benefitted from this. I am told there are 29 beneficiaries under the Rainwater Harvesting Scheme. The amount disbursed so far is Rs1,099,000.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 400, item 25210005 - *Subsidies – Freight Rebate Scheme*, can we know for which items freight rebate has been given? I see that for 2016, there is no provision. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether it is proposed to phase out this scheme? Mr Chairperson, can I ask a second question?

The Chairperson: No, one question!

Mr Faugoo: A subsidy of 25%, Mr Chairperson, is given under freight cost to boost local production and also export. The amount spent under this item so far this year is Rs12.4 m. I will table the list. There is a long list of crops, fruits, avocado, fruit cythère..

The Chairperson: If it is a long list, the Minister may circulate it!

Mr Faugoo: I will table it. There are at least about 15.

Mr Ganoo: On page 400, Mr Chairperson, item 26313084 - *Current Grant - Small Farmers Welfare Fund*, a sum of Rs6,500,000 has been budgeted for this year and this sum is increased by about Rs1 m. for next year and the coming years. Can the hon. Minister provide some information to the House indicating to us how this money has been used this year and how

much out of this fund has been used? Is it from this fund that small farmers are compensated after the floods or are there other ways in which the sum of Rs6.5 m. has been spent?

Mr Faugoo: This amount is for the Recurrent Budget. It is not for programmes. It is the Recurrent Budget for staff of the Small Farmers Welfare Fund. As we are aware, Mr Chairperson, there are 6,000 small farmers - and these include planters of food crops, fruits and also livestock - who are registered to Small Planters Welfare Fund and as far as the programmes which are managed by the Small Farmers Welfare Fund are concerned, they are provided for under the Food Security Fund.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 401, item *31122 - Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets, Other Machinery and Equipment*, there was a sum of Rs9 m. which was earmarked for this year. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what amount has been used and what are the Machinery and Equipment that have been purchased for this year?

Mr Faugoo: I don't have the information. I will table same.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, I come to the subsidies, page 400, item *25210011 - Subsidies to Crop Producers (Compost)*, we have a subsidy of Rs40 m. for 2013 and we have a subsidy of Rs30 m. for this year. Is it going to be phased out? We know that this compost is very eco-friendly fertilisers for the small planters and has been a success. May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten us on how far this scheme is going to be? How many planters have benefited from it and whether this scheme is going to be phased out next year?

The Chairperson: That is a proper question for a PQ!

Mr Faugoo: If I may reply, in brief, the amount disbursed from this Rs40 m. so far is Rs9.5 m. and the number of beneficiaries is 550. In fact, it was launched last year in the last year's budget meaning for this year 2013. It is being renewed. I cannot say, it is too early for me to say what is going to happen afterwards.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 401, on the item *32145- Loans*, a sum of Rs2 m. has been advanced to the Agricultural Marketing Board, may we have details as for what use that loan has been advanced to the AMB and on what terms that loan has been granted to the AMB?

Mr Faugoo: I think this is a loan provided to AMB for the construction of a multipurpose containment facility plant.

The Chairperson: Hon. Li Kwong Wing?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, on page 401, 28215 - *Transfers to Private Enterprises*. There is a new item for Sheltered Farming of a value of Rs2 m. and another new item of *Transfers to Private Enterprises for Crop Nursery* of Rs3 m. Can we have some details about what is this Sheltered Farming and for which farmers are they intended to benefit?

Mr Faugoo: Sheltered Farming, Mr Chairperson, as the name itself suggests, it is moving away from traditional field activities to protected cultivation enterprises.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 401, item 28225006 - *Capital Transfers under FSF-Foodcrop*. There are two sub-items, namely (a) *Land preparation and Agricultural Infrastructure Development Project (Mauritius)*, and (b) *Land preparation and Agricultural Infrastructure Development Project (Mauritius)*. Can I know what the difference is first, and then, second, the Minister mentioned last year, for the Rs40 m. which was earmarked, that it included the setting up of a National Biotech Lab. Can I know what is the status of this project?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, Capital Transfer under Food Security Fund, Land Preparation and Agricultural Infrastructure Development Project. This is provision made for land preparation and infrastructure development project for the MSPA and privately owned land for sugar, food crop and livestock. The whole amount will be spent this year.

The Chairperson: Hon Jhugroo! Last question!

Mr Jhugroo: Page 401, sub-item 31112040 - *Construction of a Multipurpose Containment Facility (Plant)*. Being given that there is a provision for Rs50 m. every year, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether this construction has already started, and if so, can we know whether tender procedures have been followed, and if yes, can we know the name of the contractor?

The Chairperson: You are putting too many questions. One question at a time!

(*Interruptions*)

I have said one question at a time! Don't argue with me. Hon. Bodha is waiting to put his question! We should give him a chance!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, it is a very complex project. It took some time. I understand the MPI has already submitted tender documents, and tenders will be floated soon, at the beginning of next year.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I have to give a chance to everyone. Don't argue with me! Hon. Bodha!

(*Interruptions*)

If you dare argue with the Chair, you will go out immediately! Don't provoke the Chair, okay! Yes, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Again, on page 282, item 25006 - *Post Harvest Facility*. We have a budget of Rs3.5 m. for this year, and then, the sum has been extended for next year. I would like to ask the hon. Minister what are the crops which are being involved, and how many planters have benefited from this scheme.

The Chairperson: Hurry up! Time is up! Yes hon. Minister!

Mr Faugoo: This is meant for food crop, Mr Chairperson. It covers a whole range of food crops. A small unit will be constructed for washing, grading, sorting, and packing of vegetables and fruits grown on MSPA and State land. It also covers onions.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Programme Code 483: Development of Non Sugar (Crop) Sector (Rs 689,625,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Programme Code 484: Livestock Production and Development was called.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 402, sub-item 2511003 - *Mauritius Meat Authority*, there is an increase from Rs5 m. to Rs17.7 m. May I know from the hon. Minister what this increase relates to?

Mr Faugoo: The increase is due to PRB Report 2013, and also increases in the prices of fuel, oil, and commercial gas, which is a major component of expenses at the Mauritius Meat Authority.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, on page 402, sub-item 22900017 - *Control of Animals Pests*. Can I ask the hon. Minister why there is an increase for 2014 for this item, from Rs11 m. to Rs17 m?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, it should have been much more. We have asked for Rs30 m., but we are being given Rs17 m., because we are coming up with a new programme - we are moving away catching and euthanizing dogs - catching, neutering and releasing, that is, mass sterilization. This amount is meant for that, and also there is a new provision, which was announced in the Budget Speech, that each owner who brings his dog for sterilization will be given Rs300. So, it caters for that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am on page 403, sub-item 31122818 - *Setting up of Salle de decoupe (Porc)*. Mr Chairperson, I refer to the Budget Speech, paragraph 252, where the Minister announced 'I am providing Rs4 million for another "salle de découpe"'. When I look at the Budget Estimates for 2013, there was a provision of Rs4 m. for year 2013 for a *salle de découpe*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, for 2013, this project has started and realised, and we are having something new for this year? Because there was one last year; there was a provision of Rs4 m., plus there was supposed to be a provision of Rs10.5 m. for 2014. And now, I am seeing only Rs4 m. So, may I have some clarification?

Mr Faugoo: The project which was announced last year is nearly completed at Roche Bois, in the compound of the Mauritius Meat Authority. We are going to inaugurate it, if not before the end of this year, maybe early next year, Mr Chairperson, and the provision which is there for next year is for a second *salle de découpe*, which is going to be in Bambous.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: I refer to the item 32 - *Acquisition of Financial Assets* on page 403, sub-item 32145519, where a sum of Rs25 m. is being earmarked as a loan to this Trust Fund for

animal care. Could the Minister kindly just tell the names of the members of the Trust Fund, and the reasons why this loan is being solicited?

Mr Faugoo: This is in connection with the project of building, coming up with a new high-tech animal hospital.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 402, under item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, some Rs30 m. has been earmarked for 2014, out of which we know for what some Rs25 m. are for. May we know for what propose is the remaining amount going for?

Mr Faugoo: I don't have the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. François! In the meantime, you will find the answer.

Mr François: I have no more questions, Mr Chairperson. It has already been answered.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 402, sub-item 28225007 - *Capital Transfers under FSF – Livestock, (a) Cattle Breeders Scheme and (d) Goat Multiplier Farms Scheme*. Can the Minister tell us what is the maximum amount granted for each breeder, and how many have benefited from it during 2013?

Mr Faugoo: I think on a heifer, it is Rs30,000 grant and then there is a loan component and on a goat it is Rs10,000. As to the number, I think for heifers it is 50; for goat also it is 50 heads.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 402, item 22900017 - *Control of Animal Pests*. The hon. Minister must surely be aware of this problem of 'mille-pattes' coming from the sugarcane field of Médine.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Don't interrupt!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether urgent action will be taken, at least, for the construction of a wall, either jointly by Government and Médine as that problem is recurring too often?

Mr Faugoo: I am well aware of this problem, Mr Chairperson. We have discussed so many times and this problem emanates from a private property. We don't have control, but still we have spoken to Médine. We have pressed upon Médine to erect a wall. It has been delayed, but I am looking into it.

Mr Uteem: On page 403, item 32145519 - *Loan to Trust Fund for Animal Care*. May I have some information from the hon. Minister as to the terms of the loan, the interest rate and repayment terms?

Mr Faugoo: I will table same. I do not have it with me.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 403, item 31113026 - *Construction of Farm Buildings – FSF (a) Model Daily*, with a provision of Rs5.5 m. for the Budget of this year. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether this has been done and, if so, where?

Mr Bodha: Again, at page 402, the last item 28225007 - *Capital Transfer under FSF – Livestock – (b) Pasture Development* Rs2 m. was earmarked. Can I ask the hon. Minister how this project is going to be implemented and where, and who are the beneficiaries of that subsidy?

Mr Faugoo: It is in relation to provision to FARC/AREU for research projects in crop production and protection in respect of strategic commodities, namely onions, potatoes and garlic.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, can I take the hon. Minister again to page 403, item 31 - *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, with regard to item 32145519 - *Loan to Trust Fund Animal Care*. We have just been informed that the Trust Fund Animal Care is for the construction of a hospital for animals. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Trust has been set up and, if so, what is the total cost of that hospital, as we are providing already Rs25 m. for this year and Rs30 m. for the subsequent year?

Mr Faugoo: It is still at initial stage, Mr Chairperson. We do not have the total amount which will be required for the whole project. It will be in a phased manner. As for Trust Fund, there must be a law; a Bill will be passed in Parliament.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 402, item 22120028 - *Fees for Laboratory Test/ Food Technology Laboratory*. With your permission, I am going to relate that to page 403, under item 31122804 - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. May I ask the hon. Minister, if we are paying

a lab for food testing which laboratory we are paying for, and whether, once again, this question of GMO testing lab is situated under these two items?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, we are not paying laboratory. It is meant for our Food Tech lab which is in Réduit, and the amount which is being voted is for veterinary drugs consumables and also accreditation process.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 402, 282225007 - (j) *Promotion of Bee Keeping*. I understand the Minister wants to promote Bee Keeping. Can I ask him how many bee keepers are registered with the Ministry, and why is it that if he wants to promote bee keeping, when I look at page 408, I see there are only two Apicultural Officers? How can two Apicultural Officers promote Bee Keeping?

Mr Faugoo: This is promotion; we are starting to promote this activity. So, this amount is meant to give training facilities to interested parties and also provision to starter kits, which will be offered to the interested parties.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a question; but, may I also remind the hon. Minister that I am still waiting for the explanation asked.

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is because I wanted to ask the Minister a question about that – anyway. Here, I am on page 402, item 26313110 - *Current Grant - Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare*. Will the hon. Minister tell us what is the status of the setting up of this new institution? Where do things stand, the more so, as the proposed amount to be budgeted has more than doubled from one year to the next? In this regard, will he also tell us about the status of the new touristic legislation that we voted concerning banning of dogs, reproduction, the famous dog Act that we voted earlier?

The Chairperson: Mr Obeegadoo, please! Put your question!

Mr Faugoo: I think, Mr Chairperson, part of the Act has been proclaimed already, but the Interim Committee is still looking after the new organisation and we are reviewing the functioning and the mandate as per the new law. So, this amount is being given to cater for that. There will be a post of Director-General which has been created in the law, in the Bill, in the Act of Parliament.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Please, please!

Mr Faugoo: The Headquarter is in Rose Hill. So, it is meant for that.

Mr Uteem: On page 402, item 22900017 - *Control of Animal Pests*. Hon Bhagwan spoke about ‘*mille-pattes*’, the other big pest problem in Beau Bassin is the invasion of monkeys. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount has been budgeted to combat the proliferation of monkeys?

Mr Faugoo: For control of animal pests, this amount, I think...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Silence, please!

Mr Faugoo: With regard to the control of animal pests, provision is made for the MSPCA; but as far as monkeys are concerned, they are controlled by the Division of the Veterinary Services of my Ministry.

Mr Jhugroo: At page 402, under item 22900027 - *Animal Feed*, can the hon. Minister explain to the House why there has been a decrease in the sum earmarked when compared to year 2013 which was Rs10 m. then Rs9 m. for next year and again Rs10 m. for the year after?

Mr Faugoo: This amount, Mr Chairperson, is provided for the purchase of feed for animals of the Agricultural Services Division. It is not subsidies.

(*Interruptions*)

We are saving because it is meant for the Ministry.

Mr François: I refer to page 403, item 28225007 – (h) *Reproduction Farm Cattle/Goat including Rodrigues*. May I ask the hon. Minister what are the targets for both cattle and goats and whether these animals will be imported from abroad?

Mr Faugoo: They are meant for import, Mr Chairperson.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 403 and I am back with the question regarding item 31122804 – *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*, may I know from the Minister for which laboratory we are purchasing this equipment and if it is...

The Chairperson: No, one question at a time!

Mrs Labelle: No, but is it...

The Chairperson: We are left with 3 minutes!

Mrs Labelle: The question is: is it for the GMO testing laboratory? If not what is the status of the GMO testing laboratory?

The Chairperson: Okay!

Mr Faugoo: It is for the Food Tech laboratory.

The Chairperson: Yes, Mrs Hanoomanjee, do you have a question?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, please. Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 402, item 22900017 – *Control of Animal Pests*, can the Minister say whether he is aware that there is a pest by the name of *poux blancs* which is ravaging all our plants and what is he doing to control that pest?

Mr Faugoo: It is a matter of policy.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 402, item 22090 – *Security*, I note an increase of nearly 25% on the amount earmarked for 2014. May we know what justifies that increase and to which firm that payment is made?

The Chairperson: Okay. Yes, *Security*?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, this is the provision for payment of security services of various compounds of the Ministry. As I said earlier, the work is being carried out by general workers of the Ministry. There was a tender exercise and, following the conclusion of the exercise, a case has been entered by the parties.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, to follow up on that, if the works are being carried out by employees of the Ministry, how come it is not under the *Personal Emoluments* item but it is found here under a different item code which is *Security*?

Mr Faugoo: It is because they are being paid extra allowances for doing extra duties over and above...

The Chairperson: Shall I put the question now? You are left with one minute! Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: On page 402, item 26313110 - *Current Grant – Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare*, the sum of Rs3.5 m was for 2013 and it is being doubled. But I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there has been an audit of the assets of the outgoing defunct MSPCA which became this Council, including an audit of the vehicles?

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Minister!

Mr Faugoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we have requested OPSG to carry out an audit and the interim committee also is carrying out an audit.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security – Programme Code 484: Livestock Production and Development (Rs401,865,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security – Programme Code 485: Forestry Resources was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, on item 22090 – *Security*, again we have been asked to vote a sum of Rs4,695,000, I take it that it is for security guards, but, in fact, when you look at page 415, there are seven security guards on the Establishment. So, how is it that we are paying for seven security guards under the Personal Emoluments and we are taking private services for security?

Mr Faugoo: I will table the information, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Uteem: On page 403 item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, may we have from the hon. Minister a breakdown of what the other goods and services relate to?

Mr Faugoo: They are in relation to fertilizers, topsoil and rock stones, Mr Chairperson. The increase in the amount reflects the increase in the price of commodities.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 404, item 31111001 - *Construction of Quarters and Barracks*, can we know, for the sum of Rs2 m. which has been earmarked, where these quarters will be constructed?

Mr Faugoo: On the question of security, I have got the details, Mr Chairperson. I am told that provision made for security services at all stations of the Forestry Services namely, at the Head Office of the Forestry Department Abercrombie, Souillac nursery, Curepipe nursery. Notification of award was made to company RSL Security Services Ltd, but the case is still pending at the Supreme Court. I think it is the same problem like I explained before.

For the construction of store for the storage of 1700 litres equivalent to 7 drums of motor oil, 2-stroke oil, SCE oil 30, tractor oil, brake fluid oil and transmission oil. I will table the details.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 404, item 31410401 - *Rehabilitation, Upgrading of Nature Reserves & Parks*, I find that a sum of Rs1 m. is being earmarked. Can I know from the Minister under which vote is the rehabilitation and upgrading of our mountains, which forms part of our natural reserves, is being taken care of?

The Chairperson: Yes! Let us proceed with another question! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. In fact, I am on the same item and I would like to ask the Minister whether he could inform us of the nature reserves and parks which have been rehabilitated or upgraded for the year 2013 and what is the plan for next year.

Mr Faugoo: I do not have the information right now. I will circulate, Sir.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

(*Interruptions*)

We are waiting!

Mr Bodha: It was the same question, Sir.

The Chairperson: The same question? Okay thank you! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: On page 404, item *31 – Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, can the hon. Minister inform the House why this amount has moved from Rs3.5 m. to Rs9.5 m.? Can we know how it has been changed regarding the transport, cultivated assets and everything?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, this is meant for the construction of concrete store for fuel and oil, mess room, purchase of lorry with telescopic aerial lift, provision made for mechanical clearing and mechanical wheeling prior to reafforestation. There has been an increase in operational cost.

For mountain, this is under the control of the forestry services, Mr Chairperson and there are provisions. There is a different programme for forestry services.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, still on page 404, under the last item – *31410401 - Rehabilitation, Upgrading of Nature Reserves & Parks*, may we know whether the Pamplemousses Garden forms part of that project and, if so, how much is being allocated for the upgrading of that garden which is in a very derelict state?

Mr Faugoo: That is separate; they have their own Budget, Mr Chairperson. It does not form part of this particular vote.

The Chairperson: Any other questions?

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 485: Forestry Resources (Rs204,198,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation was called.

Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle, do you have a question?

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am on page 404; item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants (UNDP/GEF)* and we see there is an increase, that is, it is now Rs13.3 m. May we have some information regarding the services offered for the payment of these fees?

The Chairperson: Yes, you have the answer, hon. Minister?

Mr Faugoo: Yes. In fact, this is in connection with Project Manager and one Programme Assistant who have already been recruited.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 405, last line, the hon. Minister informs the population that he intends to ask us to vote Rs14 m. for the removal of invasive alien species. Can I know from the hon. Minister who are these invasive aliens who change, cross the floor, cross the forest?

(Interruptions)

And, what is the price, what is the apportionment in the Rs14 m.?

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, do you think there is any alien here?

Mr Bhagwan: I am serious, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Who is the alien amongst us?

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking. The population wants to know who are these alien species who are very rare and invasive.

The Chairperson: But I want to know whether you have seen one!

Mr Bhagwan: They have invaded the House here.

The Chairperson: Put your question well! Don't refer to any hon. Member of the House about this!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister give us the information for the Rs14 m. of the invasive alien species; who are those people?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, the major invasive species, the famous one is goyave de chine, privet, as we commonly call it, traveller's tree or ravenale, acacia, prune marron and we are recruiting...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: I do not ...

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bhagwan! Just look at me! Please, stand up and withdraw the words!

Mr Bhagwan: What have I said?

The Chairperson: “*Vende to cadavre!*” withdraw!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bhagwan, this is not admissible!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw what I have said, but ...

The Chairperson: You withdraw purely and simply without any condition! Right!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle, please cool down! Let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, I said I gave a list of the invasive species. We are also under this item, recruiting sixty contractual workers to do the work. In fact, they are removed manually and partly...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No interruption, please!

Mr Faugoo:...mechanically and also by the use of herbicides!

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Seetaram! I do not want to hear any hon. Member, except an hon. Member who has a question to put, if not, I am going to use Standing Order 48!

(*Interruptions*)

Those who want to go home; well, they can make their application right now! I will consider! Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: At page 415, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden Trust, under item 21110 - *Compensation of Employees*, may we know from the hon. Minister why is it that no provision has been made for the Senior Technical Officer, Senior Agricultural Support Officer, Driver (Ordinary Vehicles up to 5 tons), Gardener/Nursery Attendant, Insecticide Sprayer Operator and General Worker?

Mr Faugoo: These officers are public employees; they were on secondment at the SSRBG. So, they have either retired or they are coming back to the Ministry. So, they have their own establishment there.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. François!

Mr François: I refer to the last item on page 405; what is the targeted total surface area for this project - *Removal of Invasive Alien Species*?

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 404, under item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants (UNDP/GEF)*, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the UNDP and the Ministry has

carried out any survey on the audit of our forestry area, whether the forestry area of Mauritius is shrinking or not?

Mr Faugoo: It is not shrinking at all. In fact, it has increased slightly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun is on the list!

Mr Seeruttun: On page 405, under item *311113016 - Construction of Visitors' Centre*, Rs1 m. is budgeted for 2013, Rs2 m. for 2014; may we know how many Visitors' Centre have been constructed during this year 2013 and how much is projected to be constructed during the next year?

Mr Faugoo: We have constructed this year and already opened two Visitors' Centre, one at Pétrin for the Black River Gorges and the second one was at Bras d'Eau, Mr Chairperson. For next year, we are projecting to construct a filling station at Gunners Quoin.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, you don't have a question! Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, on page 405, under item *31410401 – Rehabilitation of Nature Reserves & Parks – Removal of Invasive Alien Species (UNDP/GEF)* there was a provision of Rs9.2 m. for this year. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how much money has been spent so far and in which region to remove these invasive alien species?

The Chairperson: So, does the hon. Minister have an answer?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate it, Mr Chairperson!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 405, can I know from the hon. Minister apart from the Rs2 m. which is being earmarked, I think everybody will agree that after a Sunday or public holiday, the Black River National Park is like a dumping ground? *Une poubelle!* What is being done by his Ministry to liaise with other Ministries so that this vote can either be increased or taken care of for the cleaning of the Black River National Park, Les Gorges?

Mr Faugoo: There are a lot of projects which are financed from the Conservation...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Silence, don't interrupt! Why is this cross-talking! I said no cross talking!

Mr Faugoo: There are lot of projects which are financed, but do not appear here, Mr Chairperson. It is financed from the Conservation Fund.

Mr Obeegadoo: A geography question for the hon. Minister. At the bottom of page 404, there is mention of the *Vallée d'Osterlog Endemic Garden Foundation*. In fact, we are budgeting Rs12 m. in all this year including Rs6 m. capital, again 2015, again 2016. May I know, first of all, where this Vallée d'Osterlog is located and what is this project? Is this on State Land? Why this cumulative expenditure of Rs18 m. over three years?

Mr Faugoo: It is on State land, Mr Chairperson. It is in the South, close to Rose Belle Sugar Estate and this provision is made to set up a bike trail, security post, parking yards at the Foundation. We have already constructed a visitors' centre over there and we are expecting to open it early next year.

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security - Programme Code 486: Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation (Rs88,994,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General has made a request that the Committee examines the estimates of the Attorney General's Office immediately after that of the Ministry of Agro-Industry. The Whips have been consulted and have no objection. I take it that the committee has no objection. If this is so, I shall, therefore, call the votes of the Attorney General's Office.

Attorney General's Office - Programme Code 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services was called.

Mr Baloomoody: May I take the hon. Minister and Attorney General to page 534, item 22030 *Rent*. We find that there has been a decrease in the provision for rent under that item, but when we look at the Major Constraints at page 530 –

"Lack of physical space that is hindering the proper and natural expansion of the Office."

May I ask the hon. Attorney General on what item we have budgeted for extra office space so as to ensure that the officers work in a very good environment?

Mr Faugoo: In fact, Mr Chairperson, reduced provision will be sufficient. Increased provision was made in 2013 for renting of additional office space, but the project didn't materialise. In fact, they were supposed to move to some other building, but there are two floors which are available in NPF building because the DPP left the NPF building and shifted to La Poudrière Street. There will be sufficient space.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 535, *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, item 31133801 - *Acquisition of Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings*, may I know from the hon. Attorney General what is the total contract amount for the supply and installation of these furniture, fixtures and fittings and who was awarded the contract?

Mr Faugoo: This is, in fact, Mr Chairperson, provision for refurbishment of level 3 of the NPF building. I just said they are available, reduced provision will be sufficient as it is based on estimates made by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. The works couldn't be started this year due to lengthy procedures. A tendering exercise was carried out, but no suitable consultant was found and procedures had to be started and it is in process.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, may I take the hon. Minister to page 535, *Overseas Travel* which includes mission and capacity building. I see the amount is decreasing by substantial amounts and could the hon. Minister state what amount is for capacity building and why is there this decrease? The more so as we see under *Major Constraints* at page 503, that there is a lack of staff with required competencies and experience within this Department.

Mr Faugoo: For *Overseas Travel*, provision has been reduced based on actual expenditure in 2013 that is this year.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 535, item 22120 - *Fees*, may I know from the hon. Attorney General what these fees relate to and who are their beneficiaries?

Mr Faugoo: In fact fees are in connection with Privy Council cases. There have been fees paid to lawyers and solicitors.

(*Interruptions*)

Which one?

The Chairperson: 22120! The first item.

Mr Faugoo: For expenses in connection with training programmes organised locally and for refund of 50% of fees paid by Legal Officers when they attend courses with the IGLS.

The Chairperson: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Roopun: At page 535, item 22180 - *Overseas travel (Missions and Capacity Building)*, I want to know how much is being spent on capacity building specifically?

Mr Faugoo: I will table the information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, again on page 535, item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, the amount provided for in 2014 has more than doubled. May we know why is that so and what does it comprise of?

Mr Faugoo: Provision has been increased because of the creation of two new items with a provision of Rs500,000 each. These items are accommodation cost and passage cost meant to be used in connection with mutual legal assistance at international and regional levels.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Back to the issue of fees. Did I hear the hon. Attorney General right when he says that these fees are meant for the refund to courses which Barristers and Attorneys have to follow every year at the IGLS?

Mr Faugoo: Yes, for Legal Officers and Attorneys of the Attorney General's Office. Not for the private!

Mr Jhugroo: On page 534, item 22060 - *Maintenance*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House why it has increased from Rs1 m. to Rs1.65 m. for next year?

Mr Faugoo: Provision has been reduced because maintenance works earmarked for 2013 have been completed already.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 534 - *Publications and Stationery*. Can I know from the hon. Attorney General when was the last publication made from the Attorney General's Office, and which document was it?

Mr Faugoo: Provision has been decreased, because it is proposed to reduce the use of papers in 2014 by having recourse to e-communications as far as possible.

Mr Baloomoody: We budgeted Rs550,000 last year. What publication was there by the Attorney General's Office for last year?

Mr Faugoo: I don't have the information. I will table the same, but as far as stationery is concerned, there is a reduced budget.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 537, *Salary Code 12 00 99*. I note that the post of Assistant Solicitor General is being increased from 2 to 4. How is that justified, and what will be the attributions of each of these four ASGs?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, the attributes will be a matter of policy and administration for the State Law Office.

The Chairperson: No, it is a matter of administration, not policy.

Mr Faugoo: Two Assistant Parliamentary Counsels are already acting as Assistant Solicitor General. Provision has been made for their substantive appointment in that grade.

Mr Baloomoody: At page 537, *Legal Secretary*. Can I know from the Attorney General why is it that, again, we have not made provision for any Legal Secretary?

Mr Faugoo: There is no eligible candidate. Apparently, you need five years experience.

The Chairperson: Anyway, it is an administrative matter. Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, on page 534, item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*, the amount earmarked for 2014 has gone down, whereas when we turn to page 537, the number of employees has gone up by nearly 45 %. May we know how the hon. Minister reconciles the fact that the number of employees is going up, and the amount earmarked as emoluments has gone down?

Mr Faugoo: This is again administrative, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon, Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I come back to the issue of Legal Secretary. The hon. Attorney General just informed us that they don't have the minimum qualification of five years experience. May I know what is the academic qualification that one requires to be a Legal Secretary?

The Chairperson: The question has nothing to do with expenses. Qualifications are qualifications! Next question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: I did not hear quite well...

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun did not hear you properly, hon. Minister.

Mr Faugoo: I said it is administrative.

Mr Roopun: With regard to qualification, we are asking why the amount has remained the same. We are asked to vote an amount! I want to be guided by the Chairperson whether it is, in fact, administrative, so that we can be enlightened.

The Chairperson: When you speak of the amount, it is proper. You are being called upon to vote the amount. This is a proper question. If the hon. Minister doesn't have the answer, he may give it later on. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 503, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*. May I know from the hon. Attorney General why this reduction in the budget for travel?

Mr Faugoo: Provision has been reduced based on actual expenditure, as I said before.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: To take up the question of my friend, hon. Baloomoody, I make an appeal to the hon. Minister; everybody has played the game and offered answers to our questions. On page 537, *Position Titles*, there is the position of *Legal Secretary*, Salary Code 12 77 89. The post is being maintained for the next three years, but there is presumably no sum budgeted, because it is not planned to fill this position. So, what we are asking is simply clarification. Having regard to the proposed expenditure for 2014, and the non-filling of this position, we are asking what is the Legal Secretary, what is his role, and why is it not being filled? That is what my hon. colleague asked how is it that the Attorney General's Office cannot fill a position of Legal Secretary. What are the qualifications?

Mr Faugoo: With regard to Legal Secretary, Mr Chairperson, again, it is administrative. No provision is being made, because eligible candidates for the post should possess at least five years service in a substantive capacity in the grade of Assistant Legal Secretary, and there is no eligible officer currently in post.

(Interruptions)

It is an Attorney. So, there is the Assistant Legal Secretary who is there, and he also does not have five years experience. So, we are waiting for an officer to get five years experience.

Attorney General's Office – Programme Code 561: Policy and Management for Legal and Drafting Services (Rs56,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney General's Office – Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation was called.

The Chairperson: Hon Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: At page 535, item 22060 - *Maintenance*. Can the hon. Minister explain to the House why is it that maintenance has decreased considerably from Rs3.1 m. to Rs1.2 m.?

Mr Faugoo: Provision has been reduced because maintenance works earmarked, I have said it earlier, have been completed for 2013.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 537, Salary Code 12 60 70. I see that the post of *State Counsel* has been reduced from 20 to 16, whereas posts of *Principal State Counsels* have been increased from 3 to 6. Can the hon. Minister give us some clarification on this issue?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, funded positions have been reduced following a decision of the High-Powered Committee to create a new Legislative and Litigation Counsel Cadre, subject to the abolition of two posts of Assistant Solicitor General and 12 posts of State Counsel. This is what exactly it reflects.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 535, item 22120 - *Fees*, sub-item 22120017, there was a sum of Rs92 m. for 2013 and there is Rs75 m. for next year. Would the hon. Attorney General provide a breakdown to whom those fees were paid, and in what quantum?

The Chairperson: Find out the information and circulate it, hon. Minister.

Mr Faugoo: Yes, I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: If I may come on page 535, item 22100 - *Publication and Stationery*. Again, we are being asked to vote Rs8 m. for last year, another Rs8.4 for this year. So, may I ask the Minister what document or publication has been published in 2013?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: No comment, hon. Bhagwan! It is a bit early to go home! Next question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same issue raised by my colleague, hon. Uteem, with regard to *Fees*. The Minister says he is going to circulate - presumably - the breakdown. May I just ask him to give us an indication of the nature of these fees, given the magnitude of the amount which is budgeted here, are these fees for payment overseas? I take it, it is not Privy Council cases, because there is a specific amount budgeted for Privy Council cases. Is this expenditure to be effected locally or abroad? Could we, at least, have some idea of the nature of this expenditure?

Mr Faugoo: The first part, Mr Chairperson, under item 22120011 - *Fees icw Privy Council Cases*, that's fees for same. Item 22120017 - *Legal Fees*, this is for foreign legal experts, professionals in the legal aid. I have been told it is in connection with the arbitration case of Chagos.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 535, item 22120011 - *Fees icw Privy Council Cases*. May I know from the hon. Attorney General the number of Privy Council cases in which Officers of his Department were involved last year and the outcome of those cases?

Mr Faugoo: Again, I need to seek information but, as far as *Fees icw Privy Council Cases* is concerned, it is in relation to three specific cases. I will circulate these three cases.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 536, item 22120 - *Fees*. Can the hon. Attorney-General inform the House to whom this amount is being paid and if he can circulate the list?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate.

The Chairperson: The hon. Attorney General will circulate the information prayed for. Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, on page 535, I would like to have a clarification regarding item 22120017- *Legal Fees*. The hon. Attorney General has just mentioned that it concerns arbitration regarding Chagos. May I know whether the Rs92 m. budgeted for this current year has been totally spent, as we are providing an additional Rs75 m. which will bring it to some Rs169 m. for this arbitration case?

Mr Faugoo: Not really, Mr Chairperson. As I said, I will circulate. There was a fixed amount for the duration of the whole case. So far, we have disbursed the amount of Rs38 m. only.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Attorney-General just informed us that we already know the bill for that arbitration case - a fixed amount - out of which we have already paid Rs38 m. May we know what is the remaining sum from that fixed amount to be paid and how are we going to budget it in the subsequent financial years?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate the details.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 535, under item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments* and under the *Sub-Programme 56201 - Civil Advisory and Litigation* respectively, may I know from the hon. Attorney General, out of the 115 funded positions, how many vacancies there are at the moment?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate the information.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, we want to have your guidance. I was listening to my good friend, the hon. Attorney General, and I noted about 50 items - if my account is not incorrect – which he said he will circulate. I was just noting. Still, under your guidance, is there a

deadline to do so or do we have to wait for next year's Committee Stage to have this information?

(Interruptions)

No, as a matter of principle, we want to have your guidance on that. When?

The Chairperson: The Minister is the Attorney General, which means the Principal Legal Adviser to Government. He has given you his assurance that the information prayed for will be circulated. We should have no doubt on the word of the Attorney General. Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, I come back again to the issue of Legal Fees where ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let us listen to the question!

Mr Baloomoody: ...a sum of Rs92 m. was budgeted for this financial year and we have already paid Rs38 m. for the arbitration case, and it remains Rs54 m. Can I know from the hon. Attorney General whether that Rs54 m. is being paid to foreign lawyers appearing for us before the Privy Council and, if so, can he circulate the list? I have trust in the hon. Attorney General, I am sure if he promises to circulate it, he will do so.

The Chairperson: Of course, hon. Member, you should trust the good faith of the hon. Attorney General. Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Faugoo: Can I answer the question ?

Mr Bhagwan: On a point of clarification, we trust our good friend, the learned Attorney General. Sir, we have experience here. More than 800 Parliamentary Questions as at to date have not been circulated. How can I trust the hon. Attorney General?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan, I know you are an experienced parliamentarian, but this is Committee of Supply. So, I have no reason to doubt the good faith of the hon. Attorney General. Let us proceed with any question! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

No, no! Wait a minute! Hon. Bhagwan, withdraw again!

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw, but he knows it, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I got the impression the hon. Attorney General, Minister wanted to say something.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Let me listen to hon. Obeegadoo. Yes, hon. Obeegadoo, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: I apologise in advance if I am repeating. I am just trying to understand. On this issue of fees, on page 535, I heard the Minister say that this was in relation to the Chagos arbitration case. I wanted some explanation as to the total cost of this arbitration case, because there is a specific figure that was mentioned as 2013 estimates. I am not sure whether this was the point raised by hon. Baloomoody, who spoke of Rs54 m. - was that the same thing?

(Interruptions)

So, what I want to know from the hon. Attorney General, have we committed to this expenditure of Rs96.8 m.? Is it already due or have we underspent on the item budgeted according to last year's estimates? Is the Rs79.7 m., which is being proposed for 2014, therefore taking into account underspending, if any, in 2013, and how do we come up with this fixed sum for the rest? So, what I am asking is: do we have a global sum for this arbitration case that we know in advance? How much has been spent, how much is left?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Chairperson, this is, as I said, in connection with professional fees for foreign lawyers, the best, I must say in the roll, because it concerns a question of sovereignty and democracy, people's land. So, there is no price to it. We had to retain the services of top lawyers. There was a whole team of lawyers consisting of Professor Philippe Sands, QC, Professor James Crawford, Senior Counsel, Mr Alison Macdonald, Mrs Elizabeth Wilmshurt, Dr. Douglas Gilfoyle, Mr Remy Richfield of Matrix Chambers of UK and also Mr Andrew Lowenstein and Mr Paul Wechsler from Washington. They are famous lawyers, the best that we can have and we have retained their services. There was a fixed fee which has been negotiated for the duration of the case and that is fixed to £2 million for the whole case, which includes different stages. There have been already two hearings in this matter recently. As I said, it is a case of this magnitude; it

is not a big amount. And out of the Rs92 m. which was budgeted for 2013, only Rs38 m. has been disbursed, so far.

The Chairperson: Do you have a question, hon. Uteem?

Mr Uteem: On page 536, sub programme 56202, at the top of the page, again the same item 22120 – *Fees*, this is a much lower figure, so, I hope the Attorney General will be able to provide us with the list of people who have benefited from this amount in the Drafting Department.

Mr Faugoo: I do not have the information, I will ...

The Chairperson: Okay! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I thank the hon. Attorney General for having given us details about the cost for the arbitration fees, but out of the Rs92 m. budgeted for this year, there remains Rs54 m. Either we have underspent this money or have we paid other lawyers for other cases before the Privy Council?

Mr Faugoo: No, this is not in connection with Privy Council cases. This is in connection with the Arbitration Case on Chagos, for a specific case, for a specific fixed fee. As I said, only Rs38 m. have been disbursed. The rest will lapse and then there is another provision of Rs75 m. which is being voted for next year.

For publications, Mr Chairperson, if you may allow me, I am told that the Attorney General's Office does not publish as such, but it purchases publications.

(Interruptions)

It purchases, it buys publications.

Attorney General's Office – Programme Code 562: Legal Advisory and Representation (Rs187,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Attorney General's Office – Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development was called.

The Chairperson: Do you have a question, hon. Obeegadoo?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, on page 536, item 26313029 – *Law Reform Commission*, we are budgeting Rs17.7 m. next year as opposed to Rs14.1 m. last year. We all know that the Law Reform Commission has done a very good work in terms of the reports it regularly produces. But I would like to ask the Minister in order to justify this new expenditure in the year 2014 – and I refer here to the performance indicators on page 533 – to what extent are these reports of the Law Review Commission being taken up concretely in legislative reform in the House so as to justify the continued investment of such sums of money?

The Chairperson: No, this is not a question on expenditure! No! This is a matter for Government to decide! It is a matter of policy and it deals with the legislative programme of Government and I do not think the Minister can answer.

Mr Baloomoody: We see that it is a grant given to the Law Reform Commission, out of which Rs8,900,000 is going for the employees, but Rs8,800,000 is for others. I am sure the Law Reform Commission has submitted a list of what this ‘others’ is for us to have budgeted that Rs8,800,000. So, may we know the details of this ‘others’, if the hon. Attorney General can, at least, communicate same and lay it on the Table of the Assembly, if it is a long list.

The Chairperson: Yes, precisely. If the hon. Minister does not have the information, he may circulate the list!

Mr Faugoo: I have the information. Provision has increased because of the expected increase in rental of premises for a new location for the Commission. The Commission is actually located at the Cerne House. The contract has expired and the landlord is not willing to renew the lease agreement, hence the need for renting new premises next year. It is estimated that the new rental will be around Rs2,180,000 against Rs1,200,000 actually based on current market trends. This explains for the additional ...

(Interruptions)

This is for ‘others’.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Roopun, do you have a question?

Mr Roopun: The issue has been taken up by my friend.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, there is only one item under this code, it is item 26313. May I know from the hon. Attorney General what is the amount budgeted to pay for the fees of members of that Commission as opposed to employees of the Commission?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate it, Sir, I don't have the exact figure.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on this programme 563 and I am looking at the Service Standard Indicators (SSI) where we are being told that for 2014...

Mr Faugoo: Which page?

Mrs Labelle: At page 533, that the minimum number of areas where reform recommendations are made, the target is 12. I do not know whether we are talking about legislations. Maybe the hon. Attorney General can circulate what are these legislations, the minimum of 12, where recommendations are to be made, the areas and so on?

Mr Faugoo: I will do so, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Attorney General for this year up to date, how many reports has the Law Reform Commission published and if he could tell us in which area?

Mr Faugoo: I will circulate.

Mr Obeegadoo: Could the Attorney General give us the present composition of the Law Reform Commission and, especially, who is chairing at the present time? Is it still Sir Guy Ollivry?

Mr Faugoo: I am circulating the membership of the Commission. I understand the Chairperson is still Mr Guy Ollivry.

Attorney General's Office – Programme Code 563: Law Reform and Development (Rs17,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: This is a proper time to suspend.

(Interruptions)

I am still sitting!

(Interruptions)

I suspend for 1hr 15 minutes.

At 8.10 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.57 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, under Programme 401 - Environmental Policy and Management vote, can I know from the hon. Minister how many meetings of the National Environment Commission we have had chaired by the hon. Prime Minister or somebody else, according to the legislation, to determine the issues of environmental policy and management? How many meetings we have had so far since 2005?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, can we take all the questions and then, we will reply page by page or do you want me to reply one by one?

The Chairperson: There is only one question, the hon. Minister may answer.

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes. Mr Chairperson, the Environment Commission is chaired by the hon. Prime Minister, who meets his Ministers every week and whenever he feels like raising any environment matter, it is being raised.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has said Cabinet, we have all been Ministers; we cannot compare Cabinet Meeting and a Commission which stands within the legislation. I won't quarrel with the hon. Minister, because I know that that Commission has not met with the hon. Prime Minister as Chairperson.

I have another question, Mr Chairperson. With regard to, again, the implementation of a National Environment Policy, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there have been any studies which have been done, funds spent for the preparation of a new updated National Environment Programme, a Master Plan for environment, whether there is a latest one which has been prepared to determine the framework, the policy in which the Ministry has to go forward?

The Chairperson: Would the hon. Member guide us on the page and the item?

Mr Bhagwan: Programme 401, at page 423, we are being asked to vote Rs24,891,000 - Environmental Policy and Management.

Mr Virahsawmy: I shall reply in a few minutes.

The Chairperson: Next question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 424, item 22120 - *Fees*, some Rs3,125,000 have been estimated for 2013 and Rs3.7 m. for 2014, an increase of nearly Rs600,000. May we know, first for 2013, to whom those fees have been paid and why there is an increase in 2014?

Mr Virahsawmy: The fees are being paid to different committees and also for capacity building for specialists as and when required. The cost has gone up and that is why the total amount has increased.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same vote, Mr Chairperson, can I know from the hon. Minister with regard to compliance with international environmental conventional and protocols, whether any sum has been spent to update the Mauritius declaration for the Small Island Developing States. We have had the SIDS conference here. There is a Mauritian declaration. We are having a SIDS conference very soon. What has been the outcome of the implementation of the Mauritius declaration with regard to Small Island Developing States?

The Chairperson: If you could guide us about the page!

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson...

The Chairperson: We have to know which page it is!

Mr Bhagwan: Same page, 423 Environmental Policy and Management.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, this is an administrative matter and I don't want to discuss it. With regard to the National Environment Strategy, the whole matter is included in the development of the MID policy and action plan.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, I refer to my previous question. In his reply, the hon. Minister stated that there are various committees. May we know what are those committees and to whom the members have been paid fees? Can the hon. Minister enlist them?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, I will circulate the information.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has just replied that it is a matter of policy. I am referring to funds. I am not stating policy. Regarding the implementation of the Mauritian declaration, I want to know how much has been spent? If there is no expenditure, the hon. Minister can tell us that there is none. It is not a policy, it is a declaration and there are actions which are supposed to be taken out of the outcome of the SIDS conference to prepare the next one or this year conference. How much has been spent with regard to the implementation of the Mauritian Declaration as approved by the United Nations?

Mr Virahsawmy: I don't have the figure of how much has been spent. An amount has been spent because we are preparing ourselves for the Samoa meeting for next year. All this requires a lot of preparation. I don't have the figure in terms of how many rupees have been spent, but a lot of money has been spent and many members of the staff also are participating in preparatory meetings. Everything is being set for Mauritius to be represented at the SIDS meeting in Samoa in September 2014.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I come to page 423, item 22010 - *Cost of Utilities*, I note that the cost of utilities has decreased considerably from Rs6.9 m. to Rs3.1 m. It is good news, but I want to know how did the hon. Minister manage to accomplish such a decrease in the cost of utilities? Can we know also what does this sum of Rs6.9 m. represent for this year?

Mr Virahsawmy: Well, Mr Chairperson, the magic hand is that we have transferred expenses from this vote. All the expenses concerning NEL have now been transferred to vote 402.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: At page 424, *Item 26323201 - Maurice Ile Durable Fund*, may I ask the hon. Minister how much of the sum allocated here, Rs100 m. has been spent in 2013?

Mr Virahsawmy: Well, 2013 is not over yet, but I can tell the hon. Member that a lot has been spent and, of course, everybody knows that the MID Fund has now been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office together with the MID Commission. For the projects, there has been the installation of PV panels in many schools and there has been rainwater harvesting: Rs2 m., Household Compost Scheme: Rs19 m., Landscape Conservation: Rs6 m., Green Economy: Rs7 m. There have been a lot of projects. We have also disbursed a lot regarding the Solar Water Heater Scheme. A lot of amount has been disbursed under the MID Fund.

Programme Code 401: Environmental Policy and Management (Rs74,622,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation was called.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 424, item 22120 Fees, there is a substantial increase from Rs17.4 m. to Rs33.6 m. Can the hon. Minister give us some explanation as to the increase and a breakdown to whom this sum of Rs33.3 m. is scheduled to be paid?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Chairperson, of course, if we read the item, the fees come from grants which are received from various organisations and the fees which are being paid is Rs5.2 m. which will be paid to the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) and the funds from GEF. The sum of Rs5 m. is for training and there are also fees to consultants as recommended by NAMA: Rs1.7 m. There is also the sum from GEF: R1 m. from the Third National Communication and there is also an amount of Rs5.3 m. from the Adaptation Fund Board out of which Rs4.5m. will go as fees to consultants. There is also Rs1.2 m. received from GEF for POPs out of which Rs800,000 will go for training and Rs460,000 as fees for the consultants. So, I am covering, Mr Chairperson, all the items under Rs33 m. and there is also UNEP under the Global Fuel Economy Initiative, fees to consultants: Rs700,000. There is also the grant received from the Multilateral Fund Hydrochlorofluorocarbon and Rs735,000 for training and Rs2.2 m. for miscellaneous expenses under HPMP plan.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 425, item 31410402 *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation* of beaches, we are asked to vote an amount of Rs109 m. for rehabilitation of beaches. For the current year, we had an amount of Rs85 m. May we know from the hon. Minister whether this amount of Rs85 m. has been spent and if he can give us a list of the beaches which have been rehabilitated? Under the same item, we have also Beach Reprofiling Programme, can the hon. Minister enlighten us on the work that is being carried out under this programme of reprofiling?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Chairperson, out of the amount of Rs85 m. for 2013, of course, as I have said earlier 2013 is not over yet. As at October we have spent between Rs70 m. to Rs75 m. For 2013, we have covered projects in Cap Malheureux and Poudre d'Or, and it's completed. We started works in GRSE, Quatre Soeurs, Baie du Cap and Bain Boeuf, and there are other sites like Le Morne and La Prairie which require attention.

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Chairperson, for beach re-profiling for 2013, works have been done at Rivière des Créoles, Bois des Amourettes, Quatre Cocos, Trou d'Eau Douce, Roches Noires Fish Landing Station and Roches Noires public beach. The sites for 2014 are Flic en Flac, Le Morne, Blue Bay, Choisy, Grand Gaube, Pointe des Lascars, Grand'Baie, Trou d'Eau Douce, Tamarin, La Preneuse and Albion.

Mr Bhagwan: I come to page 424, last line, *Climate Change Adaptation Plan*. We have a vote of Rs13.8 m. Can the hon. Minister inform the House who is heading the desk for climate change, which is found at the Ministry, the number of personnel attached to that Unit, and whether there is a written plan which has been forwarded to the United Nations? We have a Mauritian plan of action. Can this plan of action be circulated to Members of the House?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson the desk had been set up, and in fact, we call it the Climate Change Information Centre. It has been set up at the Ministry at the seventh floor. It is a very modern centre, where we are in line with the world meteorological services and the NASA. We have daily information which comes in at the centre. We have also invited all stakeholders, Government departments, University, and even colleges to come at the centre and to benefit from the information which is available.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 424, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*, I note that the amount earmarked for 2014 has gone down from Rs50.4 m. to Rs44.9 m., and yet the number of employees, as stated on page 428, has gone up from 92 to 99. Will the hon. Minister explain to the House how can we reconcile the fact that the number of employees has gone up, and at the same time the salaries of the staff have gone down?

Mr Virahsawmy: I have just mentioned earlier, Mr Chairperson, that all expenses with regard to the National Environment Laboratory, which were under this vote, have now been transferred to another programme.

Dr. S. Boolell: I remember the Minister having mentioned *Air Monitoring Policy*, with regard to item 2212307, in relation to quality of air. Is there anything under this item, where the Minister has once mentioned that quality of air will be monitored and the relevant color advertised for the public?

Mr Virahsawmy: In fact, it does not fall under the item which the hon. Member mentioned, but I'll say that we are following very closely the quality of air by the National Environment Laboratory, which has the required equipment. We have also planned the purchase of two additional equipment for testing air quality. We already have equipment, with which we are testing the industrial zones and several regions, and we are purchasing, next year - you will find that there is an item *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets* - two air-monitoring equipment.

Mr Bhagwan: Page 425, *Rehabilitation of Beach*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how much did the Ministry spend for the rehabilitation of the Grand' Baie beach, where big rocks were put, and whether any adverse report had been received since the commissioning of that project, rock revetment for beach protection, at Grand' Baie? I would like to know whether there has been any post-commissioning study which has been carried out during this year, to see whether the work was done according to what was expected.

Mr Virahsawmy: I congratulate the hon. Member for raising this point because, Mr Chairperson, in 2003, when a survey was done by the Board, it reported that the beach of Grand' Baie was the one which was the most affected, and nothing has been done in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Now, we have done the work. The erosion was going nearly to the road at Grand' Baie, because it has been left there unattended. So, we had to take major decision to do the re-profiling, and to do the rehabilitation. Of course, some people who do not participate and who are there only to criticise found that this was not done properly. We requested the Japanese, from

JICA, to survey, and they found out that the work has been done properly, and there was no other type of work to be done in the circumstances, because of the acute erosion problems.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 425, under item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, the amount for 2014 has gone up by more than Rs9 m. May we have some explanation from the hon. Minister with regard to that increase?

Mr Virahsawmy: There has been an increase in cost, of course, and this item includes uniforms and stores items. But the major items which are included amount to Rs16.7 m., representing payments with regard to expenses which should be incurred in relation to grants received, that is, payment of salaries to experts, because when we receive grants, the organisation which gives the grants insist that we have to appoint experts to carry out the works. So, this amount includes salaries to experts and consultants for carrying out the surveys.

Mr François: Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 425, sub-item 31410402 – *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Beaches, (a) Rehabilitation of Beach*. As this is a national project, as a matter of clarification, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any degraded beach in Rodrigues which is concerned under this item vote?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, there are degraded beaches in Port Sud Est and Mourouk. I was in Rodrigues earlier this year, and we had the experts from JICA who came with us. They surveyed the different regions in Rodrigues, and have found out that we have to attend to the work in Port Sud Est and Mourouk rather urgently. We are looking for funding from funding agencies and national organisations, and I want to reassure the Member that once we get the funding, works will start in Rodrigues.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 424, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants*. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a consultancy for the preparation of legislation for the protection of wet lands and coastal sensitive areas, being given the massive investment which has been done, and is being done, and whether it is not time for Government to work on a legislation for the protection of wet lands and coastal sensitive areas together with the Ministry of Agriculture?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, wet lands are under the responsibility of Ramsar, which falls under the Ministry of Agro-Industry and not that of the Ministry of Environment.

Programme Code 402: Environmental Protection and Conservation (Rs259,030,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Programme Code 403: Monitoring, Uplifting and Embellishment of the Environment was called.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I would like to have some explanation on page 424, under 22060 - *Maintenance*, item 22060010 – *Grounds* where an amount of some Rs11.1 m. is earmarked. If you will allow me, Mr Chairperson, I will link it with two other items appearing on the next page.

The Chairperson: Let us go along with one question to start with. I will come back to you.

Mr Roopun: If you just allow me, you will understand the reason why I am linking it.

The Chairperson: If it is linked, yes, I can accept it.

Mr Roopun: On page 426, item 31113425 - *Embellishment of infrastructural works* and item 31410403 – *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites* respectively. I see three items, which appear to me, to be quite linked. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us about the different items and how works are being done on these three lines of Budget?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, with regard to item 22060010 – *Grounds*, this is mainly for general cleaning. Of course, it includes items like bins, plastic bags, seasonal plants, etc, which come to an amount of Rs11.1 m.. As for rivers and canals, this is Budget for the cleaning and dredging of rivers, especially for functions like Maha Shivaratri, Ganesh Chaturthi and Cavadee. So, the Rs2 m. are meant mainly for cleaning and maintaining of the rivers for these two functions. A point was raised on *Embellishment*. Of course, this is for embellishment of various places, for upgrading and landscaping works.

Also, you have raised the point on *Improvement and Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*. We have a project called ‘Clean and Green Mauritius’ which is for the rehabilitation and cleaning, and also greening of different sites in Mauritius.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 426, item 31122804 - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment for National Environmental Laboratory*. Can the hon. Minister give us some explanation for this

Rs21.5 m., which specific equipment are being purchased, and whether provision is made for the purchase of equipment to measure the level of dioxins?

Mr Virahsawmy: Equipment for measuring dioxins and furans are very expensive and, therefore, are not included in this amount. What is included in this amount is what we call inductive coupled plasma mass spectrometer. This enables the National Environment Laboratory (NEL) to measure different types of metals at the same time; it also includes for Rs8 m., as I have just mentioned, to air monitoring stations.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 426, item - 31410402 *Improvement/Upgrading/Rahabilitation of Rivers/Mountain Reserves/Islets*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he could enlighten us on the number of rivers which have been rehabilitated, and which rivers? We know of the bad state of most of our rivers actually. So, which rivers have been rehabilitated during year 2013 up to date, and does he have a plan for rivers which will be taken care of during the coming year?

Mr Virahsawmy: This includes 22 flooded areas where we have done desilting and dredging of 22.7 kms of rivers. I have a list of 24 different rivers which have been desilted and cleared as they were a threat to a lot of regions and we had to do it to protect the regions in terms of storm drains.

Mr Uteem: On page 426, item 31410403 *-Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*. May I know from the hon. Minister the amount budgeted and spent this year, and the amount budgeted for next year, which represents embellishment for places of worship? Can he table a list of all places of worship where works have been carried out this year?

Mr Virahsawmy: I think the hon. Member got mixed up. It is not places of worship; it is improvement and rehabilitation of public sites.

(Interruptions)

No, not under this item! This is for public sites. It is mentioned Public and Other Sites.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, on page 425, item 22120 – *Fees*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House to whom these fees are being paid and why it has been nearly increased by 300%? And second, item 22090 - *Security*, why there was no provision for the year 2013 and now we see that, as from 2014, there is a provision of R2.1 m. every year?

Mr Virahsawmy: The fees of Rs470,000 represent the additional amount of Rs250,000 which we have had to pay, because we had to get the National Environment Laboratory (NEL) to be inspected and pay audit fees for the laboratory to be accredited. So, this includes Rs250,000 for the accreditation fees.

Regarding *Security*, this represents transfer from *Programme 402* to *Programme 403*, because we have transferred the NEL under *Programme 403*. So, all the securities will be there.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Chairperson, on page 426, item 31113425 - *Embellishment of Infrastructural Works*, can I know from the Minister whether the amount which was provided in the 2013 Estimates, Rs18 m. has been used and what does he propose to do with the Rs18 m. earmarked for 2014?

Mr Virahsawmy: I have already replied to it, but I will reply again. The amount of Rs18 m. has been used completely in 2013 and the amount of Rs18 m. for 2014 is meant for embellishment of infrastructural works.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Chairperson, again under item – 31410403 *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*, we are called upon to vote a sum of Rs20 m. for next year. We have already voted Rs22 m. for this year. May we know which company, public or private, is being given the responsibility of upgrading some sites, especially in view of the fact that Trou aux Cerfs is now a horror?

Mr Virahsawmy: Trou aux Cerfs is not a horror; it depends on how you look at it. We could not have left it as it was before. The Municipality of Curepipe had been under your administration for so long, why you didn't do anything?

(*Interruptions*)

It was a constant danger to all the children going there; there was no protection for them and now that we are bringing in protection, the hon. Member finds that this is a horror?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

(*Interruptions*)

Some silence in the House, please!

(*Interruptions*)

Silence! Yes, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 426, allow me to go back to item 31113425 - *Embellishment of Infrastructural Works*. The hon. Minister just mentioned that the Rs18 m. earmarked for 2013 have already been spent. May we have a list of the sites where the works have been carried out so that the House is aware of it?

Mr Virahsawmy: This is administrative work. It is not a problem. I can give you the list. I will circulate the list.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, if you have got a list of all the works that have been accomplished...

Mr Virahsawmy: I'll have it circulated, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 426, under item 31410402 *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Rivers/Mountain Reserves/Islets*, can the hon. Minister inform the House which particular islets have been identified by the Ministry for rehabilitation during the forthcoming financial year?

Mr Virahsawmy: I'll have to go through the whole list to find out whether there are islets, but there are many rivers. I'll ask my officers to let me know the names of the islets.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to go back to the question of my colleague, hon. Dr. S. Boolell and I will ask it very calmly. I would like to know how much it has cost the public coffers and who was entrusted with the contract for Trou aux Cerfs?

Mr Virahsawmy: I don't have the figure how much it has cost. All works which are being done by the Ministry are important works being done by public tenders. So, there are public tenders which are being done and there is a Technical Committee which analyses. And respecting all the procedures and specifications, then the one who has to be awarded the contract is awarded the contract. In fact, we respect all the conditions which are imposed by regulations.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister agree to let us have the amount and the identity of the contractor? I am sure he has nothing to hide. So, will he please provide the information?

Mr Virahsawmy: No, I don't have anything to hide and I will let the House have it, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 426, under item *31410403 - Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*, would the hon. Minister table a list of public and other sites which have been improved in 2013?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, it is not a problem, Mr Chairperson. I will have it circulated. In fact, I am informed that the islet is Ile aux Bernaches.

Mr Bhagwan: On the last item *31410403 - Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites*, we find that a sum of Rs20 m. has been earmarked. Can I know from the Minister whether the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is still in charge for the maintenance of the Signal Mountain Health Track? If yes, can we know whether representations have been received for its maintenance and whether funds have been earmarked in the coming year for the upgrading of the Signal Mountain Health Track?

Mr Virahsawmy: The Ministry is still, as at to date, responsible for the maintenance of that health track. We are looking seriously as to whether we are going to maintain it under the Ministry or ask the Municipality of Port Louis to take over the maintenance of that health track.

Mr Obeegadoo: At page 426, under item 31410403 - *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Public and Other Sites* and the one just before item 31410402 - *Improvement/Upgrading/Rehabilitation of Rivers/Mountain Reserves/Islets*, I want to know from the Minister whether under these votes, the Ministry is addressing the major problem caused by pollution by plastic bags of some of our rivers, even some of our islets and other plots of land that have been turned into *dépotoirs*. Is this being addressed and what is the Ministry doing under this vote or another vote to pre-empt the tendency right now of the public to turn valuable parts of our natural heritage into dumping sites for plastic?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, we have, in 2012, introduced a programme for 'zero plastic' and with a view to reduce the use of plastic bags, we have introduced long lasting bags in association with Mauritius Telecom. We have distributed nearly over 50,000 shopping bags to consumers just to encourage them not to use plastic bags. This has worked out very well and we have noted also that the import of granular has been reduced by 50%. But it is very unfortunate that the Ministry cannot be responsible for regions which are under the control of local authorities also. So, everyone has got to take his responsibilities. We are taking our responsibilities. Like I have said, there are a number of sites which we are cleaning and greening in Mauritius, but I believe, all Mauritians should take their responsibility to ensure that we keep Mauritius clean and green.

Mr Bhagwan: Under the same vote, can the hon. Minister inform the House what is the present labour force of the *Police de l'Environnement*, whether it is still under the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police and whether request has been made to the Commissioner of Police for additional staff and also incentives to be given to the *Police de l'Environnement* in terms of renewal of equipment and also to enhance the good work which they are doing and which will help in combating the pollution problem in Mauritius?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, our personnel are members of the Police Force and are under the control of the Commissioner of Police, but seconded on duty to the Ministry. I think there are about 31. I will have to check the number, with 6 vehicles. We have made provision in the Budget for renewal of vehicles. I know the hon. Member raised that point, that's why I had insisted to put a Budget to try to renew, at least, two vehicles every year. There are 27 members of the Police Force who are with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and

we have decentralised the work by putting different units in Port Louis, Curepipe, Rose Hill, Grand Baie and somewhere else. We have a small unit of the Police of Environment which is working separately, not completely independent, but under the control of the Inspector in Port Louis, namely, Inspector Dimba and Inspector Brasse. But whenever there is a problem in Curepipe, there is a unit there which can access quicker than if the work has to come from Port Louis.

The Chairperson: Just the time for a last question from hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: On page 426, item 31410402, Mr Chairperson, a sum of Rs13.2 m. was earmarked for the *Improvement/Upgrading/Refurbishment of Rivers/Mountains Reserves/Islets*. Can the hon. Minister give us a breakdown how much of that money has been spent for rivers, mountain reserves and islets?

Mr Virahsawmy: This question has already been asked. I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: That's right!

Mr Virahsawmy: It is mostly for rivers. I have just said it is for one islet, Île aux Bernaches.

(*Interruptions*)

This, I will have to check it and...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister can circulate it, afterwards. Time is up!

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - Programme Code 403: Monitoring, Uplifting and Embellishment of the Environment (Rs234,918,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - Programme Code 406: Sustainable Development and Climate Change was called.

Mr Bhagwan: Concerning the Eco-Village Project, can I ask the hon. Minister how does he report progress on this project, the villages that have been identified, where work has started, what is in the pipeline for the coming year and whether any particular project has been completed and is there an Eco-Village somewhere?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes. The consultant has been working on the Master Plan for these Eco-Villages, but I must point out that there have been a lot of bottlenecks with regard to land acquisition. This has more or less blocked the project with the Master Plan which we have prepared. But we are reviewing the implementation of the Eco-Villages by using all other facilities such as the MID Fund, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, itself, the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the CSR to try to start work, at least, in two villages which is Panchavati and Pointe aux Piments.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Mr Chairperson, this project was announced in the 2009 Budget, and the hon. Minister has just mentioned that a Consultant was appointed. I think he was appointed in 2011. So, is it the same Consultant who is working on the project and the amount of money which has been paid to the Consultant as at October or to date?

Mr Virahsawmy: We are looking at the 2014 Budget, but I don't mind circulating the amount which has been paid.

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, under this Sub-Programme, I was looking at page 429 and realised that there are only five staff members who are given the responsibility of taking forward this very important programme. When I turn to page 422 with the performance indicators, it would seem that the main project is the reduced emission of greenhouse gas with a specific target for 2014. So, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether we have an estimate of the present greenhouse gas emission for the Republic of Mauritius as at now, and what specific measures are being taken next year to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to the target of 70,000 tonnes?

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Chairperson, the reduction of the greenhouse gas emission is not related to the number of employees. Unfortunately, it does not work like this. We will reduce the greenhouse gas emission by the number of trees which we are going to plant because every tree we plant will reduce by 3kg of CO2 per year. We have a programme with MEXA called the MEXA Carbon Footprint Mitigation Project which will reduce the gas emission by 7,000 tonnes and we have also introduced the Solar Water Heater Scheme which will reduce the gas emission by 65,000 tonnes. So, this will exceed slightly the 70,000 tonnes which have been provided for and, of course, we will also introduce, I hope next year, the solar project in production of electricity. This also will reduce the gas emission.

There will be the wind farm in Plaine Sophie. It is expected that the wind farm in Plaine Sophie will reduce the gas emission by 40,000 tonnes and the gas-to-energy in landfill itself has reduced by 95,000 tonnes. So, next year we are well on the way to reach the target of 70,000 tonnes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Obeegadoo: On this very same issue, Mr Chairperson...

The Chairperson: I will come back to you later. We have already established a list here. Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Let me go back again to that Master Plan for Eco-Village Project. As pointed out by hon. Mrs Labelle, this is the project which has been announced some years back and, as I can recall, the village of Vieux Grand Port was one of the villages identified to be within that project. May I know from the hon. Minister if that village is still in that project and, if so, what are the constraints that are hampering that project from going ahead?

Mr Virahsawmy: I have just explained, Mr Chairperson, that we have had major problems of land acquisition. That's why we cannot proceed with this project and, of course, we are not saying that we are not going to do the project in Vieux Grand Port. There could be some delays and we have already identified Panchavati and Pointe aux Piments, where it's starting. This is why I said we are looking at other possibilities using the same size of land which is

available. Because the private owners do not want to give land, so, we have to go for compulsory acquisition also. I know we have included Vieux Grand Port in that project and we hope that we will be able to do it in the near future.

The hon. Member had asked about what is the emission. The emission for Mauritius is 2.9 kg per capita.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, it's the same vote on page 426. I will take it under item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Ministry has commissioned any latest study to carry out the impact of climate change on sea level rise as far as Mauritius is concerned and also, on beach erosion? We have had studies done before, on which I am sure the Ministry is working, as to whether it is not time to update the present status and to have a fresh study?

Mr Virahsawmy: Yes, Mr Chairperson, we had commissioned a study by Dr. Bassi, an international expert.

The Chairperson: Do you have another question! I am proceeding as per my list.

Mr Bhagwan: One last question, under the item *406*. In the light of what has happened, that is, flash floods and other calamities, can the Minister say whether his Ministry has approached the United Nations (UNEP) for the preparation of a disaster risk mapping as far as sea level rise, flooding is concerned in order to take action to mitigate the effects of these floods and so on with regard to the protection of the environment?

Mr Virahsawmy: I am pleased to inform the House that this has been done already.

Mr Obeegadoo: I note from page 417 that the Ministry reports among its achievements that a National Climate Change Adaptation Policy Framework has been developed and the Climate Change Information Centre operational. Under the programme at page 429, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he can tell us where this climate change information centre is located and what specific measures are being taken to translate into practice whatever policy implications the framework may have?

Mr Virahsawmy: It is very unfortunate, Mr Chairperson, because I have already mentioned that. The hon. Member was not here. I can't repeat what I have said.

Mr Obeegadoo: I apologise and remove my question. As simple as that!

The Chairperson: Hon. François!

Mr François: Just one question, Mr Chairperson, as a matter of clarification. I refer to the item 22120008 - *Master plan for Eco-Village Project*, I just want to ask the hon. Minister whether this project is being worked out jointly with the Land Use Planning and Management Department of the Ministry of Housing and Lands?

Mr Virahsawmy: Of course, in Government, there is liaison with all the different Ministries concerned whenever important projects are being done.

Programme Code 406: Sustainable Development (Rs7,739,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: The Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology – Programme Code 741: Policy and Management for Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, Mr Chairperson. On page 433, the *Priority Objective* is defined as formulating policies related to the tertiary education sector. I go to page 437, which provides for the estimates of Rs278 m. for 2014. I would wish to know from the hon. Minister whether the expenditure for next year will allow at long last for the publication of the promised Master Plan for the Tertiary Sector which has been in the offering for quite a long time.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, the strategic paper has already been published.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, may I take the hon. Minister to page 437, the last item *Fees*, I see a quite an enormous increase from Rs115,000 to over Rs1.4 m. Could we be given the explanation and details about the amount of fees projected?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this is a provision for payment of fees to members of the Departmental Tender Committees for fiscal year 2014. It also accounts for fees for training of staff and refund of subscription fees to professional bodies such as ACCA, ICMA for my Ministry staff only. Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, now there is a new provision of Rs1.3 m. this year for training in quality assurance for staff of Tertiary Education Institutions as well as Tertiary Education Commission. The services of external resource will be sought for this project.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 437, item 22030 - *Rent*, can the hon. Minister explain to the House to whom this amount is being paid and whether tender procedures are being involved and, if so, when was this tender launched for the last time?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this is with regard to the rental of offices at BPML Tower, 11 Floor Wing B and also for the payment of parking slots. The total rented area is 1352.4 m². The rental amounts to Rs7.7 m. for offices and for the parking slots, it is Rs160,000. I see that there is a rental facility for events of Rs200,000, the duration is three years upon an agreement of 5% escalating cost yearly and the tender procedure was conducted in 2011.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will go back to my previous question, since we have been told that a strategy, which is now a paper, has been published. May I know when it was published? Was it in the course of 2013? How much it cost under the Estimates of 2013? Will a copy thereof be laid on the Table of the Assembly?

Dr. Jeetah: I don't have any problem, Mr Chairperson. The paper was published this year itself, and with regard to the cost involved, I know that we had a lot of consultations, and we also had consultation with the World Bank. I do not have any problem to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Jhugroo: Page 438, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel*. Can the hon. Minister explain to the House why the provision has nearly doubled for next year? Can the hon. Minister table a list of those people who travelled this year?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this is in regard to three missions I undertook, and if the hon. Member would like to have the details, I can gladly mention them now. For the first mission, I recall I went to Limoges, whereby we signed a protocol between Université des

Mascareignes and Université de Limoges for academic support. Today, we have a public university, which I can proudly say are offering a dual qualification recognised in Europe, and of course, in Mauritius. I also visited Oxford University. Today, there is an agreement signed between MRC and Oxford University with regard to research. We also visited Imperial College, we are today jointly offering a Masters in Public Health.

The Chairperson: Well, if you can table the relevant document with more details, we can save time for questions.

Dr. Jeetah: Okay!

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to Major Achievements, I see that the hon. Minister has participated in four education fairs. So, may I know from those fairs held in those countries, how many international institutions have been, in fact, attracted to Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: With regard to the fairs, Mr Chairperson, I suspect it must have been for the promotion of Mauritius as a platform for tertiary education. I recall, from memory, we have been to Tanzania, with whom today...

Mr Jugnauth: My question is clear and simple. I am asking how many international institutions have been attracted to Mauritius.

Dr. Jeetah: These fairs were meant to promote Mauritius as a higher education destination for students to come and study. We have been to Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. As I said, we did not go there to attract institutions to come and set up here. I visited Oxford, Imperial College to attract them to offer courses here. Here, the process was to attract students to come and study, and today I can safely say that we have more than 2,000 students who are studying in Mauritius from overseas.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 438, sub-item 32145303 - *Loan to Special Purpose Vehicle icw Construction of New University Park*. Can the Minister say how this sum of Rs225 m. for 2013 has been used, and what he proposes to do in 2014?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this is with regard to the three university campuses. I must say as per the procedures, invitation for bids were launched by the Central Procurement Board.

As I said, for the new university campuses at Montagne Blanche, Pamplemousses and Réduit, and the closing dates were 17 October 2013, 16 October 2013 and 10 October 2013. I am given to understand, as at mid October 2013, bids were being evaluated by the Central Procurement Board ,and hopefully, early next January, we will start the construction, depending on the procedures going promptly.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, again on that same item *Construction of a New University Park*, from what is mentioned here, nearly Rs1 billion has been earmarked for that project. May we have an idea about the total cost of that project, and what are the terms and conditions of the loan that is going to finance that project?

Dr. Jeetah: Well, this is a loan extended to us. It is a new financial instrument from the Ministry of Finance. In fact, there was a request from the Ministry of Finance to set up an instrument, which my Ministry created, that is, the Knowledge Parks Ltd, my Ministry is a member along with the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Housing, Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Education, and SIC. There were certain requirements such as drawing business plans, and I am given to understand - the information that I have here - that the loan conditions are to be determined by MOFED, and I suppose they are still working on it.

Mr Bhagwan: On the same item raised by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, *Construction of New University Park*, for which tenders have been launched, can the Minister inform the House whether this project is being *piloté par le ministère*, or by any other sub-company set up by the Ministry?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, it is the SLDC which is managing the project for my Ministry.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, as we know, this programme is based first and foremost to formulate policy. Only yesterday, we have learnt, further to the visit to Mauritius by the HRD Minister of India and Mr VedPrakash, the Chair of the University Grants Commission of India, that upon their return to India, the very same Mr VedPrakash has stated that the five Indian universities that have set up offshore campuses here have been asked to stop admissions with immediate effect. And furthermore he said that the Mauritius Council - I take it that this is the TEC - which had permitted operations by these universities might recognise the degrees

granted by these institutions, but the Indian students who want to come back will face problems, their degrees may not be recognized. So, are we to understand that these monies that we are voting today for 2014 will need now to be used for a complete overhaul of the policies of this Ministry, having regard to offshore campuses by Indian universities?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I have to say that the hon. Member seems to be having some hallucinations. I am talking about...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Dr. Jeetah: I am, Mr Chairperson, talking about funding for public institutions.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Stop it! No more interruptions! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: My concern has been taken care of by my colleagues.

The Chairperson: Do you have a further question, hon. Jugnauth?

Mr Jugnauth: Page 438, sub-item 32145303 - *Construction of New University Park*. May I know if a feasibility study has been carried out, and if yes, will the Minister circulate the feasibility study?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I have replied questions in Parliament in the past, and I have provided all the information. There have been a number of studies carried out by the HRDC, by Tertiary Education Commission, and by other authorities.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 438, under sub-item 32145303, the hon. Minister just mentioned that 2,000 foreign students were attracted to Mauritius. May I know, out of these 2,000 students, how many have been deported for having challenged the credibility of the institution in which they were lured to study?

The Chairperson: The question has nothing to do with expenses. Not allowed!

(*Interruptions*)

It has nothing to do with expenses! It is clear! This is a good question for a PQ.

Mr Obeegadoo: I had asked the question. I had asked whether the funds we are being asked to approve for next year will suffice now for a complete overhaul of the policy of the Ministry, having regard to establishment of offshore campuses by Indian universities in the light of the latest developments.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I think I have replied already. Currently, we have a university system in the public sector where we need more than 100000 sq ft of space. The University of Mauritius was designed to hold 3,000 students. Today, it has 13,000 students. The UTM is being called upon to use other public facilities...

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: How many Chairpersons do we have in this House!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, there is a dire need for space in the public sector and also besides we have been able to bring in a IIT through the visit of the Indian Minister. So, all these public institutions need space. Now we have created *l'Université des Mascareignes*, which is expanding.

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Being given that the hon. Minister has spent public money to attract foreign students to Mauritius, may we know from the number he has mentioned, therefore, to which institutions those students have been admitted and how many have not been able to complete their studies?

Dr. Jeetah: I can provide a list of students and which university they are attending. I do not have the record with me now, but I do not have any problem to give the list of students. I know, at least, for example, Mr Chairperson, we have one medical school in Mauritius today, which has more South African students than Mauritian students; but I can provide the list.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, on pages 431 and 432, I refer to the Strategic Note of the Ministry, where it is said in II - *Major Challenges and Constraints*, that one of the challenges is the Signature of bilateral agreements for mutual recognition of qualifications.

Under the Programme we are considering, may I ask the Minister whether the signature of bilateral agreements entails any financial implications and what are the bilateral agreements for mutual recognition of qualifications does the Ministry intend to sign? And can the Minister undertake that once a signature of a bilateral agreement takes place, that this bilateral agreement is recognised, is respected and we should not use the argument that Mauritius is a sovereign country and we do not have anything to do with any agreement we have signed with another country?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I do not understand why the hon. Member is getting excited.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, we have two countries with which...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Yes, there is a question. The Minister should answer. If you make noise, he will not be able to answer. Either you want an answer or not!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, we have signed an agreement with Tanzania, so far. I have a list of countries. Let me go through the list, Mr Chairperson. The Tertiary Education Commission has sent documents to Malaysia, Australia, China, UK, etc. I have got a list, as I said, but we have been able to sign with, at least, two countries, India and Tanzania.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I refer to the loan, to the special purpose vehicle for the construction of a new University Park for 2013. An amount of Rs225 m. was provided and another Rs225 m. is provided for 2014. May I know from the hon. Minister what amount of loan has been disbursed for that special purpose vehicle, and is a private company being incorporated for the purpose and, if so, who is the Chairman and who is the Director of that Corporation?

Dr. Jeetah: I have already replied to this question, Mr Chairperson. I did mention that there is the Ministry of Tertiary Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Housing, the Board of Investment, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Education and the SIC. As to who chairs, I must look for the information. I must say I do not have the information. Maybe, my

Permanent Secretary will let me have the information. How much has been disbursed, I have already replied to this in a Parliamentary Question. There has been some payment for the site in Curepipe, ex-MBC building and there has been some payment to a Consultant who has prepared a Master Plan. I can let the House have this information, but I have already replied about this in a PQ previously.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give us the number of Indian students who are enrolled in Mauritius?

The Chairperson: On what page, under which item?

Mr Bodha: Well, the hon. Minister mentioned 2,000 students; it is the policy strategy...

The Chairperson: Which page?

Mr Bodha: The hon. Minister mentioned the other countries. How many Indian students have been enrolled in Mauritius and in which institutions? May I ask the hon. Minister how many of these students can be given the assurance that, once they go back to India, they will leave Mauritius with a degree which is valid in India and in the world?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I can provide the information. I do not have it with me, because these are details which I do not keep, but I can certainly provide the details required.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology - Programme Code 741: Policy and Management for Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Rs278,711,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology –Programme Code 742: for Tertiary Education was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: On page 438, I would like to raise the issue of the University of Mauritius, item 26313088 - (b) *University of Mauritius*. We are providing a sum of Rs403 m. which is being proposed for next year. My question is, being given that this University has been subjected to significant disruption and destabilisation over recent years - if my memory serves me right - and some seven Vice-Chancellors, either substantively or interim, over the last

three/four years, do we have the guarantee that, if we agree to vote this Budget, there will no longer be any direct ministerial interference in the University of Mauritius?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Before the Minister answers this question, I want to know the item.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, certainly. We are being asked to approve, at page 438, item 26313088, a global sum for the Tertiary Education Commission, of which under sub-paragraph (b) Rs403.7 m. will be transferred to the University of Mauritius?

The Chairperson: My question is: how is your question linked to that sum?

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is: if the State is to provide such funding through TEC to the University of Mauritius, we, in this House, would wish to ask the Minister whether the condition that we approve this funding is that there be no unwarranted ministerial intervention in the day to day running of the University of Mauritius, and that academic autonomy be respected as it always has been since this University was founded?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I think things have moved on and things have changed since the hon. Member was Minister. First of all, I think, once again, he is getting mixed up. I do not know of any seven former Vice-Chancellors of the University of Mauritius. I was there myself personally. An acting Vice-Chancellor does not become a Vice-Chancellor. Whenever a Vice-Chancellor travels, you have somebody who acts as the Vice-Chancellor and we have had a few.

Mr Chairperson, I think the hon. Member ought to know that there is a system whereby you have a Senate, a Council and independent members who actually choose their own Vice-Chancellor. I do not know whether things might have been different when he was Minister and maybe he is judging me by his own standards!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: I am referring to

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please! No comment! Yes, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr. Sorefan: ...item 26 – *Grants*, sub item 26313088 where it is mentioned *Africa Scholarship*. May I know from the hon. Minister how many Africans have been awarded scholarships and whether they attend only tertiary education institutions listed here or are some attending private institutions?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I can circulate the list of all the institutions which have been able to enrol a student who had applied for these scholarships. From memory, I know that 20 scholarships were awarded.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, I would like to speak on page 438, item 26313088 – *Tertiary Education Commission*, which is a very important institution. Can the Minister inform the House and circulate information concerning who is the actual Chairperson of the TEC and its Board Members? If the House may be apprised of the Board and whether this controversy concerning the appointment of the Director - there was a controversy in the press being given the institution - can the Minister give information to the House, the country and the nation whether this *controverse* is now behind us in the interest of Mauritius and whether the Director now is a full-fledged Director, he is a part time Director, he has settled and he is not at least taking his time to leave Mauritius also?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, the Chairperson of the Tertiary Education Commission is Professor Ah-Chuen. I can certainly let the hon. Member have the names of the Members of the Board. I do not recollect who they might be, but I know quite a few of them.

Yes, we do have a new Director of the TEC. I can let the hon. Member have the information with regards to...

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister will circulate the information? Yes? It is okay? Will you circulate the information?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Sir. It is a professor from New Delhi.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: But there was a controversy concerning the appointment. *Il y a eu une controverse apparue dans la presse concernant l'institution. Que le ministre vient donner la garantie au pays que nous avons quelqu'un qui peut diriger cette institution et non pas quelqu'un qui est très controversé!*

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan! In fact, your question is in the nature of a Parliamentary Question! But I have allowed it, okay? But now the hon. Minister will circulate the information!

(*Interruptions*)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 438, item 26313088. The increase for TEC includes the recruitment of foreign lecturers and there is an amount of Rs15 m. for the recruitment of foreign lecturers. May I ask the hon. Minister where these foreign lecturers will be posted, will they be attached to TEC or will they be posted at the different universities or institutions?

Dr. Jeetah: I thank the hon. Member for asking this question. We believe that by having an input of foreign experts in their respective fields as sabbatical members, would lead towards –

- (i) internationalisation, and
- (ii) secondly, for our students to get exposure from very good professors from overseas.

I am not suggesting that our professors here are not as equally good, but, I think, this is the actual practice in all great universities and this is what we are trying to emulate.

Mr Jugnauth: At page 438 under the item TEC, there has been an exercise for the recruitment of the Director. May I know –

- (i) the number of applicants for that post;
- (ii) the members of the panel who sat to scrutinise those applications and recommended the selection of the actual Director, and

- (iii) whether this panel or any other person has done a proper and thorough screening with regard to the new Director?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I am given to understand that there were 43 applications, that is, 43 candidates submitted applications. The Commission chose the following members, independent of my Ministry, I must say –

- (i) Mr Y. Abdullatif, former Permanent Secretary as Chairperson;
- (ii) Mr R. Yat Sin, former Head of the Civil Service and former Chairperson of the Public Service Commission;
- (iii) Dr. J. Ramkissoon, Chairperson of Food and Agricultural Research Council;
- (iv) Dr. A. Jeetun, former Director of Mauritius Employers' Federation and member of governing Body of ILO, and
- (v) Mr K. Gobin, I suspect it must have been Mr Khemil Gobin, Human Resource Consultant.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I come back on the item which has been raised by hon. Mrs Labelle concerning the employment of foreign lecturers. This is a measure which was announced in the Budget by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. The sum budgeted - since we are going to have these 30 international lecturers who will be paid at expatriate rate, I suppose, the question I am asking the hon. Minister is if that is not this, in fact, an admission of defeat when the University of Mauritius now is going to employ 30 expatriates and whether this sum which has been provided for will be sufficient to pay these lecturers.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I beg to differ. I was in Southeast University, Nanjing, sometimes back. The Head of Architecture Department from MIT goes to that University and teaches once a year for a month. Here, last week we had a professor who was here from Cambridge University. I do not see anything wrong from all these good professors coming here, teaching and exchanging ideas and views. This is what the world of academia is and I do not think that we can be different from the rest of the world.

Mr Uteem: On the very same item of Rs15 m. for recruitment of foreign lecturers, may I know from the hon. Minister where will those lecturers lecture, which institutions and what criteria would be used to allocate those lecturers to the various tertiary institutions?

Dr. Jeetah: This will be decided by the tertiary institutions themselves. It is not going to be a political game. We need to let the departments, deans, head of faculties and all the public institutions decide. They are going to bring this forward. This is a new item that we have thought which is going to help upgrade the quality of our public institutions, one of the elements, I must say.

The Chairperson: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Roopun: The issue has been raised, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, again at page 438, item *Tertiary Education Commission, Africa Scholarships*, in his reply earlier on, the hon. Minister stated that there are four students who were awarded scholarships. Will he confirm that of those 20, no one is attending any private tertiary institution actually in Mauritius and whether he is aware also that some of those students did not get their stipend for some time? Will he confirm to the House whether that problem has already been settled now?

Dr. Jeetah: No, I am not aware that they have not received their stipend. But, Mr Chairperson, the condition is that they have to be of a certain age. They have to seek admission in an institution here which is recognised by TEC. So, it might well be public and/or private.

Mr Jugnauth: Again, with regard to TEC - which is paying for legal advice - is the hon. Minister aware that Counsel Doorgesh Ramsewak Q.C. has given an advice to TEC, namely, that the EIILM University is operating illegally and that the degrees that are being awarded will not be recognised?

The Chairperson: But, I don't know how far it is relevant with regard to the item.

Mr Jugnauth: The item is Tertiary Education Commission. We are asked to vote Rs786,984,000 out of which TEC is paying for its legal adviser. Therefore, it is public funds.

So, my question is: in view of the advice that has been tendered by TEC's Council whether the hon. Minister is going to act on this advice?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I think that's a valid question. There's a guarantee that I can give to the House that through whatever regulations, in fact, it is the former Minister, hon. Obeegadoo who created the framework for institutions to upgrade. Through the rules that they have created, every single institution operating here satisfies the requirements of TEC, except for one - Louis Pasteur, which is a big mess that I have inherited from hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

(Interruptions)

Sorry! The hon. Minister should withdraw the words.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, I withdraw!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, on page 433, Programme 742: Tertiary Education, one of the priority objectives is to monitor the quality of tertiary education. Coming back to the item TEC where we are voting for more than Rs786 m., may I ask the hon. Minister - considering the case that the certificates being issued by one university is being considered to be illegal and not valid - whether he will ensure that this is taken care of, taking into consideration one of the priority objectives of the tertiary education?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this very hon. Member, when she was in Government, she came to see me to get ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: No. Simply answer the question!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Hon. Obeegadoo, you put your question!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I would like a clarification from the hon. Minister, because I am very much aware that I have never asked any sort of favour from the hon. Minister, especially for this particular ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: All right! You have made your statement! Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

No! Please, withdraw the word!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I am just saying that the hon. Minister has said something which is not true.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: You withdraw the word and then, you explain!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Chairperson, I am not using the word 'liar', but I am stating that the hon. Minister is saying something which is untrue and not correct!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Have you withdrawn the word '*menteur*'?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Yes.

The Chairperson: All right!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I want to go back to the global picture, that is, this amount of Rs786.9 m. that the hon. Minister is recommending that we entrust to the TEC for next year and I am asking the hon. Minister why...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Well, I don't see any reason for hon. Ministers to laugh! Yes, proceed! I have to remind the hon. Member that we are left with two minutes!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes. Now, I am asking the hon. Minister to tell us why we should trust this very same Board of TEC that has been there since 2006, this very same Board that has allowed - in breach of our regulatory framework - Indian Universities to set up illegal offshore campuses and has allowed EIILM to operate in breach of the TEC Act? Why should we agree to entrust such public money to a TEC that has no credibility any longer?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, are you answering?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I said time is running out!

Dr. Jeetah: I can give the guarantee, Mr Chairperson, that all the institutions operating here are fully recognised by the authorities according to the law of the land that has been set up. The hon. Member might not like the law, but that's the law that he made when he was Minister. The only institution that has a problem here is Louis Pasteur where for over 12 years students are still struggling because of the mess he has created.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: There is only one minute left. I will allow hon. Ganoo to put a question!

(Interruptions)

But, short question!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, I come to...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Well, who is the one who is saying zero second?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: For Open University of Mauritius, Mr Chairperson, we are being asked to vote the sum of Rs96 m. for next year. Now, the Open University of Mauritius, if the hon. Minister does not know, has recently recruited about 25 academic staff...

The Chairperson: No. Leave all that! Put a question, time is running!

Mr Ganoo: I am asking the hon. Minister whether the sum that we are being asked to vote will cater for the recent recruitment of youngsters and whether the hon. Minister is aware that there are only two staff members with doctorates and the Open University of Mauritius the public is being told that there is 100% registration in doctoral programmes...

The Chairperson: Alright! The question is too long.

Mr Ganoo:...and whether the OUM has the qualifications and the experience to supervise these students?

Dr. Jeetah: The Open University of Mauritius is a university conducting its courses by an Act of Parliament. I don't see any problem. It has all its structures. It has its academic facilities, it is collaborating with the Commonwealth of learning, it has a number of experts and we have a Director by the name of Dr. Sukon who has been here for 10 or 15 years, I don't know how many years he has served. He has his faculty members. I don't understand why the hon. Member is throwing mud at this new university.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology - Programme Code 742: Tertiary Education (Rs854,972,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology - Programme Code 743: Harnessing Research, Innovation, Science and Technology for National Development was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, I will start with a question on page 436 outcome indicators under Programme 743, National Expenditure on Research and Development as a percentage of GDP. Now, how is it that whereas for the first time we have a Ministry solely dedicated to tertiary

education, there is no progress which is in store for us, despite the funds that we are being asked to vote between 2012 and 2014 we are stuck on Research and Development at 0.4% of GDP?

The Chairperson: How do you link that question with an item of expenditure, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, indeed, this is an outcome indicator for Programme 743 at page 439 with a total budgeted amount of Rs166,317,000 for the 2014 estimates.

Dr. Jeetah: This is probably something new to the hon. Member. For the first time, we have got a sum of Rs166 m. for research projects. We have set up National Chairs, Mr Chairperson, and I am quite glad to report that one of the National Chairs has been able to get a patent. We have a number of publications and we have been able to also, Mr Chairperson, attract an Indian Institute of Technology to set base here in Mauritius. Is that not good enough results for the hon. Member?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Any more question! Yes, hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Regarding the IIT Delhi, I want to know whether they are going to set up a campus in Mauritius and whether...

The Chairperson: I say no comments!

Mr Jugnauth: ...there is going to be any contribution, either from Government of India or from any other Institutions from India?

Dr. Jeetah: To be able to set up an IIT in Mauritius, Mr Chairperson, you will have to have the contribution of the IIT first. That is quite obvious, maybe not so to the hon. Member. Mr Chairperson, we had the visit of five professors, Professor Balakrishnan led the mission here. Only a couple of weeks back we had Professor Shevgaonkar who is the Director of IIT. He came along with Professor Koul and they have set up a committee that is going to start this Institution. Mr Chairperson, this ought to be a matter of pride that for the first time in the history of IITs, we have now an IIT in Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

I think we ought to be proud of this.

The Chairperson: Any further question! Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am no page 439, regarding the IIT Delhi. In the Budget Speech we were told that Government is providing Rs228 m. over the next five years for this project. I am referring to paragraph 320 of the Budget Speech and in the Budget Estimates a sum of Rs10 m. is earmarked for 2014, Rs5 m. for 2015 and Rs5 m. in 2016. Can the hon. Minister enlighten us a bit about the progress of the implementation of this institution with the fund that is being provided right now instead of the Rs228m. over the five years?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Chairperson, with pleasure. The progress is that only a couple of weeks back we had the Minister of HRD who came over with the Director of IIT, with his Deputy Director, the Chairperson of the UGC and members of his Ministry to give due recognition to this venture between our Government and the Government of India. Now, with regard to the proposed strategy, I can read the whole passage if you wish or may I circulate it? I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jugnauth! Put it again!

Mr Jugnauth: I put it again instead of filibustering. The hon. Minister could answer whether a campus is being set? It is a simple question.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Jugnauth: Secondly, whether the whole contribution will be from Government of Mauritius or is there going to be a part contribution from the Government of India or institution?

Dr. Jeetah: The first part is yes. The second part, Mr Chairperson, to be able to get an IIT is not just a question of putting an IIT saga there.

(Interruptions)

You have to have the faculty members! This is the most important part...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo! Silence now!

(Interruptions)

Cool down, I don't think there is any need for you to get angry!

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on the very same item.

The Chairperson: Silence! Now I want to listen to hon. Obeegadoo.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on the very same item. I won't call page and item number again. I want to know why is this institution being called Research Academy?

The Chairperson: Please, no interruption! I want to listen to his question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Why is it called the Research Academy! Will it be a teaching Institute or just a research academy? If it is going to be a teaching institution what will be the intake? Because we are voting this money, I want to know in that past India has said: "You want an IIT, same exams as India even if that means that 99% of students getting in Mauritius will be Indians. So, how is this going to work out in terms of intake and admissions and when is this institution getting started?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, the proposed strategy was over a period of 10 years. Obviously you cannot have an IIT like institution from day one. The Academy would be starting as from January 2014. It will consist of a core research faculty including research infrastructure and in the first year of operation this new IIT Research Academy in Mauritius will make use of facilities and share specialised equipment with local universities and in longer term it is envisaged that new campus facilities will be available for the IIT campus. At the end of year 5, - this is the strategy suggested by Professor Balakrishnan - it is expected that two research clusters will be operational with some 50 research scholars and as from the sixth year of operation this IIT in Mauritius is expected to become an independent awarding body which will be known as an International Institute of Technology Mauritius. To start with, Mr Chairperson, 20 PhD students will be recruited in 2014 and will start their study in June 2014. The faculty will be 60% from IIT New Delhi. Maybe this is where the confusion lies to respond to hon. Jugnauth.

There will be 30% from the Mauritian Diaspora because we have some very smart Mauritians working all over the world and there would be 10% local faculty, that is, research staff here. I have further details with regard to regular faculty, visiting faculty and so on.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question was: do we therefore understand that this is going to be a research institution and not a teaching institution and, if it is a teaching institution, when does it admit students?

Dr. Jeetah: I have to start again, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Be very brief!

Dr. Jeetah: I did mention that it is going to initially start conducting research because we have to build up our own research capabilities. We will create our own faculties and as year sixth it will start teaching.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology – Programme Code 743: Harnessing Research, Innovation, Science and Technology for National Development (Rs 166,317,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology – Programme Code 744: Registration and Accreditation of training was called.

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on page 439 where there is an item 26313041 which is a budgetary allocation of Rs19.3 m. for the Mqa which, by virtue of the Budget Speech, has now been transferred from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to the Ministry of Tertiary Education. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how these funds are going to be spent inasmuch as the Mqa does not deal solely with tertiary, that is, post secondary institutions. It also deals with students after the age of 16 who are engaged in skill development and training and are not, strictly speaking, tertiary students. How is it that the Ministry of Tertiary Education is now going to delve directly through the Mqa in secondary level training?

Dr. Jeetah: Shall I respond to the policy issue or shall I respond to the financial matters only? With regard to the financial matters, it will cover the staff including PRB and Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Commission and running and administration cost. Now, with regard to the policy I can certainly respond here or I can gladly answer in a PQ, as you wish, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item we are being asked to vote the sum of Rs20,300,000 and there is no breakdown as to how this money will be used and who are the personnel in that organisation? Who will be in charge? What will be the status of those people? I am sure the hon. Minister must have it in his file. Can I ask the hon. Minister to, at least, lay on the Table of the Assembly now the list of people who will be attached to that organisation?

Dr. Jeetah: It is exactly the same as it used to be a week before.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister is not answering to the question raised by my hon. friend.

The Chairperson: Put your question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: My question is: how many staff is there in this MQA, and do they have the necessary qualifications to evaluate the whole range of courses that are referred to them, in particular with respect to the financial sector?

Dr. Jeetah: I can certainly let the hon. Member have the information, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Any further questions? Yes hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: In view of the recent problems that rose concerning foreign students who attended certain institutions, which were recognised by the MQA, does the hon. Minister envisage legislating? Just like we have a regulatory framework for TEC, do we have any legislation for MQA?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, I think that is a very important matter. Allow me to respond to it. I would like to thank the hon. Member for raising this issue. There have been some unscrupulous agents, and I must also say some institutions, which we are looking into, I came across a couple of students from Nepal, a couple of days back, and I think they have been taken for a ride. Yes, we are looking at the regulations, to make sure that we address this state of affairs. With regard to the number of people who actually work for MQA, it is 42.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to go back to this question of hon. Ganoo. The MQA was under the Ministry of Education, with exactly the same powers, and I take it with as competent people at the Ministry of Education as there may be at the Ministry of Tertiary Education.

Will the Minister kindly explain how this Rs90.3 m. will allow his Ministry to realise what the Ministry of Education was not able to do with the same funds, the more so if you look at page 441, Sir, - I don't know whether you have looked at page 441 - there is no staff at the Ministry of Tertiary Education to act as interface concerning MQA, under Programme 744. So, my question is: how does the Minister propose to succeed, where apparently Minister Bunwaree has not?

Dr. Jeetah: It is not a question of hon. Minister Bunwaree not having been able to achieve his goals, Mr Chairperson. He is doing a tremendous job. He has not had so many children fail CPE as when the Member was Minister!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On the same item of grant to MQA, the hon. Minister just mentioned that he himself came across certain students who have been going to institutions approved by the MQA in Mauritius, wrongly. So, may I ask the hon. Minister whether any investigation has been carried out, and whether anyone from the MQA, of which we are voting the budget, has been suspended in connection with this enquiry?

Dr. Jeetah: As I said, Mr Chairperson, this is with regard to some unscrupulous agents overseas who have coaxed students into coming to Mauritius with some dreams that they have sold. And this is something that we are looking into. In fact, while discussing the budget, I raised the issue with the Director of MQA - who is here I suppose - and he is looking into the matter.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I go back to the point I made earlier to ask why it is that there is no post budgeted within the Ministry of Tertiary Education, under Programme 744, page 441, whereas we are told that the Ministry will now go and change regulations, whatever, to ensure that we do not face the very same problem, these poor Nepalese students and other students have faced over the last year?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, with regard to facilitating my Ministry, the hon. Member would notice that the administration of my Ministry has taken good care to make sure that we have a Director, Assistant Director, Technical Staff and so on. I can tell you, that the predicament of those students from Pasteur is one of the worst things that students can go through, and once again, thanks to the hon...

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Minister is misleading the House. I look at page 441, there are no posts under programme 744; and the Minister just said that there is a Director, an Assistant Director and an administrator, whereas there is nothing under Programme 744. Is he misleading the House?

Dr. Jeetah: I was referring to Programme 742.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Maybe the Chair might enlighten the Minister!

The Chairperson: Any more question? Yes, hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: On this very same point.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon Jhugroo, no provocation!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson on the very same point. Being given that, on page 441, under Programme 744, there is no provision made for any human resource in the Ministry of Tertiary Education, may I know from the hon. Minister who would be responsible in that Ministry to supervise the MQA, and to make sure that the money budgeted is being used in the proper way it has to be?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Chairperson, this is a fair question. My Ministry is in the process of being restructured by having the MQA coming in. I did say that it is a matter of policy, but let

me enlighten the hon. Member. At the moment, the Tertiary Education Commission acts as the registering office; it does the accreditation, audit work and finances the public institutions. So, in a manner of speaking, it is acting as a judge and party, and this is what we want to change. You can wait, and you will see the difference that it will make with the coming of MQA.

Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology – Programme Code 744: Registration and Accreditation of Training (Rs20,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I would invite Ministers to go back to their seat. Those Ministers who are not in their seat should go back to their original seat.

(Interruptions)

Please, I am the Chairperson. Let me give the order.

(Interruptions)

Please, go back to your seat.

(Interruptions)

Please, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, don't interrupt me!

(Interruptions)

I know it's a bit late!

(Interruptions)

Now, we shall deal with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology – Programme Code 661: Policy and Strategy for ICT was called.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, under Programme Code 661, at page 450, we are being asked to vote a sum of Rs565,497,000 for the year 2014.

The Chairperson: Which item is it?

Mr Seeruttun: The whole programme; the amount we are asked to vote for. The hon. Minister gets excited every time he talks about the penetration rate of ICT into households. What is he providing for in this year 2014 to increase that rate, and could he communicate to us what is his projection for the penetration rate for the year 2014?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: This question concerns policy, Mr Chairperson. If the hon. Member puts a PQ, we can answer it.

The Chairperson: Hon. François!

Mr François: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I refer to page 443, *Major Achievements* for 2013, last bullet.

The Chairperson: You are going too fast. Which page?

Mr François: On page 443, *Major Achievements* for 2013, last bullet point, *increase of the bandwidth capacity* for Rodrigues through satellite connectivity from 37 to 155 Mbps. May I ask the hon. Minister whether this is fully operational, since when and the cost of the project?

The Chairperson: No! The hon. Member has not linked his question with a particular item of expenditure! I am giving him the chance to look for it and come back.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, on page 449, item 21110 *Personal Emoluments*. Will the hon. Minister inform the House where matters stand about the setting up of the ICT Academy?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Insofar as ICT Academy is concerned, Mr Chairperson, I must confess that, at first, we had some difficulty for the starting up of the Academy. Now, we can say that it is under the National Computer Board which is looking after its administration and already we have spent Rs3 m. We have our building which we are renting at Ebène; we have already set up our computer laboratory, purchased equipment and it is proposed to start courses as from next year, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, at page 450, item 31132102 - *Mauritius National Identity Card and Related projects*. May I know from the hon. Minister, as at today, the actual amount spent for the project and the total amount budgeted for it?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, as at date, we have spent an amount of Rs287,409,387 in this project.

Mr Jhugroo: On page 449, item 22030 - *Rent*, where there is a provision of Rs122,725,000 paid for the year 2013, can the hon. Minister explain to the House what is the total surface area occupied and to whom this sum is being paid, and when was the last tender exercise done?

The Chairperson: That's a suitable Parliamentary Question!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, for that item, I can say that provision covered two types of rent in 2013. We have rent for space and also rent for line for network systems.

Insofar as buildings are concerned, we are renting MEDCO Building for the Ministry and we are paying a sum of Rs385,684 monthly. We have an area of 8,100 sq ft.

At Belmont House, we have the CIB and Itssoo which we are occupying and we are paying a monthly rent of Rs109,952. The extent we are occupying is 9,029 sq ft.

We also have the Stratton Court, Mr Chairperson, which is being let to ICT Appeal Tribunal. The amount of rent we are paying is Rs66,585 and the area occupied is 3,895 sq ft.

Mr Uteem: On page 450, item 31132102 - *Mauritius National Identity Card and Related projects*, may I know from the hon. Minister what are the deliverables to date on this project and whether there is any delay in the targeted delivery schedules?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I must inform the hon. Member that, as at date, everything is in order. We are well in time and we sincerely believe that, by September of 2014, we will be in a position to complete the whole exercise inasmuch as, as at date, more than 60,000 Mauritians have already registered themselves for their new ID Cards.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I hope this point has not yet been asked. I am on page 450, item 31132102 - *Mauritius National Identity Card and Related projects*. The estimates for 2013 were Rs606 m. I would like to know how much of that sum attributed actually was disbursed for the National Identity Card project itself, who were the beneficiaries and what was paid for?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, in fact, the Government of Mauritius signed the contract with Singapore Corporation Enterprise on 17 October 2012 and, after the signature of the contract an amount of Rs217,236,000 have been disbursed. Now, being given that we have already started issuing the cards, payments are being effected and, as at date, as I said, we have already effected a sum of Rs287 m. to Singapore Corporation Enterprise.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 450, item *31132102 - Mauritius National Identity Card and Related projects*. Can we have a breakdown as to whom the amount had been paid in Singapore and to give the name of the Mauritian Sub-contractor?

The Chairperson: The hon. Minister may circulate the information.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Anyway, if the hon. Member comes with a Parliamentary Question, we will be in a position to give him all the details.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: On page 450, item *31132102 - Mauritius National Identity Card and Related projects*. Out of the sum used up from the vote, can I ask the hon. Minister how much of this money has been paid to the officers responsible for the taking of data from individuals coming for their National Identity Cards?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, we have signed a contract with the Singapore Corporation Enterprise and they deputed the CrimsonLogic to start the project. We are concerned with CrimsonLogic insofar as the project of MNIS is concerned. As I have mentioned, we have effected payment to Singapore Corporation Enterprise and whoever they have retained to for every aspect of the project, they effected the payments.

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, in view of the fact that CrimsonLogic has subcontracted this project to NEC Asia Pacific, and NEC Asia Pacific has subcontracted the local implementation of the project to one Valdus in Mauritius, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can enlighten the House as to how much has been paid to the local company for the implementation of the project?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, there is a non-disclosure agreement which was signed between Mauritius and Singapore Corporation Enterprise. Payment was made only to Singapore Corporation Enterprise and nobody else.

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On the same item, Mr Chairperson. Can the hon. Minister inform us whether there would be a central data room or server to keep all the information that has been registered for the project and what guarantee do we have that such data and information are not going to be hacked and used for purposes for which they were not designed?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, all those information are safely kept at the Government Online Centre which is a building sophisticated enough with all necessary equipment. All information are secured there at the Government Online Centre and the data are kept safe. All Government confidential information are kept at that Centre. At the same time, information that are collected and gathered for the project of MNIS are also kept there.

The Chairperson: Hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the cost ...

The Chairperson: I said hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: It is okay.

The Chairperson: No, but you can't pass on. You will get your chance afterwards. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the identity card, the hon. Minister is telling us that payments are being effected. We are being called today to vote a sum for the continuous payment - if I can use that word - of what we have engaged with the supplier for these identity cards. Is the hon. Minister telling us that even the fact that there is a case in Court challenging – there is a case in Court where people are challenging the contents of the new identity card - he is telling us to vote for the payment of this item?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, we will recollect sometime in 2011 when the hon. Member was Minister of Finance, there was an item which concerns the MNIS Project wherein Rs600 m. was earmarked for the payment of the project for the year 2012. Now, when the hon. Member is saying that we have a case which is pending before Court; we can have an unlimited number of cases pending before Court. We had at the same time two injunctions which were lodged before the Judge in Chambers and both injunctions have been set aside, meaning we

can proceed with our project and as I have mentioned, more than 50,000 people have already received their cards and the question of dilly-dallying does not arise.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister has failed to give reasons warranting the creation of the storage of digital data of every citizen but the question I want to ask him is: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the ID cards make provision for a RF chip, that is a radio frequency chip, and is he aware that this chip will allow the physical movement of every citizen of this country to be monitored?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: It is absolutely incorrect what the hon. Member is saying, Mr Chairperson. As far as I can recollect he participated in the Debate and he said that he has no quarrel with the amendments that we are bringing for the introduction of this card.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Mr Chairperson, may I ask the hon. Minister what is the cost of one card and can he reassure the House that we are getting value for money in view of the fact that there was a first tender which said that this project will cost only Rs300 m. and now it is costing 5 times the price?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, let me reassure the hon. Member, at the time when you said that the project was to cost us around Rs300 m., it does not cover the whole project at all because we are not talking about ID cards, we are talking about Mauritius National Identity Scheme. It is a scheme; it is a process where all these have been taken into account.

Mr Bodha: What is the price of...

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: On the very same point, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that the National Identity Scheme is a scheme. May I know from the hon. Minister, if so, how many hardwares have been purchased already which can read those ID cards and where will they be located?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: As many as necessary to meet 900,000 ID cards.

Mr Jugnauth: As regards the National Identity Card, I am informed that the hon. Minister has passed a regulation on 03 October with regard to taking photographs and finger prints. May I know if there are any expenses that have been incurred with regard to passing that regulation and secondly, if he can circulate a copy of the signed regulation?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, when we voted for the legislation then we said that regulation will follow and I think it is the same regulation which the hon. Member is referring to. Am I right?

Mr Jugnauth: It is not that, I am talking about the regulation that the Minister made afterwards, that is, 03 October. I am asking a simple question, if he can circulate the signed copy of the regulation and whether there have been any expenses incurred with regard to passing that regulation.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: No, Mr Chairperson, that regulation when it was ...

The Chairperson: Regulations are normally published in the Government gazette and this is deemed public knowledge. Yes, hon. Baloomoody! You are left with one minute, ask your question!

Mr Baloomoody: Regulation is made and published, but the circumstances in which it was made, at three o'clock in the morning. This is why we are asking the hon. Minister whether we can have a signed copy of that regulation made at three o'clock in the morning.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, in fact, after the legislation was introduced, there was a pilot phase and we have to let it follow. The regulation was made by the PMO and now in so far as ...

(Interruptions)

Let me finish, please! When the regulation was launched as far as I can recollect the hon. Member's case was pending before Court and it was on 4 October that the case was set aside. He could have raised that issue; he has been communicated with a copy of that regulation when the matter was pending before the Judge in Chambers. You have the copy, so why now you are

asking me to communicate it to you. You already have it; you have it in your case when the case was launched.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Anyway. Time is up!

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 661: Policy and Strategy for ICT (Rs565,497,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 662: Provision of Citizen-Centric Services through ICT was called.

Mr Uteem: Page 451, item 22120033 - *Licensees Fees for Microsoft Enterprise Agreement*, I see that there is an amount of Rs40,000,000 budgeted for next year. May I know from the hon. Minister why is the Government going ahead and spending more money on purchase of *Microsoft Enterprise Licences* when this very project has been repeatedly criticised by the Director of Audit in his Annual Report?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, we've said it on so many occasions that that agreement was signed with Microsoft long before I took office as Minister and that agreement expired in June 2013. Mr Chairperson, when it expires, as a responsible Government, a sum of Rs40,000,000 has been earmarked if in case we accept to renew the licence, we have to make provision for that but nothing says that we are going to renew the licence. Only provision is being made in the budget for renewal if we decide ...

The Chairperson: Which means that the decision has not yet been taken. Next question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: On the same item - *Licence Fees for Microsoft Enterprise Agreement*, may I know from the hon. Minister, as at to date, how many of these licences have been left unutilised by the Government?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I have answered more than five PQs concerning that question.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, simply answer the question!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I have already answered those questions.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: I cannot compel the hon. Minister to answer the question. He may have answered different PQs about the same subject matter, but he is free to answer or not to answer.

(Interruptions)

It is for the hon. Minister to decide.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, as at date, as at the expiry of the contract, there has been no unutilised licence.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I am raising the issue of the SchoolNet, under item 22030007 and further down under the same item 31132401 ...

The Chairperson: Could the hon. Member tell us the page?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on page 451, under item No. 22030007 – *SchoolNet II*. At the bottom of that vote, under item 31132401 (c) - *SchoolNet II (incl. Routers and Wifi)*, I would like to have a status report because there was nothing budgeted last year and I take it that this is linked to the undertaking in the Budget speech that all our schools will have access to internet or Wifi. This is a promise that is being recurrent and I think it was in the last year's Budget speech as well. So, what is now proposed to be done because this is a significant amount of money being requested?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member is right. In fact, why to SchoolNet II? The first one concerns the recurrent expenditure for rental of lights whilst the second one is a capital expenditure for the purchase of Routers and installation of Wifi in schools.

Mr Obeegadoo: Where does the project lead to? How many schools will have internet connection by the end of 2014? I am asking this because, as I said, there was the same undertaking in last year's Budget speech and nothing happened.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, we have said that we are going to provide each Form IV student with a *tablette*, in fact, they are getting it. Insofar as what the hon. Member is saying about Wifi, all secondary schools, be it private or public, will be connected with Wifi and it is under process. We are working on it.

(Interruptions)

In all, we have 155 schools, to be more precise.

Mr Seeruttun: On page 451, under item 22900904 - *Government Online Centre*, may we know from the hon. Minister when will that online centre be operational and what will be comprised of the cost of Rs55 m.?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Can the hon. Member just tell me under which item because there are sub-parts?

Mr Seeruttun: Item No. 22900904 – *Government Online Centre*, Rs55 m. have been earmarked for operating cost. What I am asking is when will that Online Centre be operational, is it next year and what comprises of that operating cost?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: We have Rs55 m., which comprises of personal emoluments: Rs12.1 m.; other charges like electricity and rental: Rs19.8 m.; and the maintenance of software equipment: Rs23 m.

Mr Seeruttun: Just to follow up on that, the hon. Minister did not reply as to the date of its going into operation.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: For the information of the hon. Member it is already operational.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, I'll like to turn to page 448, under sub-programme 66203: *Promoting e-Government*. I see on the target that there are only ten online services for the year 2014. Being given that the Budget for this programme is half a billion rupees, does the hon. Minister consider that we are getting value for money, half a billion rupees only for ten online services?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: There is a lot of hardware. We have 10 out 30 e-services which have already been made and others are in the making.

Mr Nagalingum: On page 451, under item 31132401 – (d) *Deployment of Voice-Over-IP (VoIP)*, can the hon. Minister give us some details as to whether it will be fully deployed next year?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: This concerns what we call the Gpone Project. There was a pilot project at the first instance which concerns Government Building. All the Government Buildings are now fitted with the Gpone Project and now, it is the second phase that we are coming with the VoIP. Insofar as the VoIP is concerned, it is to be executed on a pilot basis on two sites, that is, the Air Mauritius Building and the New Government Centre.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Under item 22900904 – *Government Online Centre* ...

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Which page?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On the same page 451, under item 22900904 - *Government Online Centre*, can the hon. Minister give us some details about this online centre, in the light of what he said as one of the strategic action of the Government which is to set up an e-payment and m-payment service? Can the hon. Minister inform us to what instance this infrastructure has been set up in the context of his Government Online Centre and whether this is going to be done through Mauritius Telecom?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Chairperson, as we have mentioned the Government Online Centre (GOC) is Rs55 m. I will say that an e-payment gateway has been set up at the GOC and already five e-payment services are operational and this since November 2013.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I am talking also about m-payment and whether this is going to be done exclusively through Mauritius Telecom, and if so, why?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: No, it is not exclusive through Mauritius Telecom.

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 451, under item No. 31122802 – *Acquisition of IT equipment*, for the Government Online Centre, there is a budgeted amount of Rs48 m. for 2014. May I know from the hon. Minister what equipment is referred to here and who won the contract?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: In fact, I must tell the hon. Member, it concerns the acquisition of IT equipment for the Government online centre itself. We have servers and IT equipment for upgrading the GOC, we have the secured G-Cloud Access, we have also other servers and IT equipment which we need to consolidate our data centre and it is almost all these we are doing. The amount for the IT equipment and servers is around Rs48 m. and others Rs51 m. in all.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, allow me to go back to my previous question where in his reply, the hon. Minister stated that the Government online centre is already in operation.

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: Which item?

Mr Seeruttun: Under item 229000904, you just stated that this online centre is already in operation. I can't see any provision made for the year 2013. May we know from where funds are coming to finance that centre in this year 2013?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: This is because the provision was previously shown under programme 661 before and now it has been transferred to 662.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to ask the hon. Minister about the *Implementation of e-Government Strategy*, at page 451, under item 31132401. This *e-Government Strategy*, I thought was a long-standing project, this page suggested that there was nothing budgeted in 2013, at least, in its present formulation, Rs8,000,000 next year and then increasing. I want to know the status of the *e-Government Strategy* inasmuch, Mr Chairperson, as today if a citizen wishes to correspond with the Social Security Office or the Civil Status Office, he cannot do so by sending

an e-mail, but still he has to use the antiquated method of fax communication. So, what is the status and when will it be that within the state apparatus citizens can communicate with the administration using e-mail?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: We've started, first of all, by setting up our National ICT Strategic Plan in 2011, then, in 2012 we came with the National Broadband Policy. Now, this year, we are coming with our *National e-Government Strategy*. The implementation of the *e-Government Strategy*, Mr Chairperson, is one of the items which falls under our ICT Strategic Plan for the year 2011 to 2014. I can say that the CIB, in collaboration with statistics Mauritius, has carried out the e-Government needs surveys with the citizens, Government agencies and business. Moreover, consultations were held with stakeholders through various workshops. Mr Chairperson, being given that it is something which is of paramount importance for the Government, the philosophy of the Government is to put people first, that is why we are walking on that e-Government Strategy. That e-Government Strategy ...

(*Interruptions*)

Either you want to listen or you don't want to listen.

Mr Uteem: It is on the same issue I raised, Mr Chairperson, on item 31122802 - *Acquisition of IT Equipment, Rs48,000,000*. May I ask the hon. Minister to whom the contract for supply of these equipment was awarded?

Mr Pillay-Chedumbrum: That amount was earmarked and now we are going to launch the tenders next year.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology - Programme Code 662: Provision of Citizen-Centric Services through ICT (Rs667,603,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Ministry of Fisheries, Programme Code 751: Policy and Strategy for Fisheries (Rs48,349,000) was called and agreed to.

Ministry of Fisheries, Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development and Management, was called.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on page 462, Programme Code 487, item 22150 - *Scientific and Laboratory Equipment and Supplies*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether we are talking about the lab at the fisheries centre of Albion?

(*Interruptions*)

The Chairperson: Silence, there is a question! You may put the question.

Mrs Labelle: Alright, I start again.

The Chairperson: Yes, start again.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 462. I am going to refer, firstly, to item 22120 – *Fees*. May I ask the hon. Minister for which services the fees were paid? One question only?

The Chairperson: Yes one question.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Chairperson, the increase is due to the grant from EU for training the staff of the technical cadre to build capacity for monitoring of stock and build up know-how for scientific assessment of the resources and, secondly, skippers in order to build up a pool of trained skippers, mechanics and electricians for the industry. This has been lacking over the years.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, with regard to *Studies and Surveys*, can the hon. Minister inform us, at least, for this year, which studies have been done and what publication has been made with regard to the study and what studies and surveys are being planned for next year?

Mr Von-Mally: Well, this is meant for cruise surveys around the fishing banks to determine production potentials, testing of new gears and for unexploited resources in the bank fishery and surveys in the east of Rodrigues, the small banks of Rodrigues. An increase of Rs486,000 for grants by EU to cater for implementation of bank fish in management plan. Its genetics on the banks and

Mr Francois: I refer to page 462, item 28212016 - *Compensation to heirs of fishermen i.c.w Accidental Death at Sea*. The hon. Minister replied in a PQ a couple of weeks ago that out

of 14 cases there are 10 cases pending, legal clearances. Will the hon. Minister inform us whether the pending payments of about Rs200,000 per case will be paid under this item for next year?

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, this is compensation to heirs of fishermen because there are different compensations.

Mr Francois: I mean death at sea, item 28212016 - *Compensation to Heirs of Fishermen i.c.w Accidental Death at Sea.*

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, *Compensation to Heirs of Fishermen*, what is the problem with that? Does the hon. Member want me to table the names?

The Chairperson: Yes, you have already answered, hon. Minister. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Von-Mally: Does the hon. Member want all the names? Does he want me to table the names?

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, you have already answered!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: On page 462, sub-item 26313018 - *Current Grant - Fishermen Welfare Fund.* Can the hon. Minister say how many fishermen are registered with the Fund, and what has been the total amount disbursed to date for 2013?

Mr Von-Mally: If the hon. Member wants, I can table the number of ...

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Only the number.

The Chairperson: Hon. Minister, do you have the number?

Mr Von-Mally: I will give the hon. Member the number.

The Chairperson: If the hon. Minister do not have the number, he can look for it. In the meantime ... hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 462, under item 28212002 – *Compensation to Net Fishermen*, can we have an indication why we have budgeted Rs6.5 m. for 2014? Are we paying compensation again to net fishermen, and if yes, how many cooperatives will benefit from that compensation, and what is the strategy of the Ministry with regard to net fishing?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, the increase is due to the new rate of compensation. It will increase by 50%. This is to encourage fishermen to surrender their nets.

Concerning the question put earlier, the number of registered fishermen is 2,227. For those who want to surrender their nets, it will be voluntary; it will not be forced.

(Interruptions)

I can give the list. There are about 15 cooperatives.

Mrs Ribot: On page 462, item 28212016 – *Compensation to Heirs of Fishermen i.c.w Accidental Death at Sea*. Can we know from the hon. Minister the number of fishermen who have accidentally died at sea for the year 2013, and the quantum of the compensation that is given to the family?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, I answered a PQ earlier on that, but I can table the number and the sum given to the families.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 463, item 31112031 - *Construction of Fish Auction Market*. There was a sum of Rs2.4 m. which was budgeted for this year. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this sum has been used, and whether the Fish Auction Market is now in operation?

Mr Von-Mally: It has already been completed.

(Interruptions)

Where is it? It is at Bain des Dames, Les Salines. There is a company which has been recommended by the main committee to operate the Fish Auction Market, and this will be operational very soon.

Mrs Labelle: What is the name of the company?

Mr Von-Mally: The name of the company is Euromer. It is a French company which will operate the Fish Auction Market very soon.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: At page 463, under sub-item *31112012 – Dredging of Boat Passage*, I would like some clarifications from the hon. Minister because there is Rs1 m. earmarked for 2013, nothing is earmarked for 2014, and then in 2015, it is Rs20.2 m.?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, we cannot dredge all the boat passage because this is subject to availability of funds.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Chairperson, when I look at the Strategic Note of the Ministry, Major Achievements, Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed, with regard to the programme that we are voting, I ask myself the question: whether this Budget is more aimed at fisheries than, in fact, at the fishermen. This is why I would like to ask the hon. Minister, with regard to the Fishermen Welfare Fund, how this money has been spent. I refer to sub-item *26313018 – Current Grant – Fishermen Welfare Fund*, on page 462. What are the activities of this Fishermen Welfare Fund? How was this money disbursed? We are providing Rs6 m. for next year. When we know that there is a project to compensate net fishermen, does not the hon. Minister think that the bad weather allowance should have been increased, especially in view of the fact that there are lesser lagoon fishermen now?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, the bad weather allowance is being increased every year, gradually.

For the Fishermen Welfare Fund, there are new schemes that have been set up, for example, maternity grants Rs10,000 and funeral grants. These are new schemes.

Mr Jugnauth: I see that one of the main objectives of the Ministry is to attract Foreign Direct Investment of Rs1.3 billion for the next three years. May I know, for the coming year, what initiative the Ministry is taking, and what amount of money is being allocated to each of the initiatives that are going to be taken, in order to attain this objective?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, this is a matter of policy. But, what I can tell the hon. Member is that we are having a lot of FDI from fisheries. For example, we have one French Company which is coming with an investment of Rs10 billion in the seafood hub. We have the Chinese Company coming, with around Rs5 billion, the South Korean, and also the Japanese. So, I think that the strategy is working very well.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I take the hon. Minister to page 463, under sub-item 31121803 – *Acquisition of patrol vessels*. We find that we have budgeted Rs3.5 m. for this year, nothing for next year, and then Rs5 m. for the year 2015. May I know where matters stand with regard to these patrol vessels?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, we have enough patrol vessels, and we already have nine dinghies.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to go back to the question raised by hon. Lesjongard. At page 462, item 28212002 - *Compension to Net Fishermen*. As the hon. Minister may be aware, we started this project 17 long years ago. I want to understand what is the present status. As hon. Lesjongard said, we were 5,000 only in the estimates of last year, jumping to Rs6.5 m. in 2014. I would like to know how many large nets and gill nets are still licensed. Given the destruction brought by these nets, what is the strategy, after all this time, to have the compensation scheme removed this system of fishing altogether?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Chairperson, we have 16 large nets and five gill nets, which are in operation.

(Interruptions)

Yes, there are still too many. We are encouraging the fishermen to group themselves in cooperatives and to move towards aquaculture. The hon. Member has been Minister of Fisheries; he should know what I am talking about.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Von-Mally: We are encouraging the fishermen to go and fish around FADs. This is why we are helping them to buy canoes to go and fish off-lagoon.

The Chairperson: Yes, hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Time is going by and no question is put. Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Chairperson, on page 463, item 22120 – *Fees*. May I know from the hon. Minister what the fees are meant for?

Mr Von-Mally: The fees are increased to cater for the training of staff in various sectors, like IT, to ensure AC Regulation for 2014, for more harmonise and efficient control, to keep pace with the changes and evolution of HACCP based-system and ISO standards and to acquire training, mainly on auditing for ISO standard and for HACCP.

Mrs Ribot: On page 463, item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*. Could the hon. Minister give some clarifications about the consequent increase under this item which, in fact, has more than doubled?

Mr Lesjongard: On page 463, item 28225 - *Transfer to Private Enterprises*, an amount of Rs2 m. is earmarked for 2014. Can we know what are those private enterprises? At the same time, can the hon. Minister let us know why, with regard to inland and marine-based aquaculture, the sea concession fees is being reduced from Rs1.2 m. to Rs100,000 per site, and who have such concessions?

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the first part of the question, Mr Chairperson, a grant of Rs6,885,000 has been given to the support of fishermen communities for fishing around FADs, particularly Albacore and Yellow Fin. 28 FADs will be under study to understand the stock dynamics of these species.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Don't interrupt the hon. Minister!

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, aquaculture support to both small scale farmers inland and marine and an evaluation of impact of FADs on the state of resources.

The hon. Member has said that it has been reduced. In fact, the sea concession is to encourage the development of aquaculture, because the fees were on the high side. It is to steer up the development in the sector.

To encourage off-lagoon fishing, Government will further provide 50% grants, as it has been said in the Budget, to purchase off-lagoon canoes up to an amount of Rs200,000 per canoe. Rs2 m. has been earmarked for 2014 and an additional Rs2 m. for 2015.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Ministry of Fisheries, Programme Code 487: Fisheries Development and Management (Rs306,100,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Chairperson, I beg to move that we do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 29 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.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTER RAISED

(00.47 a.m.)

CUREPIPE - HAWKERS

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Speaker, Sir, despite the very late hour, I am sorry to have to take the time of the House - and I shall be very brief - for an urgent matter which has arisen today.

I am directing my remarks and my appeal to the hon. Minister of Local Government.

Today, further to a decision taken by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, I understand that *les marchands ambulants de Curepipe*, are being forcibly removed et, donc, dans tous les lieux où ces marchands ambulants ont opéré durant des années au vu et au su des autorités.

Donc, il est évident que la Mairie de Curepipe a un devoir de faire respecter la loi, mais je voudrais, alors que nous approchons la Noël et de la fin de l'année, demander au ministre des Administration Régionales, d'intercéder auprès de la Mairie de Curepipe, afin qu'une approche humaine soit adoptée, qui fasse la part des choses entre le respect des droits des commerçants, qui payent leurs licences à la Mairie, mais aussi, le drame humain qui sévit au niveau de ces familles des marchands ambulants, qui, soudain, du jour au lendemain, après avoir été tolérés – si c'est le terme – pendant de longues années, se retrouvent dans une situation impossible. On leur demande immédiatement d'évacuer les lieux où ils se trouvent pour aller au Forum de Curepipe, ce qui équivaut à signer leur arrêt de mort.

Donc, dans ces circonstances, à la suite de nombreux appels que nous avons reçus - mon collègue, l'honorable Dr. S. Boolell et moi - toute la journée aujourd'hui, je voudrais demander au ministre d'intercéder auprès de la Mairie, afin que la Mairie puisse avoir une approche humaine dans la façon de traiter ce dossier dans l'immédiat, en attendant de trouver une solution à long terme, qui soit juste pour toutes les parties concernées.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the power to interfere on this matter. The Council is autonome, as everybody knows.

(Interruptions)

Port Louis is a different case.

(Interruptions)

I cannot interfere in the affairs of the Council. I am not going to do anything.

(Interruptions)

At 00.52 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 29 November 2013 at 3.30 p.m.