



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**SECOND SESSION**

**TUESDAY 03 DECEMBER 2013**

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## Members

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
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
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, GOSK, FRCS	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
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Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	Minister of Fisheries
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## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar
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**MAURITIUS**

**Fifth National Assembly**

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**SECOND SESSION**

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**Debate No. 36 of 2013**

**Sitting of 03 December 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)*

## PAPERS LAID

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

**Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –**

- (a) The Annual Report 2012 of the Financial Intelligence Unit.
- (b) The 2011 Housing and Population Census of the Republic of Mauritius (Volume IV : Disability).

## MOTION

### SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## PUBLIC BILLS

### 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 Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection - Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, if I can take the hon. Minister to page 591, Programme Code 601, *Outcome Indicator - Value Added of the manufacturing sector (Rs billion)*. May I

know from the hon. Minister the number of companies in the manufacturing sector in 2013, which have either closed down or laid off workers on economic grounds?

**Mr Bhagwan:** Programme Code 601, page 594, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel*. We are being asked to vote Rs1.5 m. It is more than doubled. Can the hon. Minister give justification to the House as to the reason of this increase?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the second question on overseas travel, the hon. Member may know that in the Appropriation Bill for this year 2013 there were sums which were voted for each Ministry for overseas travel, and whatever was short was requested from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. I am sure that the hon. Member will appreciate that this Ministry, Industry and Commerce, does warrant certain amount of travel overseas, and the new sum which has been indicated in the budget reflects more or less the requirements for the Ministry on the basis of the travels last year.

For further information of the hon. Member and of the House, in 2013, I carried out seven visits for the Industry Division abroad, and two visits were carried out by officers of my Ministry for the Commerce Division. In 2013, visits where I was involved, of course, together with officers of my Ministry, the cost amounted to Rs1.5m. So, it is on this basis that the sum of Rs1.5m. has been requested this year. Mr Chairperson, I am afraid I did not really understand the first question from hon. Uteem.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 591, talking about the outcome indicator for the manufacturing sector, I wanted to know from the hon. Minister, in 2013, the number of companies involved in the manufacturing sector which have either closed down or reduced its workforce on economic grounds.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Out of 591 enterprises, Mr Chairperson, as at June 2013 - these are the latest figures that we have - 22 enterprises have ceased operations. Of course, there are new enterprises which have started operations. If you allow me, I will circulate the information which I don't have.

**Mr Uteem:** On the same item, does the hon. Minister have the number of employees in that sector that have been laid off in 2013?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** No, I don't have that information. I will circulate it, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Uteem:** I will take it under item *Compensation* on page 594. Answering a PQ earlier this year, the hon. Minister justified the increase...

**The Chairperson:** Sorry to interrupt you, hon. Member. Which item is it?

**Mr Uteem:** Page 594, item *Personal Emoluments*. It was announced in the Budget also that Mauritius would become a petroleum hub. May I know from the hon. Minister whether, as at to date, his Ministry has received any request for construction of storage space for petroleum products?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, there are actually two categories. First of all, the Major World Company, the four companies Vivo, Total, Engen and Indian Oil are, at present, in the process of building new storage space. As far as the petroleum hub is concerned, Government has received, not directly into my Ministry, but through the Mauritius Ports Authority, because land is vested in the Ports Authority to build storage tanks for petroleum products. I have heard the name of two companies, one company from China and one from the United Arab Emirates which have made requests for land to be made available to them for the construction of petroleum tanks. It should be to the extent of 175,000 tonnes of petroleum products.

**Mr Uteem:** Still on Programme 601, I have not seen anything in the Estimates, and I would like the hon. Minister to enlighten whether any provisions have been made for any grant or transfer to the State Trading Corporation?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the State Trading Corporation is a parastatal body which operates with its own financial means. It is a trading company; it imports/sells, and with some surplus that it makes, it runs itself. Actually, there is no sum which has been voted for the State Trading Corporation.

**Mr Ganoo:** On the same item, Mr Chairperson, *Personal Emoluments*, I come back to what was said in paragraph 76 of the Budget Speech –

“(...) we are liberalising the bunker trade which will bring a fall in the price of bunker fuel.”

Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, therefore, this is an admission that we could have a lower price for our petroleum products if we had liberalised our oil trade?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Not at all, Mr Chairperson. If the hon. Member himself will agree, I can come back with a statement on that particular issue in Parliament later on.

**Mr Uteem:** On the same point, about the State Trading Corporation which the hon. Minister has just answered, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is also no capital grant to be given to STC for the construction of any storage facilities for the products that it imports?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, there are two possibilities. Either the STC invests its own funds in the construction of storage facilities, then it becomes the owner of these facilities, or the STC leaves it to private operators to build and operate on their own these facilities. Government has opted for the second possibility, that is, we leave the private operators to finance and build their own storage tanks.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On item 594, Programme Code 601: *Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection*, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel*. With regard to the expenditure made for capacity building, may we know from the Minister, with regard to FDI into the manufacturing sector for exports, how much FDI was attracted last year and estimated to be attracted for this Budget 2014 compared to how much investment has been made outbound in manufacturing enterprises abroad?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** First of all, Mr Chairperson, let me just remind the House that the outbound investment which has been made amounts to Rs1.5 m. The FDI that has been attracted with this other expense, and of course, whatever the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has done, is far above this sum of Rs1.5 m.

I have the figures for 2012. I do not have the consolidated figures for 2013. In 2012, manufacturing inbound FDI was Rs426 m.

**Mr Ganoo:** On the same point which I raised regarding the question of bunkering, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there have been any companies which have shown their interest, especially, as the hon. Minister said in his speech, I quote -

“We are impressed by the key interest of the international companies to invest in bunkering and of storage. It is an opportunity that we should not miss.”

So, can the hon. Minister tell us the names of the companies which have shown their interest in bunkering, and can he tell us also the amount that the STC is getting from this trade at the moment?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the first company which is already in the process of setting up storage tanks - of course, the process is long. I think they are at EIA stage for the moment - is a company from the United Arab Emirates called Al Break, and they are projecting to construct tanks of storage space of 125,000 tonnes. The name of the company is Al Break, and the investment that is planned would be around 60 to 70 million US dollars. The second company is Tafou, which is also linked to another Chinese company called Shanghai Blue Ocean Company. They have also made a request to the Mauritius Ports Authority for land, and they already have a barge in the port for the increase in the growth in bunker trade.

I would like to add for the information of the hon. Member and of the House that the State Trading Corporation collects some Rs245 m. as surplus from bunker trade. The objective of beefing up the bunker trade is to increase that Rs245 m, at least, double it within 16 to 18 months, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Still on Programme Code 601: *Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection*. The Ministry has listed up a number of major constraints and challenges. May I know if it is intended to carry out any study in order to address any of those major constraints and challenges, and if yes, in what field?

**The Chairperson:** Under which item?

**Mr Jugnauth:** It is on policy as a whole, Mr Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** No, I am sorry! Policy has to be related to expenses. Policy matter will not be allowed at Committee of Supply.

**Mr Jugnauth:** May I rephrase my question then?

**The Chairperson:** If you emphasise on expenses as a result of a policy, this is allowed.

**Mr Jugnauth:** May I rephrase the question? With regard to the expenses that we are asked to vote for next year, is there any amount that has been earmarked for any study?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, may I know which line exactly the hon. Member is referring to, and on which page?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, the Minister needs clarification.

**Mr Jugnauth:** It is on the whole amount that we are asked to vote. We are asked to vote Rs12,575,000 for that Programme.

**The Chairperson:** It appears that the clarification that the hon. Minister needs is a specific subject matter. Which aspect of this sum?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Chairperson, we are asked to vote that amount with regard to expenses that will be carried out in 2014. I am asking whether there is any provision made within that amount that we are asked to vote for any study.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** No, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Uteem:** With regard to the bunkering, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount is earmarked in 2014 to carry out a survey and study to find the needs of the country in terms of bunkering, and also whether it would be on a first come first serve basis, or the Ministry is going for a request for proposal to get international community to invest into this bunkering?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, we already have a certain number of expressions of interest. Without our having floated any request for expression of interest, there are already a certain number of companies which have applied for land to build storage space for the bunkering hub. Up to now, we have considered two of them. But, of course, if need be, we will launch an international request for expression of interest.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, we have three minutes left!

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, answering a Private Notice Question, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister had talked about Liquid Petroleum Gas. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any amount budgeted in the Budget to accommodate investors who want to set up storage facility for liquid petroleum product and natural gas.

**The Chairperson:** We are dealing with Programme Code 601; the question of the hon. Member appears to be of a general nature!

**Mr Uteem:** For consumer petroleum and gas product, which is the policy.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but, as I said, we are under Programme Code 601. So, which specific item the hon. Member is referring to?

**Mr Uteem:** That will be Study, Mr Chairperson. Whether they have carried out any study for gas and...

**The Chairperson:** Okay, now the question on study!

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Utilities, I know, has commissioned a study to consider the possible usage of natural gas for the CEB and, of course, we will not duplicate the study which is being carried out by that Ministry.

In case there are investors who are willing or who are interested to set up storage space whether for petroleum products, I mean, liquid petroleum products or for natural gas, Government will be very willing to consider this. But, there is no sum in this Budget for that particular thing because this is totally a private venture.

For the information of the hon. Member and of the House, I wish to remind that there is already one company which has set up storage space of a capacity of 15,000 tonnes for Liquefied Petroleum Gas and not for natural gas. If I can go a little bit further, Mr Chairperson, right now, the tankers which carry natural gas are very big tankers, and we do not have the capacity in Mauritius for these tankers to berth so that we can reception natural gas from theses ships. That may happen in the future.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, last question to hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** On the same item, Mr Chairperson, the Budget also mentions, and I quote –

“The Ministry will probe into the feasibility of creating a full-fledged petroleum terminal.”

So that this does not sound as another blasting announcement, can I ask the hon. Minister how will that probing be carried out, who will probe into the feasibility of creating such a terminal,

has a study been conducted or, does the hon. Minister intend to commission any study for that matter?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I find the side comments of the hon. Member a little bit regrettable, but I will stay sober on that point.

The House may remember that last year when the hon. Prime Minister was on a State visit in India, that question was raised between the hon. Prime Minister and the then Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India. There is right now an understanding between the State Trading Corporation and my Ministry and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) to carry out a study for looking into the feasibility of setting up a petroleum terminal which would serve both the domestic market and, eventually, service a regional trade in petroleum products.

So, the project is still on, but there is still a study to be carried out. If my understanding is correct and if things are confirmed, the hon. Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India should be coming to Mauritius in the month of December, and this project will be given a new boost.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** Time is up!

*Programme Code 601: Policy and Management for Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Rs12,575,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 602: Industrial Development was called.*

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 595, item 26313134 – *Enterprise Mauritius*, I am referring to page 587 also, where in the *Strategic Direction* it is said that there will be *market diversification to growing but untapped markets*. Can I ask the Minister which untapped markets he has in mind?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** The whole world, Mr Chairperson.

*(Interruptions)*

The Mauritian industry has been dependant for a number of years on two things: first of all, very heavily the textiles and clothing industry and, from the market point of view, very heavily on

what we call our traditional markets, that is, Western Europe, basically the United Kingdom, France and the United States of America.

The strategy of the Ministry and of Enterprise Mauritius is to diversify on both dimensions, diversify the base of products, that is, to bring in new subsectors, and also to diversify our markets. This has proved very successful in the sense that what we call the non-traditional markets now represent 50% of our exports compared to 40% five years ago.

The new markets which we are targeting, Mr Chairperson, are mainly Turkey, Russia, Japan, China and the United Arab Emirates and, of course, we will keep on consolidating our position in the Indian Ocean and Eastern Africa, especially, of course, South Africa.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bodha! You do not have any question? Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Under item 26 - *Enterprise Mauritius*, may I know from the hon. Minister, in 2013, what was the amount of Foreign Direct Investment into the manufacturing industrial sector, following missions by Enterprise Mauritius?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I just replied to a question from hon...

**The Chairperson:** For the guidance of all of us, may I know which item? Under 602?

**Mr Uteem:** Yes, *Grant to Enterprise Mauritius*, and I am linking that to the comment on page 586 relating to the low level of FDI flows in the manufacturing sector.

**The Chairperson:** Alright!

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, a few minutes ago, I replied to a question from hon. Li Kwong Wing, and I said that I do not have the figures. I can circulate it later on for 2013, but for 2012 the manufacturing sector received Rs420 m. and something in FDI.

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** At page 595, *Enterprise Mauritius*, I am linking it to page 592. We note that there is 8% growth rate for the year 2012 and a 4% growth rate for year 2014, and at page 595 we note only Rs6 m. under *Extra-Budgetary Units*. I would like to know what was the sum allocated for the year where Enterprise Mauritius achieved the growth rate since it does not appear here.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, if the hon. Member would recall, at the end of 2011, there was a certain percentage of growth which was stated, but then, there was a double

counting. It was found out by Statistics Mauritius, I think, around March or April 2012, that there was a double counting from one particular enterprise which had declared that it was going to export, but it did not export; not in 2011, and the export was only in 2012. That is why, at the end of the day, the export growth rate for 2011 was reduced, and the export growth rate for 2012 was increased. This accounts for the 8% growth in 2012. And for 2013, we are aiming at 4%. That was in the Budget figures which were worked a few months ago. Probably the final figure would be closer to 5% increase in exports, Mr Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bodha!

**Mr Bodha:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On Enterprise Mauritius again, may I take page 586 with regard to relatively low level of industrial competitiveness. May I ask the hon. Minister whether any Action Plan has been established to provide support to enterprises to be more competitive, and whether the list of those enterprises which will need those supports has been established?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I thank the hon. Member for that question, which is of strategic importance to us. There is, indeed, a relatively low level of competitiveness in our industries, and this is due to three main factors. First of all, a technology-based which is not strong enough, I mean, not good enough to make us competitive with major countries that are involved in the same type of activities that we have.

Secondly, we have a major labour problem, and we have a certain mismatch between skills and the demand of industries, and thirdly, we have a problem of Foreign Direct Investment which is directly linked to the problem in labour and in technology-based. We have an Action Plan for 2014 which has already been published, where we indicate the actions that we are planning to take to correct this. Of course, my Ministry is working in conjunction with other Ministries, including the ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources for training, of course, human resource development, and the Ministry of Tertiary Education for research.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, on this same question, the same issue of Enterprise Mauritius, can the hon. Minister give us the figures of how much was spent on Enterprise Mauritius itself out of the whole sum budgeted, and if he can give us a breakdown of the activities of Enterprise Mauritius for the year current?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I think that would be a fairly long answer, Mr Chairperson. I will circulate the reply, if you will allow me.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on the item of Enterprise Mauritius, last year, at Committee Stage, the hon. Minister referred to an allegation of fraud being under investigation. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any finality in those investigations and anyone prosecuted from Enterprise Mauritius?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I don't recall that I mentioned the word 'fraud'. I think the issue was more of a conflict of interest more than anything else, and nothing wayward has been found, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Chairperson, at page 595, item 26313134 - *Enterprise Mauritius*, a sum of Rs45 m. has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, for the previous year, how many road shows and fairs Enterprise Mauritius has been engaged in, what has been actually spent in terms of these road shows, and what is the forecast in terms of number for the coming year for the sum we are being asked to vote, and in which countries? What are the estimates?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, for 2013, Enterprise Mauritius has been involved in 16 different fairs abroad, has organised seven Buyers/Sellers meetings, has carried out or caused to be carried out by Consultants five market surveys, and has organised three events in Mauritius, Mitex, Trend Forum and Rum Festival.

The Rs45 m. that the hon. Member is referring to are provided for the recurrent expenses of Enterprise Mauritius, and for the marketing and promotion activities that are carried out by Enterprise Mauritius. These projects are funded from the National Resilience Fund, and I think, last year, it was for an amount of Rs135 m.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I refer to the expenditure budgeted under 602 generally and page 586, reference amongst the constraints to lack of skilled labour to stimulate diversification of the manufacturing industry. I listened to the answer given to hon. Bodha. I would wish to have some specific information as to the nature of the skilled labour that is considered to be lacking, and especially I would like to know, having regard to the expenditure incurred last year, since

this is an old problem, what was done this year, 2013, to address the issue, and with what degree of success, since there are no performance indicators relating thereto.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I said a few minutes ago that we believe that for our industrial sector to move forward and to be less dependent on textiles - and you know the traditional sectors that we have - we need to move into higher value-added sectors, especially in sectors like micro techniques. We identified medical devices which are a booming industry worldwide, but unfortunately we do not have the skills. We really consider that we have a mismatch of skills, and in order to resolve that problem we have established means to have a synergy among different stakeholders, that is, MITD, HRDC, the private sector, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and tertiary institutions of training, private institutions. We look forward to this synergy being enhanced, so that we can develop and implement new skills to meet the requirements of new industries which would be willing to set up base in Mauritius, but which for the moment are constrained by the lack of this particular type of skills.

During a few of our visits abroad, for example, we have established contacts with one company which is a very good - quite big actually - French company specialised in what we call technical textiles, which is different from cotton, which is what we generally do in Mauritius, and this calls for a specific kind of skills. We have met with companies which deal in micro techniques, for example, things which are very precise in medical devices, literally minute pieces of equipment, and again this calls for specific skills which we do not have. We have established contacts, therefore, with institutions of training abroad, in Germany and in France. I am talking with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, so that we can correct that situation and start training our people in these particular fields.

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 595, Sub-programme 60203, sub-item *Personal Emoluments*, and referring to the priority objective of that Sub-programme: *safeguard the interest of consumers when buying and selling jewellery and foster greater confidence among consumers*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how this is being addressed, and what control has been set to prevent export of gold that is being bought in every corner of Mauritius by those companies.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Sorefan. What is the link with Personal Emoluments?

**Dr. Sorefan:** Staff has to safeguard the priorities.

**The Chairperson:** We move to hon. Bodha!

**Mr Bodha:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Again relating to Enterprise Mauritius, the last item for Sub-programme 60201 - *Enterprise Mauritius*, we have a Capital Budget of Rs6 m. which is being earmarked for 2014 whilst there was none in 2013. May I ask the hon. Minister to enlighten the House as to this budgetary item?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the sum of Rs6 m. is for Capital Budget, and I think there are two vehicles which need to be replaced, and there are certain pieces of equipment at Enterprise Mauritius which need to be replaced also.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, under Sub-programme 60203 - *Assaying and Marking of Jewellery*, may I know from the hon. Minister the number of assay certificates in jewellery that have been issued, and the total amount of gold which has been exported following these export permits given to jewellers to export gold?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I will not be able to answer the second part of the question, that is, the amount of gold which has been exported. I can get the information from Customs and circulate it. The information I have here, the export of scrap gold, January to September 2013, Rs163 m., which is in decrease of 24% with regard to 2012. In 2012, it was Rs215 m. and in 2013 Rs163 m. Regarding the first part of the question, the hon. Member may know that the Assay Office is in charge of regulating this particular sector. 966 cases of assay of gold have been carried out in 2013 up to November, I suppose. I would like to add also that with the new regulations that have been introduced last year to regulate the sale of gold and jewellery, 17,556 ownership declaration forms have been endorsed in 2013, ending October.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, we have three minutes left. I will allow two questions. Hon. Jugnauth and the last question will be for hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. With regard to Enterprise Mauritius, the hon. Minister has mentioned for 2013 there have been a number of road shows abroad in order to try to promote Mauritius and attract FDI. May I know if there has been any post mission exercise which has been carried out in order to establish how successful the shows have been, so that it can, in fact, help for next year's promotion or campaign?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Of course, Mr Chairperson, these post mission exercises are systematically carried. If I can summarise what we did in 2013 roughly; EM has assisted 856 participants, of which about 80% Small and Medium Enterprises. As I said, monitoring and evaluation is a current feature at Enterprise Mauritius. Of course, it is difficult to differentiate between what is done through Enterprise Mauritius and what is done directly by the enterprises. The end result is that, by end October, Rs312 m. worth of orders have been received for these enterprises. Rs787 m. worth of orders still for these enterprises were due to be finalised, and Rs369 m. worth of orders are foreseen foreign participations in the latest fairs in which the enterprises took part.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Ganoo, last question!

**Mr Ganoo:** On page 592, Mr Chairperson, Sub-programme 60201 - *Industrial Consolidation and Diversification, Industry Division, Collaboration with stakeholders to facilitate the inflow of FDI in the manufacturing sector*, I am sure the hon. Minister will agree that the continued decline in private investment is a source of concern to all of us. Can the hon. Minister tell us whether - in terms of private sector investment which has continued its downward trend - he has the percentage from year 2008 as compared to this year, for example? Can the hon. Minister give us the percentage in terms of private sector investment?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I, unfortunately, do not have these figures, but I mentioned before the FDI figures for manufacturing 2012. These figures actually represent a growth compared to 2011 and not at all a decrease. The question regarding evolution from 2008 to this year, unfortunately, Mr Chairperson, I will need to circulate this answer because I don't have that information.

**The Chairperson:** Time is up!

*Programme Code 602: Industrial Development (Rs168,109,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 603: Trade Development was called.*

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, may I take the hon. Minister to page 588, Programme Code 603, *Priority Objective: Regulate trade practice*. May I know from the hon. Minister for year

2013 how many contraventions have been given to companies which did not practice restrictions?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I suppose, Mr Chairperson, that the hon. Member is referring to the Consumer Protection Unit. From January to October 2013, Mr Chairperson, the Consumer Protection Unit established 383 contraventions.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on page 598, item *31122804 - Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*, may I know from the hon. Minister what is the amount for? What equipment are we getting?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Which line are we referring to exactly, Mr Chairperson?

**Mr Uteem:** Last item, *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*.

**The Chairperson:** The last item in italics.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Yes, Mr Chairperson. This is for the Legal Metrology Division, and this is a provision made for the purchase of marking tools, proving measure for 2000 litres for volume calibration, mass comparator, standard length measure, and 12 units of 1 tonne standard weights.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ganoo, you have a question!

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister to page 598, Consumer Protection.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Which item?

**The Chairperson:** It is Programme Code 525. Hon. Obeegadoo!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, I refer to pages 597 and 598, to the item *Fees* under all three Sub-programmes, if I may. So, page 597, item *22120 – Fees*, Rs104,000, fixed sum repeated this year and next year; item *22120* at the bottom, Sub-programme 60302, again the item *Fees*, and then, next page, same item *22120*, here the fees jump from Rs30,000 to Rs180,000. I would wish to know, under each sub-programme, the nature of the fees, the beneficiaries, and finally, the explanation for the dramatic increase under Sub-programme 60303.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, for item *22120*, it's provision for payment of fees to Chairman and members of Board and Committees, purchase of parking coupons, and training of staff locally. That is for Chairman and members of Departmental Tender Committee and Bid

Evaluation Committee, training of the staff for short courses, workshops/seminars Rs50,000, and payment of parking coupons Rs4,000.

The increase from Rs30,000 to Rs180,000 is due to the following reasons. Previously, funds were provided for audit fees and ISO certification. Last year, funds had not been provided by Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for this item, and this year, following the request made by my Ministry, the item has been reinstated within the budget of this Ministry instead of coming from Finance.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** No question from a sitting position! Just answer the question put to you. I have said it before! Hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** I refer the hon. Minister to Sub-programme 60303 - *Legal Metrology Services*, at page 602; the staffing. I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware of the numerous requests that have been made in order to enhance the staff, the number of people who require, by law, the services of that department. So, may I know why is it that, as from the Technical Officer above, there has been practically no increase in staff?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, actually there are three additional posts which are provided in that Division; post of Legal Metrology Officer, one post of Heavy Vehicle Driver, and one post of Mechanical Driver. Indeed, I do agree that this particular service has to be beefed up a little bit.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on page 593, Sub-programme 60303 - *Legal Metrology Services, number of compliance tests undertaken*. May I know from the hon. Minister, in 2013, the number of compliance tests undertaken on fans, whether it is of the make 'Pacific' or other make?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, until now, there are no mandatory standards of fans. We are introducing in the legislation very, very soon, the possibility for the Ministry to introduce mandatory standards for fans, and from there on, compliance tests will be carried out, of course, on representative samples of imports.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 598, Sub-programme 60303, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, I note a decrease in the amount earmarked for 2014. Yet, if we go

on page 602, the number of employees has gone up from 29 to 32. May we have some explanation as to why it has gone down?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I suppose the hon. Member is referring to that figure of Rs11,965,000 going down Rs11,353,000. Actually, that was over budgeting, and the actual figure for 2013 is Rs10,402,000. That was over budgeting for 2013.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, page 597, *Commercial and Trade Facilitation*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount has been budgeted this year to carry out a survey about any need to remove trade barriers to reduce the price of meat?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I don't suppose that the hon. Member is referring to any particular item number.

**Mr Uteem:** This budget is for trade facilitation, removal of trade barriers. I am asking the hon. Minister whether there is amount budgeted to carry out a survey, to see whether there is any trade barrier in the importation of meat with a view to reduce the price of meat.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the definition of trade barrier is a barrier which is set up by the authorities, that is, either a tariff barrier or a non-tariff barrier. There is no such trade barrier, as far as meat is concerned. This is a matter of private operations and, of course, we would welcome, as I have said a number of times, competition in that sector, so that prices could go down.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Again, I come to Sub-programme 60303, page 598, *Legal Metrological Services*, the last item - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. For the year 2013, there is meagre sum which was voted. May I know if that amount has been spent, and on which equipment, and for next year, which equipment is intended to be bought? So, if the hon. Minister can circulate the list.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, actually I just replied to that question. The equipment that is meant to be purchased are the following: marking tools, proving measure of 2000 litres for volume calibration, mass comparator, standard length measure, and 12 units of one tone weight.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I refer to page 598, item 31122804 - *Acquisition of Laboratory Equipment*. I am sure you will understand, Mr Chairperson, that I am very intrigued by the

evolution of the figures, rising from Rs200,000 this year to Rs1.5 m. next year, which the hon. Minister might justify. But, then, it keeps doubling in terms of projected figures for 2015, 2016. I would like to have some clarification as to what is being envisaged in this regard.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, it was announced in the Government Programme in 2010 that Government intends to modernise the Legal Metrology Services. The Legal Metrology Services presently provides calibration and certification services in volume, length and weight. It is intended that the Legal Metrology Services extends the range of its services to other goods which are either used by industry, by trade, or by consumers; generally industry and trade. The sums which are requested here for 2013, and which are planned for 2014, are meant to go in that direction. If you allow me, I will read the number of items.

**The Chairperson:** You circulate, if it is lengthy.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Jhugroo:** On page 598, Sub-Programme 60303, item 31121 - *Transport Equipment*, where an amount of Rs1.3 m. was earmarked for this year. May we know from the hon. Minister what amount had been used and for what equipment transport had been paid?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the amount of Rs1.3 m was for the purchase of a light truck with trailer, which was supplied on 11 November 2013 for calibration and verification of weighing and measuring instruments which are out of the premises of the LMS.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 602, Sub-Programme 60303, on the funded positions by December, I note that we have a post of Director Legal Metrology Services. If there is a full-fledged Director, may we know the name of that Director?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Yes, there is. It is Mrs Bagha, Mr Chairperson.

*Programme Code 603: Trade Development (Rs61,004,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance was called.*

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, on page 586, I refer the hon. Minister to Commerce and Consumer Protection Division, where it is mentioned: Sensitisation campaigns to empower consumers regarding their rights and responsibilities. I also refer the hon. Minister to page 589,

Programme 525, Priority Objective, where it is said: Ensure Consumer protection and increase awareness of the population about consumer rights and responsibilities, and on page 603, Sub-Programme 525, item *18 70 85 - Head, Consumer Affairs Unit*. Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister why is it that the Price Observatory is not mentioned as an item in the Estimates since this was set up by Cabinet on 15 April 2011. Can we know also whether there is a Head of Consumer Affairs Unit presently? Since when has this post been filled? Is somebody at the moment heading the Consumer Protection Unit?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, indeed, the Price Observatory was set up by a Government decision. The Price Observatory operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce. Therefore, there is no particular item no. that is meant specifically for Price Observatory. For the information of the hon. Member, it is still alive and kicking, operating regularly and publishing its results every month although it has stopped for a while, because we brought certain reforms, not in the operations, but in the way that things were done on the Price Observatory.

Regarding the Consumer Protection, yes, there is an acting Head. Mr Seegoolam is the Acting Head of the Consumer Affairs Unit.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 593, Sub-Programme 52501: Consumer Protection, under *SS1: % of traders complying with recommended prices*. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the number of complaints received from tourists this year?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Can I come back to that, Mr Chairperson?

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Could the hon. Member repeat the question?

**Mr Uteem:** My question is: what is the number of complaints which has been recorded and made by tourists?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** By tourists? I would not know exactly. I do not have the figures here, but from January to October 3,281 complaints were received at the Consumer Protection Unit. Of course, some of these were directly with consumers coming or with consumers calling, and most of these were through the hotline. But I would not know exactly the number of complaints from tourists.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 603, item 18 45 66 - *Consumer Affairs Officer*. During weekends and public holidays, in some supermarkets, amongst others, we find that the weight of bread goes down and prices are not affixed. Can I ask the hon. Minister how many surprise checks have been made to supermarkets, specifically on Sundays and public holidays till today, and how many contraventions have been taken?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** This is a very specific question.

**The Chairperson:** You may circulate the information.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I will circulate the information later on.

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 598, Sub-Programme 52501: *Consumer Protection*, item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many cases with regard to non-compliance to legislation, with regard to consumer protection, have been sent to Court and matters settled? How many traders have been fined?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Again, Mr Chairperson, I do not have the number of complaints or contraventions which have been sent to Court. As I said, we carried out 7,480 checks at their premises, we received 3,281 complaints, and we established 383 contraventions, but this is probably fixed. I will get the information and circulate it, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Chairperson, on page 598, Programme 525, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees* and on item 21110 - *Personal Emoluments* respectively, may I ask the hon. Minister how many dawn raids, that is, surprise checks have been carried out during the year 2013, and what has been the outcome?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the hon. Member mentioned dawn raids. I suppose he is referring to bakeries. In fact, 205 dawn raids were carried out in 2013 from January to October in bakeries. Unfortunately, shops and supermarkets do not open at dawn, it is mainly bakeries.

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

**Mr Uteem:** The hon. Minister just stated that out of 3,281 complaints, only 383 contraventions were taken, which is less than 10%. May I know from these non-compliant traders, whether anyone has had his licence suspended or revoked?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** 383 contraventions, Mr Chairperson, that is probably due to the fact that certain number of complaints are not justified and a number of other complaints are settled amicably between the consumer and the trader. I am informed that there has been no suspension of any trade licence in 2013 because of that.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I would like to come back again on this item of the *Head of Consumers Affairs Unit* to ask the Minister when, in fact, will a full-fledged Director be appointed so that the Price Observatory – in the same breath I am asking this question to the hon. Minister - could fulfil its role in a more meaningful manner. In fact, the Managing Committee of the Price Observatory has not been meeting very regularly, and it is a Committee composed of the Consumer Organisation, the representatives of the supermarkets and the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce. But, unfortunately, it would seem that this organisation, that is, the Price Observatory has departed from its original mission of protecting consumers. As an example, the Government Programme...

**The Chairperson:** No. What is the question, please?

**Mr Ganoo:** The question is: what steps, what measures does the hon. Minister envisage to take to make of this Price Observatory an organisation more effective to protect the consumers, inasmuch as in the Government Programme...

**The Chairperson:** No, the hon. Member must put a question, and it is enough!

*(Interruptions)*

There are other hon. Members waiting!

**Mr Ganoo:** The Government Programme also announced that the Price Observatory would...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ganoo, one question at a time!

**Mr Ganoo:** ...fulfil its role. This is the question I have.

**The Chairperson:** Yes.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I am lost. I do not even remember the question. Regarding the...

*(Interruptions)*

*Oui, mo capave prend impé ar twa!*

**The Chairperson:** Please, no private conversation!

*(Interruptions)*

I do not want any comment!

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Regarding the Head of the Consumer Protection Unit, Mr Chairperson, there is a new Consumer Protection Bill that will be introduced in Parliament soon and that the new Consumer Protection Bill will also restructure the Unit, and then the needful will be done for the administrative set up of the Unit.

Regarding the operation of the Price Observatory, I will have a word with the person who is responsible and who acts independently of the Ministry.

**Mr Jugnauth:** On page 598 – *Consumer Protection*, item 22100 – *Publications*, may I know for the year 2013, how many sensitisation programmes relating to *Publications* have been carried out and what amount has been spent for each campaign?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, actually it is *Publications and Stationery*. So, the sum requested here is provision for purchase of photocopy papers, toners and newspapers, not for publications by the Ministry.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** On page 603, I look at the number of *Customer Affairs Officers*. At a time when we have increasingly complaints everyday about abuse, the number of Consumer Affairs Officers remains constant for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. It is stuck at 27. One wonders whether the Minister would have been passed over by the Minister of Finance! I relate this to page 593. The two objectives under *Consumer Protection*, I do not understand. The *Percentage of Compliant Traders*; are we to understand, Mr Chairperson, that 27 Customer Affairs Officers will ensure that 80% of traders across the country, the Republic, are compliant? Further down, 90% of traders complying with recommended prices. So, my question is: if we are going to vote this Budget, how can we have only 27 Consumer Affairs Officers year after year, with indicators that are supposed to be realistic?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, five new Consumer Affairs Officers have been recruited in 2013. When we are talking about percentages of traders compliant with this or compliant with that, of course, this has to do with the sample of traders that have been visited or

raided by the officers. We are not talking about 90% of traders in Mauritius as a whole. That would be unrealistic, and nobody can expect that.

**Mr Jhugroo:** On page 598, Sub-programme 52501: *Consumer Protection*, can the hon. Minister inform the House how many contraventions have been taken against owners of shops, supermarkets, hypermarkets with regard to frozen foods which were not kept in required norms?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Again, Mr Chairperson, that question is very specific, but may I inform the hon. Member that the verification of the way of keeping frozen foods or other foods falls under the Food Act which is with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 603, following up from what hon. Obeegadoo has just talked about the limited number of Consumer Affairs Officers, may I know from the hon. Minister whether for the month of December there is an increased number of inspections by officers of his Ministry with regard to toys that are imported and also fire crackers?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Yes, Mr Chairperson, first of all, there are norms and standards for toys, and no consignment of toys is released from Customs before the Mauritius Standards Bureau has carried out tests on the safety and norms of the toys. That's number one. Once these toys are released in the market, the inspectors of the Consumer Affairs Division would visit shops, as they do regularly, to ascertain that the products being put on sale are in conformity with the norms that are accepted by the authorities.

**Mr Bhagwan:** With regard to *Consumer Protection*, Sir, the *Personal Emoluments*, with regard to the recent case of these 'Pacific' fans, can the Minister inform the House how many of these fans have been seized, ordered, kept by the suppliers in the public interest? What is the latest concerning those which are on sale actually? What are the measures which his Ministry has taken, the officers responsible for Consumer Protection are advising the public, especially at the end of the year with regard to the safety measures of the existing 'Pacific' fans? Hopefully, we do not have any of these here!

(*Interruptions*)

Even in the other offices!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, the House may know, because I made a Statement in the House last week or I think it was the week before, my Ministry has issued a prohibition notice to the importer and distributor of 'Pacific' fans to protect the public from using this particular brand. The importer has been ordered through the prohibition notice to recall from all its distributors and resellers all the 'Pacific fans' that were there. So, for the moment, there are no 'Pacific' fans on sale in Mauritius unless, of course, somebody breaks the law and puts the fans on sale.

Secondly, the company in question has offered to check free of charge all 'Pacific' fans owned by Ministries and Government Departments. At the request of my Ministry, the company has agreed to extend this offer to the public at large. This offer is being studied right now by the State Law Office prior to a decision being taken. But, the fact is that - to answer directly to the hon. Member - all 'Pacific' fans have been removed from the market, Mr Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** Two last questions from hon. Seeruttun! Short questions, please.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 603, under Sub-programme 52502: *Market Surveillance*, here again there are six employees attached to that Sub-programme, and there is no Office Management Executive. That post is still vacant, and it is not going to be filled in the years to come. May we know why that post is not going to be filled? I also note a decrease in the amount earmarked for 2014, under *Personal Emoluments*. Would the hon. Minister have some explanation for that decrease?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Actually, Mr Chairperson, market surveillance refers to verifying and checking the prices, wholesale and retail prices of those products for which there is a price control. This is a merely desk work, and it has been found that there is no need for the moment, at least at the level of my Ministry, to have this particular Unit overcharged with the staff. My understanding is that it is operating properly with the staff that we have there.

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

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on the issue of Consumer Protection, the hon. Minister mentioned, in answering my question, that there is a Unit in his Ministry which looks after the toys regulations, the norms. May I know from the hon. Minister what are the standards applicable in determining whether a toy is safe? Because yesterday, the Association of

Consumer Protection on radio stated, for example, that in the US, there are, at least, 10 types of toys that are banned, but not in Mauritius.

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Actually, Mr Chairperson, there is no specific Unit that looks after toys. Toys, like some other products - not all - are subject to standards that have been established by the Mauritius Standards Bureau, and the Mauritius Standards Bureau carries out technical tests on these products when the toys are imported, and they are not released. I repeat that no consignment of toys imported is released before obtaining a technical release from the Mauritius Standards Bureau.

Regarding the standards, of course, here, MSEN 71, and this Mauritian Standard is based on European Standard 71 regarding toys, Mr Chairperson.

**The Chairperson:** Exceptionally one last question from hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Further to my earlier question on publication, the hon. Minister has said that it does not concern the sensitisation programme. Now, if we look at page 589, the priority objective of the Ministry is to: ensure consumer protection and increase awareness of the population about consumer rights and responsibilities. So, may I know if any amount has been spent for 2013 with regard to any publication, in order to make people more aware about their rights and so on?

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** Mr Chairperson, I am afraid that the hon. Member might have misheard what I said. I did not say that this amount does not concern sensitisation. I said that this amount does not concern publications. But, of course, the Consumer Affairs Unit of my Ministry carries out regularly talks, seminars on radio, on television, in Social Welfare Centres. I will circulate the number of talks and seminars which have been carried out. Mr Chairperson, if you will bear with me, the Ministry works with various stakeholders, public and private and this includes the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Prisons Department, Ecole Hotelière, Sir Gaëtan Duval Training School, the State Trading Corporation, NGOs and les *Forces Vives* in respective localities.

Up to now, 80 talks have been delivered in schools, Community Centres and Social Welfare Centres on the following: rights and responsibilities of consumers, consumer laws,

responsible buying, budget management, and most of the time PowerPoint tool is used for the dissemination of information, and we also broadcast programmes on MBC/TV and on radio channels.

*(Interruptions)*

Well, from time to time, for certain specific events, Mr Chairperson, we have specific...

**The Chairperson:** No questions from sitting position. You have answered the question, that's okay. Time is up!

*Programme Code 525: Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance (Rs29,712,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

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

*On resuming at 2.23 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

*Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment – Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was called.*

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, for Programme 731, I am on page 608, last year we voted a sum of Rs37.7 m. and this year we are called upon to vote Rs40 m. I look at page 606, among the Major Services to be offered, formulation of policies and national actions plans. May I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has been able to formulate an Action Plan for year 2013 and, if so, will he table a copy of this Action Plan as well as the policy formulated under Programme 731?

Now, I am on page 611. When I look at the funded positions, last year we voted for a position of Lead Analyst, and I can't find this job for the coming year. May I know whether this position was filled out of the Budget voted last year, and what has happened to this position?

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 610, *Current Grant - National Economic and Social Council*, Rs12.5 m. Can the Minister inform us who actually chairs this National Economic and Social Council, how many times it has met, and when was the last report circulated to the public?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson with regard to formulation of policies and national action plans through consultations for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Group, obviously we do have an action plan and this action plan is being implemented through the different programmes,

and I would like here to mention that the vision, mission, and strategic objective of my Ministry are not amenable to changes on a year to year basis although the instruments and methods may evolve with time taking into account emerging realities and priorities. With regard to Lead Analyst from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, we are having one next year to assist in the establishment of the Poverty Observatory?

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I think I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning that his Ministry will be recruiting the Lead Analyst this year, but this position is no longer in the Budget Estimates for 2014. It was for 2013, and I think the position has not been filled, and now the hon. Minister is saying that he will recruit when the position is not on the list of funded positions for 2014!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I would like to have some clarifications from the hon. Minister. Looking at page 605, there are a number of so-called achievements that relate to education and training, if I may quote a few –

- Basic functional literacy and numeracy courses
- Remedial education
- Training in entrepreneurship
- Training of unemployed persons below SC level

I would like to know who delivers, which Ministry delivers on this. Is it the Ministry's own department or is it the Ministry of Education or the MITD? I would like to have a clear answer who delivers on each and every one, because when we look at the indicators on page 608, under National Empowerment Fund, the indicators refer to the number of persons trained and the percentage having applied for placement and secured same, which would tend to suggest it is this Ministry that is training and placing undergraduates since these are performance indicators of the NEF, of the Ministry. So, will the Minister clarify?

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** Mr Chairperson. At page 609, item 22130, I would like to know what Studies and Surveys were carried out and by whom?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question put by hon. Labelle, I would like to say that the Lead Analyst was not filled last year. It is going to be filled next year, and this will be from the Fund of the Ministry of Finance. Regarding the NES report submitted, it is

Youth and Employment of November 2013 and the Annual Report 2012, which will be circulated soon.

With regard to the question put by hon. Obeegadoo, the 2,263 unemployed persons below SC who have been trained as at October 2013, this is in our Placement and Training Programme, and we do enlist the support of MITD and other training institutions. I can add by sectors, namely basic art welding, electrical and mechanical courses, repairs of petrol engine, plumbing, front office, pastry, masonry courses, child care, pattern construction, housekeeping, basic food and beverages, aluminium openings, food preparation, beauty care, hair style, ICT.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** On page 609, under the item *22120 - Fees*, I see that the fees for 2013, Rs2,030,000, have taken a dive by almost half the sum next year. Could we have some explanations as to why?

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, I go back to page 605, *Major Achievements for 2013*, *350 vulnerable families provided with Corrugated Iron Sheet Houses* during the year 2013. May I know on item *21 - Personal Emoluments*, how many employees are attached to the process of those applications, and how long does it take on average to process an application for those iron sheets? Could we have some explanation on that? Why does it take so long?

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, allow me to come back to the position of Lead Analyst. I won't put the question, but the hon. Minister has once again said that it is going to be funded out of the Ministry's funds. My point is that it does not appear under 'funded position'. So, I have some difficulties to understand how it is going to be funded from the Ministry's funds when it does appear under 'funded position'. Concerning the Action Plan, I think the hon. Minister has mentioned annual return. But, as far as I know, annual returns are not action plans. So, he can't circulate annual return in lieu of action plan.

Mr Chairperson, once again I am looking at the *Service Standards (Indicators)* under Programme 731, on page 608; the first Service Standards Indicator – SS1: Reform strategy to deliver the long term ESTP Outcomes formulated. Next year, we are voting to have the PBB Strategic Plan updated and aligned with ESTP outcomes. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he can enlighten the House by giving us a copy, if ever this has been done, of this plan, updated and aligned with the ESTP outcome framework, to alleviate absolute poverty?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question put by hon. Dr. S. Boolell concerning provision for Rs2,030,000 in 2013 which has then been halved, I would like to give the explanation. This is the contribution to UNDP, amounting to Rs1,040,000; consultant for monitoring and evaluation, Rs942,000; training, Rs10,000; consultancy fees for the development of a monitoring and evolution framework for the National Empowerment Foundation, contract amount Rs1,345,000. The report of the consultant for the monitoring and evaluation framework has been submitted in 2013. As regards 2014, the provision of Rs1,145,000 is meant to cover the second year's share of the Ministry for the project of UNDP, Rs1,100,000, for social inclusion and empowerment; training of staff and fees payable to members of the Departmental Tender Committee and Bid Evaluation; total payment effected by Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment for the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to consultant is Rs942,172 of contract amount.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, may I take the hon. Minister to page 606, *Major Constraints and Challenges*, the first bullet - increasing number of households not registered on the SRM. May I know from the hon. Minister the number of households seeking assistance which are not registered under the Social Register of Mauritius?

**Mr Jhugroo:** Page 609, item 22110 - *Personal Emoluments*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what mechanism has been put by his Ministry to look after the quality of building materials provided to these vulnerable families? Sometimes, some of the families get corrugated iron sheets, which thickness is not 24 gauge, but more, and sometimes, even the wooden poles are not according to the required norms.

**The Chairperson:** If the hon. Member could clarify me. What has *Personal Emoluments* to do with the subject of your question? This is not! The hon. Member asked about the quality of the wood, and the CIS, and what not! Anyway, I leave it to the hon. Minister, if he is prepared to answer! Hon. Mrs Ribot!

**Mrs Ribot:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to item 22120, on page 609, *Fees*. In reply to hon. Dr. S. Boolell's question, I heard the hon. Minister mention a sum of Rs940,000 given to a consultant. Can we know, first of all, for which project - which project was monitored - and, secondly, the name of the consultant?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, as regards the question put by hon. Uteem, let me say to the House that a process is in place for registration of beneficiaries, whereby a list of beneficiaries of NEF seeking support from the Foundation is compiled by NEF, and sent to my Ministry for onward transmission to the Ministry of Social Security for registration of the SRM database.

For the second part of the question, I will circulate. I think it is around 2,000 families registered under SRM, which is scheme-based.

With regard to the question put by hon. Jhugroo, there is an ongoing monitoring process, Mr Chairperson, to see to it that the best quality material is given to the beneficiaries.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** No question from a sitting position please!

**Mr Dayal:** I will have it circulated.

**Mrs Labelle.** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 606, still under *Major Services* - the provision of continued support to empower vulnerable families. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of vulnerable families who have received the continued support for empowerment from his Ministry for year 2013?

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to page 609, same item, *Compensation of Employees*, it is said that one of the functions of his Ministry is to ensure that all families requiring assistance are registered under the Social Register of Mauritius. So, may I know how many families have now been registered under the Social Register of Mauritius, how many staff has been scheduled for that purpose, and also how many staff is working in that Poverty Observatory?

**Mr Dayal:** With regard to the question put by hon. Mrs Labelle, it is around 12,000 vulnerable families. It is continuous support given to families through a package of facilities under the three Programmes like CIS, CCIS, integrated housing, child welfare and family empowerment, life skills, provision of school materials, *accompagnement scolaire*, meals, transport, remedial education, placement and training. Regarding surveys, these will be undertaken by NEF.

Then, there is the question put by hon. Li Kwong Wing. We are going to put in place, next year, the Poverty Observatory, that is, to track poverty trends. It will be under the

supervision of a collaborative network, comprising representatives of each of the following organisations, under the leadership of my Ministry, which will comprise of -

- The Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment;
- The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development;
- The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions;
- The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare;
- National Empowerment Foundation (NEF);
- National Economic and Social Councils;
- Statistics Mauritius,
- Mauritius Research Council,
- MACOSS, and
- NGO Trust Fund.

**The Chairperson:** You may circulate, because time is limited. We have a last question from hon. Mrs Labelle.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, with your permission, I am coming back on page 609, item 22130 – *Studies and Surveys*. May the hon. Minister inform this House which study and which survey has been carried during 2013 and by whom this has been done?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, I mentioned that studies have been carried out by the National Economic and Social Council. I can circulate the details.

**The Chairperson:** Time is over!

*Programme Code 731: Policy and Strategy for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Rs40,865,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities was called.*

**Mrs Labelle:** I am on page 610, under item 26313135 – *Educational Support to Children*. Mr Chairperson, the number of children benefitting from – according to the figures in the Estimates – educational support has doubled. Since the number has doubled and we see that for 2013 the amount is Rs20 m., may I know from the hon. Minister whether the materials

provided are cheaper? How come that we have been able to double the number of children benefitting with this amount? I see that for next year, 2014, we are providing Rs30 m., and the Minister is talking about increasing number of families requiring assistance. Can he enlighten us on this issue?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 610, item 26313135 – *Social Infrastructure*. I link it with page 605, where amongst the *Major Achievements*, it is mentioned that *a shelter for female ex-detainees was set up at Palma*. Can I ask the Minister, first, what facilities are provided to the ex-detainees to reintegrate society, second, for how long do they stay at the shelter, and, third, I cannot see any post underfunded positions ...

**The Chairperson:** No! Too many questions! Other Members are waiting for their turn. One question at a time! Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Chairperson, page 610, item 26323135 – *Gros Cailloux* where a sum of Rs10 m. is earmarked. Last year, I raised that issue, Mr Chairperson. This is creating a problem; it is not Gros Cailloux. The houses are in the village of Petite Rivi  re, and the Minister knows it. If the Minister is still around next year – which I don't think so – I'll ask him to correct this; instead of Gros Cailloux, it is Petite Rivi  re. Can the Minister inform the House actually when a handing over will be effected of all these houses, which I think he has inherited...

*(Interruptions)*

*Bo  tes d'allumettes!* May we know when the project will be completed, whether all the amenities, especially the walls with the surrounding area included these...

**The Chairperson:** It is limited to one question.

**Mr Bhagwan:** No, this is Gros Cailloux, Mr Chairperson. Will the Rs10 m. be sufficient here?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** No cross-talking! Yes, hon. Minister!

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, to answer the question put by hon. Mrs Labelle, there will be an increase in the number of beneficiaries for the year 2014. In 2013, it was 19,000; next year, it will be 22,000. It is not a question of whether it is cheap material.

With regard to the question put by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, let me say that the project at Palma run by NGO '*Ki Nou Ete*' is a pioneer project, and this has been made possible between the Government, NGO and CSR contribution. If I give you a glimpse of the achievement, it will be understood what is the function and how it goes about, achievement as at date, and this is done by the Director of '*Ki Nou Ete*', Mme Michèle Vieillesse. After obtaining an occupational permit from Black River District Council, fire clearances from Fire Services, Police clearance, insurance certificates, they have taken in charge five women ex-detainees. Out of the five women ex-detainees, Mr Chairperson, one person is fully independent and has left the centre. She is working now in a Call Centre, and her son is living with her in a house in the area. One woman has left the centre by herself without any complaint from her part. Another one is almost reintegrated. She is employed in the private sector since a few months.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, you may circulate, if you wish.

**Mr Dayal:** Yes, I can circulate. There was a third question from hon. Bhagwan.

**The Chairperson:** Ok, answer the third question.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the project at Gros Cailloux, the 59 houses were initially expected to be completed by December 2012. However, due to procurement issues for infrastructural works, the completion of the houses has also been delayed in order to ensure that the contractor remains on site and be responsible for the houses' security until completion.

Mr Chairperson, with regard to the site and services especially, we had problem again, problem inherent with procurement procedures. In July 16, 2012, a communiqué for invitation of bids for the infrastructural works was launched.

As at closing of bids, five bids were obtained, and the amount quoted were higher than the amount earmarked for the project. The bidding exercise was cancelled and then afresh with new specification.

In mid-October 2012, a second bidding exercise for sites and services had been launched with revised scope of works within the earmarked budget so as to render the houses operational

in 2013. In this respect, the initial scope of works was broken down into two phases; phase A and phase B. Award for phase A: this phase comprises infrastructural works, road networks, drains and supply of utilities within the village, so as to render the site operational.

Award of contract for phase A has been made to Transinvest Ltd for a sum of Rs14.6 m. Works started in April, and completed in August. This is phase A. Regarding phase B, I had representations from people of the village and hon. Bhagwan. The recommendation of RDA is that the road had to be enlarged, because it was the main entrance. It had to be enlarged from 5 metres to 7 metres, along with proper drain works and so on. I am glad to inform the House that tenders have been launched and the closing date is 06 December, and it will take some two months to be completed.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Chairperson, item 26323135 – *National Empowerment Foundation*. May I ask from the hon. Minister what is the criteria used to determine whether someone receives a complete cum corrugated iron sheet house and those obtaining cum corrugated iron sheet houses from his Ministry?

**The Chairperson:** Second question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Mr Chairperson, allow me to come back to this question of educational support to children. Mr Chairperson, in the Budget Estimates of 2013, there was a sum of Rs25 m. which was voted, and according to the Major Achievements, 16,000 children benefited from that. And when we are at the Budget Estimates for 2014, we are being told that there are 25,000 children – it is written 25,000, not 19,000 – and the amount is 20. This is the main reason of my putting the question: how come that we have been able to serve more children with less money according to the figures published in these Estimates? Mr Chairperson, this was not my question; my question is on page 608, under *the Services to be Provided S2: Empowerment and Training of the Absolute Poor and the Service Standards (Indicators) SS2: % of persons having applied for placement and who secured same*. There has been a drastic decrease in the figures.

**The Chairperson:** I am sorry to interrupt! Be fast with the question! The hon. Member is taking too long for a question. Try to be fast!

**Mrs Labelle:** I am going to be fast, Mr Chairperson. The figures have come from 80% to 22.8%, and for next year from 82% to 22.8% regarding people having applied for placement and who secured same. May I know from the hon. Minister what has happened to this programme and if he can give us absolute figures of those who have been trained, those who were in placement and have found jobs?

**The Chairperson:** Third question, hon. Bodha!

**Mr Bodha:** On the same item, Mr Chairperson, I just want to add that on training and placement, the budget was Rs55 m. for this year and it is only Rs40 m. for next year. So, I will join my colleague to ask why there is a reduction in the budget. May I ask the hon. Minister how he has assessed the effectiveness of this programme?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question put by hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, the monthly household income excluding social aid should not exceed Rs6,200. Applicants should either be owner of land on which the proposed house can be erected or obtain authorisation from parents and grandparents for the construction or be holder of a lease from the State for a minimum of 20 years' period. The applicant should not be owner of another existing concrete land.

The applicant must –

- obtain building permit from the relevant authorities with the assistance of NEF;
- be prepared to enter into a social contract with NEF pledging *inter alia* to engage in an income generating activity;
- commit to the education of their children;
- ensure responsible parenthood;
- promote harmony within their family;
- respond to offers of training and employment opportunities, and
- ensure good neighbourhood.

This is the first question.

As regards the question put by hon. Mrs Labelle, educational support to school children, there has been an increase of 10 m. due to the increase in the number of children, as I explained earlier, from 19,000 to 22,000. On page 710, Members can see that we have got a collaborative

approach with the CSR foundation. And it will be the same answer with regard to placement and training. Let me inform the House that the Budget 2013 made provision for Rs55 m. Budget spent Rs52 m. The budget for 2014 is Rs40 m., and if you refer to page 710, the CSR components, it is Rs21 m.

**The Chairperson:** Alright! Next question, hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Under item *Eradication of Absolute Poverty*, may I know if in the light of the latest Household Budget Survey, the Ministry will review the criteria that the Minister has just mentioned for that, and how many people are in that category as at now?

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

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 610, item *26323135 - Relocation of households on alignment of Ring Road (Phase II)*, the budgeted amount is Rs36.5 m. Last week, the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands mentioned that the people on the alignment will be relocated at La Tour Koenig. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the people from Vallée Pitot would be relocated on La Tour Koenig and when is construction of the houses expected to begin?

**The Chairperson:** Third question, hon. Ameer Meea!

*(Interruptions)*

Then, hon. Li Kwong Wing!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. At page 610, programme *26313135* under item *(e) Corporate Services*, there is an amount provided for Budget 2014 of Rs93 m. Can we know for what purpose it is, what type of corporate services and to whom will that be paid?

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question put by hon. Jugnauth with regard to income threshold, it is good to inform the House that previously it was 4,000; then it moved to 5,000, and around February 2012, it increased to 6,200. According to World Bank benchmark of USD2 per day per head, the proportion of poor household in Mauritius is less than 1% of the population and absolute poverty cannot be eradicated overnight.

With regard to the question by hon. Li Kwong Wing, yes, there has been an increase of Rs10 m. to meet payment of salary in respect of additional 20 case workers, one Engineering Assistant, one Project Statistical Analyst, one Draughtsman and one IT officer.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Chairperson, I would like to ask the hon. Minister under the National Empowerment Foundation, concrete/CSI houses where we have been called upon to vote Rs55 m. What sum of money has been spent in the current year on setting up the housing estate of Dubreuil for the squatters? How much money is being earmarked in the next budget to repair all the cracks, slab roofs and leaking drains which is converting this place into a slum area?

(*Interruptions*)

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

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, if you look at page ...

**The Chairperson:** Please be fast, because time is running!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** ... 607, item *Priority objective - Eliminate absolute poverty*, I am going to ask the same question that I asked in 2011: where are the indicators relating to elimination of absolute poverty? You have indicators relating to education and training, but the primary objective is absolute poverty. Why don't we have a clear indicator relating to absolute poverty?

**The Chairperson:** Third question, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** At page 610, item 26323135 (c) *Emergency Housing and Community Projects for Vulnerable Groups*, I would like to have some details of this item and the eligibility criteria.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, answer!

**Mr Dayal:** I missed the question of hon. Uteem, which I am going to give a reply to it.

Relocation of households on alignment of Ring Road, Phase II Project, a sum of Rs36,500,000. This is going to be spent by NEF. This project is in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and Housing. And the share of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and NEF is Rs36,500,000. The project of relocating 82 households on the alignment of the ring road project also consists of provision of infrastructural facilities on

120 plots of land at Pointe aux Sables. Total project costs are Rs70.9 m. and, as I said, it is going to be shared by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. With regard to Dubreuil, it is a specific question; I will look into the matter.

With regard to the question raised by hon. Obeegadoo, Mr Chairperson, I have explained it on so many occasions in this House that this is not a matter of days, it cannot be done overnight. And I will not circulate it. I will probably tell the hon. Member that there is no panadol solution that we can erase absolute poverty overnight!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** One last question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, there are so many questions and I have to choose one out of many. Let me take this question of *Relocation of households on alignment of Ring Road (Phase II)*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether the 82 households are NEF beneficiaries, that is, all these persons are drawing a salary less than Rs6,200? When has this study been carried out to determine whether they are beneficiaries of NEF?

**Mr Dayal:** I can inform the hon. Member, Mr Chairperson that out of the 82 persons identified, 61 are NEF beneficiaries. That's why the cost is being shared by the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

**The Chairperson:** Time is over!

*Programme Code 363: Socio-Economic Empowerment and Widening the Circle of Opportunities (Rs268,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives - Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives was called.*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On Programme 701, on policy ...

**The Chairperson:** Policy matters, no!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** No! Policy and Management for Business, the programme is called policy.

**The Chairperson:** The programme is this, but it has to be linked - I repeat it again - with an item of expenditure

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Of course, Mr Chairperson. The Programme is called Policy, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*. May I know from the hon. Minister how many employees are scheduled in the statistics collection? Because we talk about vital statistics collection of SMEs. So, how many officers are scheduled to that task, how many SMEs have been created during the year 2013, and how many have been deregistered or liquidated owing to the policy in action of Government towards SMEs?

**The Chairperson:** So, we will take three questions at a go hon. Minister, or one by one?

**Mr Seetaram:** One by one.

**The Chairperson:** Alright, one by one.

**Mr Seetaram:** Concerning the registered enterprises, the new ones, it is 1,738 and also the employment creation, like the hon. Member said, *in toto* it is 5,193.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** This first vote is called policy and management. Will the hon. Minister agree that in consideration of the funds he is requesting from us, there must be some analytical work in response to all the documents submitted by the federation of Small and Medium Enterprises? Now, when I look at page 623, for the staff, there is only one lonely Analyst and all the other positions ...

*(Interruptions)*

Page 623, the page the hon. Minister provided for staffing!

... are vacant and no plans to fill them. When I look at page 620, there are no fees for Consultant. There are no surveys or studies provided for. So, where is the analytical work, the intellectual work, the thinking which is going to allow us to use the funds you are requesting in a productive manner to help SMEs?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, concerning the consultants by the MBGS, there has been work done, and I can provide the amount assisted to the beneficiaries of the MBGS, that is, the work done by the consultants. The total amount is Rs211,170,000. The number of projects approved and work done by the consultants is 60 till now, and the amount disbursed is Rs28.6 m.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, may I take the hon. Minister on page 618, Programme 701 - outcome indicator, number of new jobs. The hon. Minister has mentioned the number of new jobs created. May I know the number of SMEs that have closed shop in 2013 and the number of people who have been laid off as a result of same?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the rate of employment has increased drastically. In 2007, the rate of employment in the SME sector was 51% and now it is 54%; net employment: 3% increase, and we have it from the New Statistical Unit that the employment created as at October is 5,193.

**Mr Soodhun:** Page 620, Programme 701, item 22030 - *Rent*, can the hon. Minister give us some details on the rent?

**Mr Seetaram:** Which item, please?

**The Chairperson:** Page 620, item 22030 – *Rent*, Programme 701.

**Mr Seetaram:** Mr Chairperson, there has been a decrease in the rent. It is due to the fact that Rs800,000 were provided for the *Centenaire du Mouvement Coopératif*. Therefore, this fund would not be needed next year.

**Mr Bhagwan:** At page 620, Mr Chairperson, *Personal Emoluments*, we are being asked to vote Rs19,972,000. I will go back to page 615 on the Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, Programme 701 - major services: facilitation of market access to enterprises. Can we know from the hon. Minister from the vote which we are being asked to vote nearly Rs20 m., how many personnel of the Ministry have been geared for market access for the sale and production of heavy duty solar panel? Can the hon. Minister inform the House which company has been given this facilitation for market access with regard to solar panel?

**The Chairperson:** Put the question!

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, we have to carry out a research, but I think I can look into the sector of wood. Some *dibois* has been stolen, I don't know, but I have to look into it.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Don't interrupt. We waste time otherwise! Yes, hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I come to the question of employment again. Can the hon. Minister tell us in terms of percentage...

**Mr Seetaram:** Which item?

**The Chairperson:** Page and Item!

**Mr Ganoo:** On page 618, *Policy and Management Services*, can the hon. Minister give us the percentage of employees of the SMEs out of total labour force of those employed by the SMEs and secondly, in terms of contribution of the SMEs to GDP, can the hon. Minister give us the percentage for year 2013, please?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the total number of employees in the whole SME sector is 255,000. So, we have to calculate the percentage.

**The Chairperson:** Calculate the percentage and then you come forward!

**Mr Seetaram:** The percentage was 51% in 2007. It was 54% in 2012, and in 2013, the hon. Member asked for the percentage of GDP, which is 40%.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you. Mr Chairperson, I am on page 615, and I am coming back to this Major Service which is supposed to be offered by the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives, that is, facilitation of market access to Enterprises. May I ask the hon. Minister which facilities of market access have been offered to enterprises during 2013 and how many - if the hon. Minister has the figures - SMEs...

**The Chairperson:** No, one question is enough!

**Mrs Labelle:** Regarding the facilitation of marketing...

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but one question is enough!

**Mrs Labelle:** What facilities offered and the number of companies which have benefited from that?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the access to market is at different levels. Firstly, you have SMEs cooperative fairs where several fairs have been organised during the year itself. Secondly, you have access to the market in terms of international markets also. So, basically we have organised cooperative fairs all round the country; Rivière du Rempart, 85 participants, that is, SMEs, Port Louis Waterfront, Mahebourg, Port Mathurin, Vacoas. So, *in toto* it is over 400; 406 SMEs.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson. On page 614, *SME Directory*, may I know from the hon. Minister when will the SME Directory be available and to whom the contract was awarded to do that directory?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the SME Directory is in process. It might be the GIS, but the funding is from NRF.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 621, item *22180 - Overseas Travel*, for the year 2013, a sum of Rs500,000 has been provided for. May we know how much has actually been spent and what are the countries visited, and whether new markets have been identified, and what are the results of those new markets?

**Mr Seetaram:** Which item, please?

**Mr Seeruttun:** Item *22180 - Overseas Travel*, on page 621, for the year 2013, a sum of Rs500,000 has been provided for. I would like to know how much has actually been spent, what are the countries visited, and what are the new markets identified to allow SMEs to export their products there.

**Mr Seetaram:** There has been a list of missions. There was a mission to India, a visit to Malaysia and Singapore. This was by the hon. Minister and the Permanent Secretary. The total is Rs489,000.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, again, under the same item, can I ask the hon. Minister to inform us how many SMEs have been encouraged and been incentivised to participate in the Public Procurement Scheme? Because one of the measures of Government is to split public procurement to favour SMEs. So, how many SMEs have been able to take advantage of this? The item is Personal Emoluments; how many staff have been promoting and incentivising SMEs to take advantage of Government policy to favour SMEs?

**The Chairperson:** That's proper!

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the number of staff has been allocated several tasks. It is firstly for mentoring, handholding, and it also includes all kinds of promotions either on marketing or other aspects of business, whereas specifically you have 12 BDOs, Business Development Officers, who are carrying out these tasks.

**Mr Jhugroo:** On page 620, item 21110, with regard to *Personal Emoluments*, can the hon. Minister name the advisers whom he integrated in his office, the condition of work, their salaries and then their qualifications?

**Mr Seetaram:** I will circulate the answer.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, I want to back to my question. We have been asked to vote a significant amount of money under item 701 on page 620, where we have all the details. I want to ask the hon. Minister on what basis we are planning this expenditure. Does the hon. Member have any single planning document that allows him to determine those priorities? He mentioned consultants earlier. There is no consultant under this vote. Is there a plan? Is there a strategy? Is there prioritisation of projects? Where is it?

**Mr Seetaram:** I will take some time. In fact, there is a master plan on the way, the SME master plan. But the hon. Member is not aware that there have been so many tasks that have been already executed, and one of the main which was made with care, 'Made in Mauritius' label. Secondly, all the criteria have been under four main sectors: access to finance, access to market, access to industrial space, access to technology and innovation.

**The Chairperson:** Alright, hon. Bodha!

*(Interruptions)*

No cross-talking! Yes, hon. Bodha! Hon. Minister, I say no cross-talking!

**Mr Bodha:** On the same Programme 701, *Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives*, Mr Chairperson, when we see the challenges at page 614, they are daunting -

- Inadequate visibility
- Low participation
- Inadequate use of technology
- Lack of internal expertise
- Lack of professionalism

The hon. Minister has mentioned that there was an Entrepreneurship Forum which was held in March 2013. May I ask him whether an action followed and how many SMEs took

advantage of that action plan with urgent measures because these are the challenges? These are the challenges that each and every SME is expecting the hon. Minister to be able to address.

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the Entrepreneurship Forum was very successful, among which one of the main, I should say, worries and issues that came up in the forum was access to finance for SMEs. The issue that came up here and again was the collateral one, that is, how to provide SMEs with loans without collateral and that has been forwarded to my office. We have, in fact, liaised with one of the experts from India, Dr. Narain, who came up with one scheme, loan without collateral for SMEs. This has been proposed to the Ministry of Finance, and they have been able to work out on a scheme, and in the Budget this scheme was included. So, one of the main issues was the issue of access to finance without collateral for the SMEs, for the micros, most importantly, as we have more micros. There were around more than 60 participants in that SME, and they have also come to a conclusion that we have to move towards more inclusive business.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Mr Chairperson, page 620, item 22040 - *Office Equipment and Furniture*. There was a provision of Rs650,000 for year 2013. So, can we have some details regarding how this work has been done?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, there is a decrease in office equipment and furniture from Rs650,000 to Rs250,000, and this decrease is in relation to a photocopy machine which was bought and which will not be needed anymore.

**The Chairperson:** Last question hon. Ganoo!

(*Interruptions*)

No! I said last question hon. Ganoo! I can't compel a Minister to answer! Hon. Members know that! Yes, hon. Ganoo.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I come to page 621, item 26313083 - *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*. I find, Mr Chairperson, that Rs34 m. has been budgeted for SMEDA. The question I want to put is: does the hon. Minister find it normal that for the SME sector which, according to him, contributes about 40% of the GDP and now employs about more than 55% of our labour force, only Rs37 m. is allocated per year for the running of the SMEDA,

and for the prospection of new markets? Can I ask him why this is so low when we compare the budget allocated to Enterprise Mauritius?

**Mr Seetaram:** It is not so low. The money includes payment of salaries obviously, and the allowances. For strategic planning, marketing, business, organisation of forums, training and capacity building, the funds come from the National Resilience Fund, the NRF. We have to note that we have also the craft markets for SMEDA. There is income from there as well.

*Programme Code 701: Policy and Management for Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Rs31,552,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness was called.*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Page 621, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants (MBGS)*, Rs8,450,000. Can the hon. Minister give us more details about which consultants it is all about, for what services, and how the consultants were chosen? Was it by tender?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, with regard to the question of hon. Li Kwong Wing about fees, we have fees for training and then consultants. All the consultants do have tasks allocated to them when there is any project they should work on. I have a list of the consultants, which I can provide, with most of the sectors they are in like manufacturing, textile, medical appliances and all that. I have the list of all the advisers and consultants.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Same item, Mr Chairperson, *Fees to Consultants*. May I ask the hon. Minister why is there such a marked increase in the vote for the consultancy fees from Rs6.5 m. in 2013 to Rs8.450 m. in 2014, and who is the consultant?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, there has been provision made for the payment of one senior consultant who is presently working on a staggered basis. That is why we have such an increase. The consultant is Mr Henri Stetter.

**Mr Nagalingum:** Mr Chairperson page 621, Programme 703, item 26313083 - *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*. I see a sum of Rs40,300,000 has been earmarked for 2014. Can I know who the Director is? How much amount are we provided for overseas travel to attend trade fairs?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, I am not aware if the Director did attend a trade fair or not, but I will surely circulate the answer as soon as I have it.

**Mr Jhugroo:** Page 621, item 2290024 - *Management Fee to DBM Ltd.* Can we have some details regarding this amount which was earmarked - Rs2,250,000?

**Mr Seetaram:** The process was like that. You have an amount of money disbursed for projects through the MBGS, and this money is managed by the DBM. So, for the management fees for DBM, there is a percentage that you have to pay to DBM.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 621, back to item 22120 - *Fees*. Mr Chairperson, in the following two items, we see fees for training and fees for consultants, and in bracket MBGS. MBGS is the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme. I have some difficulties. Is a scheme a consultant? Because it is a scheme; Mauritius Business Growth Scheme. We see that everywhere; MBGS for expenses. To whom is this money being paid? I don't think we pay money to a scheme.

**Mr Seetaram:** Mr Chairperson, the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme Unit is a Unit where it carries out all tasks through projects to grow businesses. When you have businesses that are, for example, having same turnovers, they come in; they help to grow the businesses. It is by mentoring, handholding, and they do it through consultants. That Unit comes in businesses which are having difficulties to improve their turnover. So, they come in, they improve the businesses through growth. Consultants act on behalf of companies which require their services, and there is a fee paid to those consultants. That fee is up to a maximum of Rs3 m., depending on the project. So, that money, if it is paid to the consultant, is on a refundable basis. When is it refunded? After three years. So, there is a *moratoire* of three years, and after that three years, the reimbursement takes effect by 11% on the incremental sales that they have taken stock of; reimburse the funds paid to the consultants. That is how it works.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 621, under item 26313 – *Extra-Budgetary Units – Grants to SMEDA*. We are asked to vote a budget of Rs40.3 m. May I take the hon. Minister to page 614 under *Major Constraints and Challenges*, at the fifth bullet, where it says: *Lack of professionalism in the delivery of the services offered by SMEDA*.

May I know from the hon. Minister why are we expecting to vote Rs40 m., when he himself agrees that there is no of professionalism in the delivery of the services? And if we are going to vote this item, what is the amount budgeted to improve professionalism in the delivery of the services by SMEDA?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the reason being simple, that is: what is the plan now? Hon. Obeegadoo asked about the plan. The plan is to restructure SMEDA. On one side, we are going to leave SMEDA in terms of an SME Advisory Centre and, on the other side, to specialise in the Handicraft sector. So, concerning the professionalism, we want the staff to be experts, to be consultants in advising SMEs, to be good in what they are doing. That is why we have put it this way, and in the restructuring process there will be lots of capacity building and training to come to that level.

**Mr Seeruttun:** On page 621, on item 22900024 – *Management Fee to DBM Ltd*. In his reply earlier on, the hon. Minister mentioned that a percentage of the amount processed by the DBM is worked out and paid to the DBM Ltd by his Ministry. May we know what is that percentage paid to the DBM and whether that amount which is being processed by the DBM Ltd is the same as those as the four years ahead? Because the amount earmarked here is the same all throughout?

**Mr Seetaram:** The percentage is 1%, management fee; yes, all the way.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, on page 621, item 22900099 – *Miscellaneous Expenses (MBGS)*. Again, MBGS, we are invited to vote a sum of Rs800,000, and the same amount was voted last year. I would like to have details of these expenses. How was the money spent last year?

**Mr Seetaram:** I will circulate the breakdown.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to page 621, item 21110 – *Personal Emoluments*. The number of funded positions in that Unit is remaining the same for next year, that is, five employees in all. Can we get an explanation from the hon. Minister how is it that the *Personal Emoluments* are decreasing by Rs200,000?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, there is a decrease in the *Personal Emoluments*, and the decrease is due to the fact that one of the posts of Office Care Attendant was not filled as the number of posts was reduced accordingly in the Fiscal Year 2014.

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 621, item 26313083 - *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*. We are being asked to vote Rs40.3 m. from the taxpayers' money. Can the hon. Minister inform the House if within this Rs40.3 m., there is a study which

is being carried out actually for the reorganisation of the SMEDA, and whether Mr Vijay Ramgoolam, former Director, who has been *sauvagement licencié* will be reintegrated?

(*Interruptions*)

**The Chairperson:** No, no! You mention his name that's all.

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Bhagwan:** Which word did I say?

(*Interruptions*)

**The Chairperson:** Now don't !

**Mr Bhagwan:** He has been fired...

**The Chairperson:** Oh non! Pas de qualificatif !

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Bhagwan:** ...*d'une façon illégitime*. Very competent officer! Fired on political ground! Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has been promised by the Prime Minister to be *réintégré*?

**The Chairperson:** No, he can only answer for himself.

**Mr Bodha:** On page 621, item 26313083 – SMEDA. We are asked to vote a sum of Rs40 m. When I come to page 614, we learn about the *restructuring of SMEDA into two different units*. May I ask the hon. Minister how he is going to apportion this Budget as regard to the business development support and as regard to the Handicraft sector? And, at the same time, if he can tell us how many SMEs are involved within the Handicraft sector, and how many are involved in the other segments of the SMEs?

**Mr Seetaram:** As I said, Mr Chairperson, there is a restructuring going on. On one side, there will be specialisation for the SMEs in terms of an Advisory Centre, especially advisory, marketing, handholding, branding, repositioning, reengineering and, on the other side, to concentrate on the handicraft sector, how to go up the ladder concerning handicraft. So, the restructuring is still going on.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I refer to page 618, under *S:2 Support to Start-ups and SMEs*. Now we know that the major complaint of SMEs concerns the access to credit. I want to know from the Minister why his Ministry is so conservative and fixing those targets. We are to understand only 31% of SMEs assisted managed to obtain financial support in 2012, and only 34% in 2014. So, is this not an admission of failure on the part of the Ministry?

**Mr Seetaram:** It is not an admission of failure as some would know. What I have to inform the House concerning Start-ups Entrepreneurship Scheme, is that there have been two sorts of proposals per year; one in January and one in June. That scheme is for innovation, fresh ideas that one would come up with, and these ideas would be studied by the MBGS and then those projects would be approved. We have a number of applications received in 2012, that is, 119. Up to October, as is mentioned here, it is 57. The number of projects approved till now is 12. The amount disbursed is Rs3.3 m., and that explains the conservative figure on the percentage.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I am referring the Minister to page 621, item 22120007 - *Fees for Training (MBGS)*, item 22120008 - *Fees to Consultants (MBGS)* and also *Grants to SMEDA* respectively. I am referring the Minister to several items, because the last Budget talked about the lack of coordination and duplication in the SME service providing institution, which is cause for a misuse of human and capital resource. When this question was put to the hon. Minister, and highlighting the different institutions that we have in this sector, the SMEDA, the DBM, the EM, the MBGS, the National Women and so on, ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but what is the question?

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Minister talked about an agency: “The Inter Agency Committee which has been set up by my Ministry and is looking into it”, and he talks about...

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but what is the question?

**Mr Ganoo:** ...decisions which should be taken. What decisions have been taken to rationalise the existence of all these different institutions?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, the question that hon. Ganoo is referring to is concerning the UEP. It was going to be an inter agency having all the SME providers under one

roof. But the strategy we are adopting now is the restructuring of the SMEDA itself into an SME Advisory Centre. This is, for the moment, the way to go ahead because we had several meetings, including the World Bank, where there have been several suggestions and proposals that were made and discussed and, at the end of the day, we have put forward a Coordination Committee. That Coordination Committee, in fact, passed through the Cabinet, and that Coordination Committee came with the conclusion that there should be a common training, common initiative between the SMEDA, NICE, NWEC and all these institutions.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on page 613, the third bullet, there have been 46 approved projects for a total amount of Rs51 m. May I know from the hon. Minister...

*(Interruptions)*

Page 613, yes. There have been 46 projects approved under the MBGS for a contribution of Rs51 m. May I know from the hon. Minister what criteria has been used to disburse this sum, and can he circulate a list of all the beneficiaries who received funds and the amount they received under this programme?

**Mr Seetaram:** I have an evaluation criteria and the list. So, I shall circulate.

**The Chairperson:** We are left with one minute. Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. I am on page 621, and I am back to item 22120 – *Fees for Training (MBGS)*. The Minister has said that the Mauritius Business Growth Scheme is a Unit under his Ministry. May I know how many members of staff are attached to this Unit and whether the role of this Unit is just acting as a broker for consultants?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Minister. One minute!

**Mr Seetaram:** Unfortunately, we do not have brokers in my Ministry.

*(Interruptions)*

Unfortunately, we do not have it. What I can do is I can circulate the names, the number of advisors and also the related list of service providers.

**The Chairperson:** Yes. Time is over!

*Programme Code 703: Enterprise Development and Competitiveness (Rs56,408,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives was called.*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Sir, I refer to page 619, the first target S1 which refers to creation of employment in the cooperative sector or through cooperatives presumably. I would like to know from the Minister where is the strategy which would allow this target to be delivered, because I cannot see any specific item in the Budget either at page 622 or considering the miserable 5 member staffing at page 623 that would allow for some serious reflection and strategy implementation in that regard.

**The Chairperson:** One question?

**Mr Seetaram:** What was the question? Strategy of...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Member, repeat your question!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** May I repeat in greater detail, Mr Chairperson?

**The Chairperson:** Repeat your question!

**Mr Seetaram:** In relation to which item, please?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** On page 619.

**Mr Seetaram:** Yes.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** If the Minister recognises this programme! The First indicator relates to employment, the employment direct or indirect, full time or part time. If that is clear, I am asking where is the strategy that would allow us to move from 31,298 in 2012 to the stated target for 2014, considering that at page 622 I find nothing that would relate to a particular initiative safe for the NICE, which I do not know much about, and in terms of staffing, there is a miserable 5 member staff...

**The Chairperson:** Under which item is the NICE?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** NICE is at item 26313061 at the bottom of that page. But I do not have the answer. I am just raising the question because I cannot see any strategy, any indication of serious thinking and strategising for employment creation.

**The Chairperson:** No, but one thing that the hon. Member should bear in mind is that you cannot find serious thinking in a Budget! Because it deals with expenditure, but, by the way, I will have to remind all Members...

**The Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, it was the reformulation...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Member, you cannot interrupt me! Standing Order 73(3) is very clear that -

“Discussion at the Committee of Supply (...)"

I want all Members to listen to this carefully. I have been flexible, but there is a limit to flexibility!

“(...) shall be confined to the details of the expenditure contained in the programme, sub-programme or item of expenditure and shall not refer to the general principles of Government policy and administration.”

So, before putting any question, I would invite Members to bear this well in mind. Otherwise I will not allow questions which go outside the requirement of Standing Order 73(3).

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, my initial question was not understood. It was by way of further explanation that I referred to ‘serious thinking’. My question is simple. There is an indicator on page 619, we are budgeting funds to achieve a target stated for 2014. My question is, if we vote those funds, that is the essence of the exercise today, how do we get to that target?

**Mr Seetaram:** Which item of expenditure?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, but I have explained that this is a matter of administration! The Minister may not answer! Next question, hon. Soodhun!

**Mr Soodhun:** On page 624, Programme 604: *Promotion and Development of Cooperatives*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House how he has been promoting, developing and consolidating the cooperative associations in the absence of Registrar of Cooperative Society, and in the absence of Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Society? These two very important posts are vacant. I would like to know from the hon. Minister for how long these posts have been vacant and when will they be filled.

**The Chairperson:** Okay, hon. Minister you answer!

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the promotion exercise has been going on smoothly and all the tasks have been very well managed and very well undertaken by the Acting Registrar.

(*Interruptions*)

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

(*Interruptions*)

I can't compel a Minister to answer according to the Standing Order. I can't! The hon. Member must come again with a question. Yes, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 622, item 28211058 – *Other Current Transfers – Mauritius Women Entrepreneur Cooperatives Federation*.

**Mr Seetaram:** On which page?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 622. Under item *Mauritius Women Entrepreneur Cooperatives Federation*, I see for 2013: Rs500,000; 2014: Rs500,000, and it goes on till 2016 with Rs500,000. When I link this to page 619, where we talk of consolidation and enhancement of cooperative societies, can I ask the Minister whether he does not foresee any enhancement of the Mauritius Women Entrepreneur Cooperatives Federation? Because there is no increase in the Budget, it remains same all throughout.

**The Chairperson:** Why no increase?

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** Simple question. Yes! Why no increase?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, this is a grant to the Federation and there has been considerable amount of work done. There has been growth all around for Women Entrepreneurship Federation, because it has under it over 70 Women Cooperatives. We have to bear in mind that in 2005 there were only eight Women Cooperatives, and now we have more than 70 Women Cooperatives.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, page 621, item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*; if we look at all the funded positions, we find that there is an increase of only two Cooperative Officers in the staff complement of the Ministry. Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the turnover of all the Cooperatives and the number of live Cooperatives? And in view of the vision

of the hon. Prime Minister of a big ocean economy, should there not be more Cooperative participation in the ocean economy warranting more staff?

**Mr Seetaram:** In total, the turnover for the whole Cooperative Sector amounts to more Rs5 billion, and concerning this sector, lots of work have been carried out, and we have the Credit Union Sector which has come now to Rs2.1 billion, which is quite remarkable. There have been more than 24 Fishermen Cooperatives registered for the new aquaculture strategy, which is the Ocean Economy Strategy, and they would be having their fish cages next June.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Chairperson, on page 622, I would like to canvass the same item which has been canvassed by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee regarding Women Entrepreneur Cooperatives Federation. I would like to know why this sum is remaining the same throughout, that is, Rs500,000, when at page 614, last bullet, Major Constraints and Challenges, and how they are being addressed -

“Low participation of women in the Cooperative Movement.

- Engendering the Cooperative Movement by encouraging women to join cooperatives through special capacity building programmes for women cooperatives.”

So, can we know why this amount is remaining constant throughout?

**Mr Seetaram:** Like I said, this is a constant grant given to the Women Federations, and the point that the hon. Member is making concerns all the tasks and the issues that came up for Women Cooperatives. I have to inform the House that a lot has been done concerning strictly the Women Cooperatives. Firstly, we had training courses and workshops, participation in fairs, capacity building projects, a sales outlet that has been inaugurated at Le Souk. So, a considerable amount of work has been done in that line.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Page 622, item 26313061 - *Current Grant - National Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship (NICE)*, an amount of Rs3.3 m. has been earmarked. Can the hon. Minister be nice enough to inform us about why there is this increase, who runs this Institute, who is the Chairperson of this Institute, whether NICE is performing, and whether any report of its activities has been published?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Too many questions in one! *C'est un gros caillou!*

**Mr Bhagwan:** Yes, because of his caliber!

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Seetaram:** I am more than happy to answer. In fact, there have been funds provided to meet the operational expenses of NICE, and also there has been an increase in grant for the payment of pension. But, with regard to the question the hon. Member has put concerning the work and all the tasks carried out by NICE, it is a task that has been carried out all over the country. There have been several trainings, workshops and also *formation* in all sectors carried out by trainers from the NICE.

**Mr Soodhun:** Mr Chairperson, I would like to know from the hon. Minister again since when...

**The Chairperson:** Page and item?

**Mr Soodhun:** Page 624 and item 18 00 86.

**The Chairperson:** Yes, Registrar, Cooperative Societies.

**Mr Soodhun:** And, Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Societies. Since when this post is vacant, and what the hon. Minister intends to do?

**Mr Seetaram:** I would like to explain the history in that. Firstly, the post of Registrar, Cooperative Societies and Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Societies are vacant since June and May 2011, and the post could not be filled due to representations made by the unions from the Cooperatives, and following the recommendations of the IOSC report the schemes of service of the two posts have been amended accordingly, and this has been submitted just now, in November 2013. So, it is for consideration now.

(*Interruptions*)

**The Chairperson:** I have three more questions, but please be short in your questions, and we hope to finish with the item. Hon. Jhugroo!

**Mr Jhugroo:** Page 622, first item 22090 - *Security*, can the hon. Minister explain to the House why there has been an increase of Rs105,000, which represents 25%, and to whom this contract has been given, and whether there has been a tender exercise done?

**Mr Seetaram:** Well, I can inform the House that there has been an additional provision made for new and higher rates for Security Services and it is New Security Guards and the new rate amounts to Rs21,390 per month and the contract has been awarded on 14 April 2013 for a period of, I think, two years. That's it!

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 622, the last item on that page, 26313061 - *Current Grant - National Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship (NICE)*, in his reply earlier the hon. Minister stated that the enterprise has conducted several projects in several areas of the country. Can he give us an idea of how many people this institute has touched during that year and the different locations where those projects were organised?

**Mr Seetaram:** More than 1500 entrepreneurs have been touched, and there have been training even in the South at Chemin Grenier, in Triolet, in Brisée Verdière, in Bel Air, in Vacoas and all around the country. There has also been sensitisation of more than 1,000 students, capacity building for Cooperative leaders, 300, number of Cooperative societies that have been formed is more than 20, and training for empowerment of women and youths is more than 1500. So, there has been considerable work done.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on the issue of NICE, item 26313061, may we have a breakdown, which the hon. Minister can circulate, on how this amount of Rs3.3 m. is arrived at, including what portion relates to salaries?

**Mr Seetaram:** I will kindly circulate same.

**The Chairperson:** We still have four minutes! Yes, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Item 28211 - *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. May I ask from the hon. Minister...

**The Chairperson:** Which page and item, please?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Page 622, item 28211 - *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. May I ask the hon. Minister the number of Cooperative Societies which have closed down in the year 2013?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, the number of Cooperative Societies has increased and Cooperative Societies are known to be very resilient and sustainable economic activity led institutions. So, there has been an increase from last year in the number of Cooperatives.

**Mr Jhugroo:** On page 622, item 22060 - *Maintenance*, can the hon. Minister explain to the House whether there has been an increase for next year in the provision, and can we have a detailed explanation with regard to the maintenance done?

**Mr Seetaram:** In fact, concerning maintenance, there have been funds provided for maintenance of *maison des pêcheurs à Mahebourg*, Rs350,000, and Tamarin Rs450,000, and other regional Cooperatives Centres.

*Programme Code 604: Promotion and Development of Cooperatives (Rs92,820,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare -*

*Programme Code 521: Policy and Management Gender Equality, Child Development, Family Welfare and Social Welfare was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Ribot!

**Mrs Ribot:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to page 635, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. Can we know from the hon. Minister the number of studies and surveys that have been carried out, the subject matter, by whom, and the outcome of those studies and surveys, and if subjects like child prostitution, child living in street conditions form part of those studies and surveys?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Chairperson, as regards the number of studies and surveys, as you know, the Planning and Research Unit has, for the moment, as I have indicated in the former PQs, been understaffed. That is one of reasons why many studies and surveys have not been carried out. However, the Planning and Research Unit has undertaken two studies, which are being carried out right now, and will be completed by mid December. One is the situation analysis on family values in Mauritius, and the second one is an impact assessment on strengthening values for family life.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 635, item 22100 - *Publication and Stationery*, where there is provision of Rs800,000, can I ask the hon. Minister how her Ministry and other Ministries have used ...

**The Chairperson:** The hon. Minister can only answer for her Ministry.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** How her Ministry then uses information which she, Minister, publishes in one publication entitled 'Statistics on women' to address the gender gap?

**Mrs Martin:** Actually, Mr Chairperson, we have the National Steering Committee on gender mainstreaming, where we discuss the different sectoral gender policies which many Ministries have been dotted with, and they use their different facilities and items that the Ministry provides. This is one of the ways through which the gender statistics is disseminated among the Ministries, and they have to own their policy. As they own their own policy, they use the statistics to be able to mainstream gender in their own practices.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Chairperson, on page 635, item 22180 - *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*, last year, a sum of Rs800,000 was voted, and this year an amount of Rs900,000 is being earmarked. I would like to have a breakdown of the expenses incurred for 2013, and I will also like to know if there has been any report coming from these missions.

**Mrs Martin:** The number of overseas missions that have been effected, in fact, are three for 2013, one is the SADC Ministers meeting responsible for women and gender, the second one is the 10<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women Affairs Ministers' meeting, and the third one is the 9<sup>th</sup> COMESA technical meeting and the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministers' meeting on Gender and Women Affairs. All the different meetings have had their outcomes, and this can be circulated.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** On page 634, item 21111 - *Other Staff Costs*, will the hon. Minister give us an idea of the details of the amount spent in 2013?

**Mrs Martin:** I can table the details with regard to 2013.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Can we have an idea of which cost it is meant?

**Mrs Martin:** It is mainly for travelling and other allowances such as refund of bus fares and overtime.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Chairperson, I am coming back to item 22130 on page 635. Since the hon. Minister replied that only two surveys had been carried out by her Ministry itself, can I know from the Minister the percentage of the sum that had been earmarked in 2013 that had been used for those two surveys?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, the remaining sum of Rs619,500 will be disbursed on completion of the impact assessment on strengthening values for family life and the situational analysis on family values in Mauritius by December. The contract sum for the situational analysis is Rs500,000, and the second contract sum for the assessment on strengthening values for Family Life Programme is Rs385,000.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Yes, Mr Chairperson. On page 631, *second indicator, formulation of a 10 Year costed Integrated Strategy for Children Women and Family*, I want some clarifications. The indicator is in terms of the percentage of implementation. But when will the strategy be actually ready and published?

Secondly, is this the same as the Child Bill? Because there has been a lot of talk of a comprehensive Child Bill, but the Child Bill does not appear here at all as the indicator. Would the hon. Minister clarify?

**Mrs Martin:** Actually it is not the same as the Children's Bill. The Children's Bill is being finalised. However, this formulation of a 10-year costed Integrated Strategy for Children, Women and Family is undertaken from the funds received from AFDB, the African Development Bank, for the preparation of this Integrated Strategy, and we have a lead consultant and a local consultant who have been recruited, and the implementation for the Integrated Strategy is expected to take effect as from 2014 because it will be submitted early in 2014.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, under Programme Code 521, the sum we voted last year, one of the services to be provided was Formulation of a Strategy for National Child Protection. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this strategy has been worked out, and if so, by whom? Will she table a copy of this strategy if it has been worked out?

**Mrs Martin:** The strategy has not been finalised yet, but it is under preparation.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Page 635, item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. The Minister just mentioned that she has carried out two studies on the family. Can the Minister tell us, with the sum that has been allocated, whether she does not feel that child prostitution is an area which needs priority, and that a study should have been carried out on child prostitution as a matter of priority?

**Mrs Martin:** This, in fact, will be carried out in 2014.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Chairperson, I turn to page 627, under the heading *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. I find mention of lack of technical expertise in dealing with child, gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming policies and programmes, and then, at the third bullet point, limited capacity to address the increasing number of reported cases of violence against children requiring placement in shelters, and also as a means to address these issues, continuous training of existing personnel. But, then, there are no items on the budget to explain how the Minister is going to achieve this. Would the hon. Minister explain which item in the Budget will address this issue?

**Mrs Martin:** It is under training.

**The Chairperson:** There is no such item in the Budget.

**Mrs Martin:** It is under *Other Goods and Services*.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to the budget of last year, and there was the Formulation of a Strategy for National Child Protection, which was supposed to be completed by January 2015. I would like to ask the hon. Minister why this item simply does not appear in the budget this year?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, it is one of the strategies that are going to be developed this year, because last year we launched a request for consultancy services, but we had no responsive bidder. And this time, the request for consultancy services is being channelled to the EU, through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I would refer the hon. Minister to page 627, *Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed*. It is also linked to page 631: Formulation of a 10-year costed Integrated Strategy for Children, Women and Family.

Page 627 refers to a mechanism to identify children leaving shelters to be accommodated in halfway home. Can I ask the hon. Minister if any provision has been made, and if so, where, for the setting up of a halfway home, and whether this halfway home is only for children leaving shelters, or children who are now presently in the Brown Sequared Hospital? Can the hon. Minister tell us if there are any of our children still being confined in the BSH, at the time we are discussing about child protection?

**Mrs Martin:** As you know, the CDU caters for children under court order and, as far as I am aware, none of those children are still in BSH. However, as regards the question of the hon.

Member concerning the halfway home, we have noticed, in fact, that there is a gap from the moment where the children stay in the shelters, especially those who are nearing their maturity have no place of abode. There is a small percentage of children who still have that problem, although the CDU tries to integrate them in their family, into mainstream society as well. Therefore, we are proposing to define criteria as from early January 2014, to be able to work out solutions, so that those children, minors would be transferred to a halfway home under certain specific criteria, and also fulfil a social contract of empowerment so that they be able to integrate mainstream society.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister to page 635, with regard to item 31132401 - *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. Can I ask the hon. Minister how her ministry ensures that PCs and internet facilities available at Community Centres are functioning properly? May I draw her attention to the fact that the PC at the Cité La Cure Community Centre, most of the time, is not in working condition?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Chairperson, I am not aware of such a thing. However, this has not been reported to me, and I thank the hon. Member. I will check whether this is the case at Cité La Cure, which we have, in fact, launched quite recently. However, the services for maintenance of these computers are being ensured under the Net PC Programme of Mauritius Telecom.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Chairperson, I would just like the Minister to confirm to us that the National Child Protection Strategy no longer falls under the aegis of her Ministry.

**Mrs Martin:** Sorry, there is no National Child Protection Strategy Unit.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Can the hon. Member be explicit about her question, please?

**Mrs Ribot:** We heard the hon. Minister say that the National Child Protection Plan no longer falls under the aegis of her Ministry. I would like her to confirm.

**Mrs Martin:** I did not say that.

**Mr Chairperson:** It is not a proper question anyway. Hon. Obeegadoo!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Hon. Ganoo earlier referred to lack of technical expertise as the first major constraint identified on page 627. Considering the total lack of technical staff at page 638

- in fact, there appears to be only one Head, Planning and Research Unit, and no other technical cadre - and considering the fact that the budget for fees is remaining the same at page 635, how the budget the Minister is requesting us to approve is proposing to address this lack of technical expertise?

**Mrs Martin:** I already said that we have a Technical Head. We only have one coordinator also, which is a technical staff, and we have one FWPO who works at the Planning and Research Unit. This is clearly not sufficient. We have requested a Social Statistician, but given the economic situation, this request was not entertained. However, a person from the Analysis Cadre of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development also assists in his/her capacity as designated Desk Officer for the Ministry, as and when required.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, we would like to confirm from the hon. Minister whether the Formulation of a Strategy for National Child Protection is no longer with her Ministry, but funded by the EU. This is what we think having heard, and it is under the Ministry of Finance. The formulation is not under her Ministry.

**Mrs Martin:** Let me be clearer perhaps on this subject. In fact, what we have done is, since we have not obtained local consultants, we are channelling this request through the EU, but as per procedure, it has to go through the Ministry of Finance to be entertained.

*Programme Code 521: Policy and Management for Gender Equality, Child Development, Family Welfare and Social Welfare (Rs83,445,000) was, on question put this, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 522: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming was called.*

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to page 635, item 28211051 – Women’s Associations. Can we know from the hon. Minister the criteria for those associations to benefit from grants, the number and list of associations benefitting from such grants, and if there are any women’s associations whose request for grants have been turned down, and why?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, the payment to the women’s associations is Rs200,000, and around 1,125 women’s associations benefit from those funds. These women’s associations are duly registered with the Registrar of Associations. There is also Rs5,000 which is allocated to five regional committees. As far as I am aware, there is only one regional

committee which last year did not benefit, but now that the election has gone through and with the advice that we have obtained from the Registrar of Associations and the State Law Office, this regional committee will benefit this year.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** On page 635, item 22060 – *Maintenance*. May I ask from the hon. Minister which company is responsible for the maintenance of the premises?

**Mrs Martin:** There are different companies which are responsible for the maintenance services. I can circulate, because there are a lot of different companies.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I refer the hon. Minister to page 635, item 28211028 – *Chrysalide Centre*? The sum of Rs1.2 m. has been budgeted for all the coming years, that is, up to 2016 and, as we know, this centre which is situated at Bambous caters for women who, unfortunately, have become victims of alcohol and other substances. Can I ask the Minister whether she is happy, she is satisfied with this sum which has been budgeted and which is the same for all the coming four years?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, Chrysalide Centre has not asked for any additional grant, and under its agreement it was supposed to be a self-funding institution. However, Government is supporting Chrysalide Centre through other projects. For example, this year, we are going to be financing the construction of an added wing for Chrysalide Centre under the special collaborative programme for women and children in distress. So, the funds would be given to them for the construction, I think, to the tune of Rs2 m., and they will be accommodating victims of gender-based violence and their children as well.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister how many inmates there are in Chrysalide Centre now?

**Mrs Martin:** I can circulate the number. I don't have the number with me right now. Chrysalide Centre, as you know, is a private institution. So, I'll have to ask.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 635, item 26313067 - *National Women's Council*. I see that there is an increase from Rs66 m. to Rs81 m. We know that at the level of the Regional Committees, there is an ageing of the members. Can the hon. Minister say how many new members she has registered in 2013?

**Mrs Martin:** There are 75 new women's associations which have been registered this year.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** On page 635, item 26313 - *Extra-Budgetary Units*. For *National Women Entrepreneur Council*, a sum of Rs9 m. is being earmarked for next year, and for the *National Women's Council* a sum of Rs81 m. is being earmarked for next year. I would like to know what is the percentage of the amount that goes to salaries and fringe benefits.

**Mrs Martin:** The percentage will have to be calculated, because the higher provisions are made mainly to cater, in fact, for the increase following the PRB report.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 631, under SS1: *Number of women sensitised/trained for their social, economic and political empowerment*. It is being said that we are targeting Rs76,000 and, over the years, there has been a constant increase, but the number of employers in this section remains the same; it has even been decreased by one. So, can the Minister enlighten us as to how they have reached this figure, and even for 2013, the figure of some 58? Also how the sensitisation/training is being done, where, how and by whom, and how it comes that the number increased but the number of personnel remains the same, even decreased a bit?

**Mrs Martin:** The number of women increased, because the Ministry and the Gender Unit work in collaboration with the National Women's Council and other Officers are trained regularly to be able to sensitise women on different issues and as well we partner with other stakeholder, for example, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Security, etc. in order to regroup a maximum and target a maximum of women.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to page 635, item 22120 – *Fees* that have gone down by almost half. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether there was anything special this year for the fees to have gone up, since, as from next year, the fees are remaining Rs1.4 m. for four or five years?

**Mrs Martin:** There is no special project this year, Mr Chairperson. However, the consultancy fees and fees are payable to resource persons who work on sessional basis and the fees have been reduced based on actual trend of expenditure.

**Mr Jugnauth:** I refer the Minister to the item of *Rent*, that is, office space. I am informed that the staff at the CSK Building is working under very stressful and overcrowded environment. In the previous Programme, I did not raise it, but I raise it here. I can see that rent is remaining the same, and in this Programme it is decreasing, in fact. So, do I take it that there will be no improvement in the working conditions of the staff?

**Mrs Martin:** Actually, no, Mr Chairperson. In fact, what we are doing is trying to refurbish the existing buildings, and then as regards to the overcrowding of staff for the CSK Building, for example, one building has been identified in the former SILWF Building in Port Louis and soon the officers are going to move there.

As for rent, the rent is for officers located on rented accommodations, especially for women centres. It is the provision which is based on actual rented accommodation, and the decrease in due, in fact, to lower rent than was anticipated.

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** Mr Chairperson, at page 631, under Programme 522: *Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Unit, SS1 - Number of women sensitised/trained for their social, economic and political empowerment*, we have a figure of 54,568 for 2012 Actual. I would like to know how and where these programmes have taken place. I would also like to have a list of the gender sensitive campaigns conducted by her Ministry, a detailed breakdown of expenses incurred in the year 2012, and the sum earmarked to reach the target of 76,000 women.

**The Chairperson:** That is a Parliamentary Question, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines! Too many questions in one! It is very difficult to answer! But try to answer if you can!

**Mrs Martin:** There are quite a lot of answers to provide in there. But, as regards the political training, in fact, the training that we have identified is 400 women in political empowerment. That was our target for 2013 and we have, in fact, gone beyond that target. But, as regards the different types of trainings that have been given, there are a lot of them, amongst which are the interactive sessions under the African Union themes where we regroup more than 1,600 women, training courses for women in women centres where we have trained more than 2,858 women. There are about 18 different schemes and programmes, and the total of this amounts to 67,748, because when you add all the women centres and all the social welfare and community centres, we can reach that figure.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring again to item 22120 – *Fees*. The hon. Minister said that part of those fees had been paid to a consultant for consultancy fees. Can we know from the hon. Minister to which consultant those fees have been paid and for which project?

**Mrs Martin:** Can I have just another question and then I will come back?

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 635, item 26313066 – *National Women Entrepreneur Council*, a sum of Rs9 m. has been earmarked. Can I ask the Minister how many women entrepreneurs have been able to export their products, and to which countries?

**Mrs Martin:** As regards exporting of products, Mr Chairperson, this goes under the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives. But we assist...

(*Interruptions*)

**The Chairperson:** No comment, please! You listen!

**Mrs Martin:** ...women entrepreneurs with regard to setting up and sustaining their businesses, and not exporting their products. The exportation of their products falls under another Ministry.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Chairperson, I refer to page 635, item 22120 – *Fees*, and item 26 – *Grants*. I would like to know how much has been paid to the organisation Gender Links for year 2013, and for what purpose?

Secondly, the same question, at the bottom of the page *S.O.S. Femme*; why is our commitment in real terms decreasing?

(*Interruptions*)

I do not know if the Minister was listening, she seemed to be talking at the same time. I was asking why the contribution to *S.O.S. Femmes* in real terms is decreasing since the level of support remains the same in nominal terms.

**Mrs Martin:** There have been no consultancy fees paid to Gender Links, and as regards *S.O.S. Femmes* ...

(*Interruptions*)

...payment for grant to *S.O.S. Femmes* remains the same because they have not asked for an increase, and furthermore we are given to understand that *S.O.S. Femmes* also benefits from funding from other sources, including CSR.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am back on this page 631 concerning the *number of women sensitised/trained*. According to the figures given, there is an average of 6,500 women trained every month. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is someone in her Ministry who coordinates all the activities, and how many persons are devoted for the coordination of the training of 6,500 women per month?

**Mrs Martin:** As you can see, Mr Chairperson, under this item, these people are sensitised and/or trained. Therefore, part of them is being trained, and most of them are being sensitised. However, this programme is coordinated by the Head of the Gender Unit of my Ministry, and the programmes are being carried out through the different women centres that we have in the social welfare centres and in the community centres as well.

**Mrs Ribot:** Item 22120 on page 635, *Fees*, I repeat the question for the hon. Minister. The hon. Minister herself said that in year 2013, the sum had gone up because part of it went to consultancy fees. I did not mention Gender Links. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the sum that had been paid to consultants, to whom the sum had been paid, and for which purpose.

**Mrs Martin:** Yes, Mr Chairperson, this figure and the names of the consultants are going to be communicated to me, I hope, very soon. However, I was answering to the question of hon. Obeegadoo, who asked whether Gender Links had benefited from any consultancy fees. That is why I was saying no Gender Links has not benefitted. Gender Links works in collaboration with us, we do several programmes, and they are represented on the Gender Based Violence platform. However, we do not pay them for any service.

As regards the consultancy fees which hon. Mrs Ribot was asking, fees were paid to Ms Nalini Burn for the different sectoral gender policies on gender mainstreaming that have been conducted and provided to different Ministries this year, as well to a certain Mr Dabee to the

tune of Rs120,000, Professor Bunwaree who worked on the AU Framework and Mr Koodoruth for training as well.

**The Chairperson:** We have two minutes! Last question for hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines! No long questions, please and not too many in one!

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** At page 635, I would like to come back to the Chrysalide Centre, as raised by hon. Ganoo under item 28211028. I heard the Minister say that she is not aware of the number of women at the Chrysalide Centre. May I remind the hon. Minister that Chrysalide is one of the outcomes of the CSEC study, and as she may be well aware, drugs are really associated with prostitution, and if she will be committed to find out the number of women here and to raise the grants of the Chrysalide Centre?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Chairperson, I am afraid the hon. Member misunderstood me. What I wanted to say is that no matter the number of inmates at Chrysalide, we are willing to help Chrysalide. That is given. In fact, we are helping Chrysalide for a new project that they are doing, and under the special collaborative programme for women and children in distress we are financing Chrysalide for the construction of a new wing. We are supporting in fact Chrysalide, and we always will support women in distress.

**Mr Bérenger:** Replying to a question about the consultants that were retained, the second consultant, I heard the hon. Minister say either a certain Dabee or a certain lady. Can we have the exact name of the consultant concerned?

**Mrs Martin:** I think it is Ms Anjani Dabee. She is a lady.

**Mr Chairperson:** Anyway! Time is up!

*Programme Code 522: Women's Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming (Rs128,620,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

*Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development was called.*

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister to page 632, Programme 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development. Outcome: Improve immediate support services to

children victims of violence and ensure conducive environment for healthy psycho-social and physical development of the child.

Mr Chairperson, when we look at page 626, we are unfortunately announced that 3,500 children victims of abuse, neglect and abandonment as at July 2013, have been provided with protective services in terms of psycho-social aid and so on. When turning to page 639 now, programme 523 in terms of Child Protection, Welfare and Development, item 23 33 63 - *Family Welfare and Protection Officers*, and also two lines down, psychologists, in these two cases, the number of officers provided for, for the three coming years are the same, that is, 42, 42, 42 for the Family Welfare and Protection Officers, and in terms of psychologists 9, 9, 9. I ask the question to the hon. Minister when we know that in the last report of the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman said very clearly: the CDU Officers wear too many hats, they are flooded with too many tasks to respond to child at risks, to investigate into complaints, to offer counselling services, to attend court, to organise reconciliation meetings and so on. About ten tasks are specified.

Now, is the hon. Minister satisfied that the number of these Family Welfare and Protection Officers should stay the same for the next coming three years, when we know that there has been such an increase in child victims? Secondly, in terms of psychologists, the number is still 9. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any child psychologist, *pédopsychiatre*? Can she inform the House whether among these psychologists there is a psychologist who is specialised in child disorders, child illness?

**Mrs Martin:** Many questions in one. However, I am also of the same opinion as hon. Ganoo, and I have been saying it in the House that we need additional officers. I must thank the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for having provided us this year with 24 additional Family Welfare Protection Officers, 12 of which will go to the CDU to be able to strengthen the existing staff.

As regards psychologists, over and above the number that we have, we are also recruiting psychologists under the Service to Mauritius Programme, and some will be recruited also on sessional basis as and when required.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Ribot!

**Mrs Ribot:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am referring to item 22900911.

**The Chairperson:** Which page, please?

**Mrs Ribot:** On page 636, together with item 22900912, the *Running Expenses of the Drop-in-Centre* and the *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*. The Budget for 2014 has gone down. I would like to ask the hon. Minister how is it, since the number of children victims of abuse and street children keeps increasing? And the second part of the question is whether the expenses here include the running expenses of the Drop-in-Centre of Grand River North West and if ever that Drop-in-Centre is going to be operational one day.

**Mrs Martin:** The running expenses of the Drop-in-Centre have been included in there. As for the drop in the sum, in fact, it is due to the provision of the running of shelters that we were supposed to be able to rent. However, when we launched tender procedures, no responsive bidder was obtained. That is one of the reasons why we had to reduce the amount this year.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 636, item 22900912 - *Running Expenses of Shelters for Children*, can the hon. Minister say with respect to the Shelter at Pointe aux Sables, what has been done to solve the problem of overcrowding there and the problem of putting boys and girls together?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, we have identified, and three new shelters are ready for operation, and will be inaugurated and launched in December. So, that will help to, in fact, relieve the Shelter 'La Colombe' somewhat of the number of children that are being accommodated there. The three shelters - one would be in Curepipe, another one in Floreal, and another one in Belle Rose, with different age groups of children and categories, whether they are girls or boys.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Chairperson, I would like to bring the hon. Minister to page 628, Programme 523, priority objectives - improve immediate support provided to children victims of violence. We all know that one of the problems that the CDU meets is the lack of vehicle, and no amount is being earmarked for fuel and oil for 2014, 2015 and so on under item 22020 on page 636. I would like to know if there has been any purchase of vehicles in 2013 and if the Ministry has the intention to acquire new vehicles for 2014.

**Mrs Martin:** This is catered for under Programme 521. However, the officers also benefit from 70% duty-free, and they use their own cars to attend different cases, especially when they go to court.

**Mr Jugnauth:** At page 626, I see that the Ministry recognises the fact there that is an increasing number of children victims of neglect and abandonment. However, in 'Major Constraints', I don't see any specific mention about that. So, may I ask the hon. Minister whether a survey has been carried out to know the number of per street children and, if yes, as at this year how many are there and what is being done to address this problem?

**Mrs Martin:** The answer is no survey has been done, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 636, item 22120012 - *Retainer Fees to Counsel*. May I know from the hon. Minister who is the Counsel concerned here, what were the criteria for his or her recruitment, and whether the fees include court appearance?

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I refer to page 632, second indicator - percentage of child day care centres complying with regulations. The situation described here is truly scandalous. Only 31% of Child Day Care Centres in 2012 complied with regulations. Will the hon. Minister tell us what is being achieved in 2013? Where we stand and how the hon. Minister proposes to double the proportion by 2014, given there is any vehicle attached to the department that we just heard?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, the vehicles are given on request to the unit and service concerned with the inspectorate. We have set up an inspectorate which has enabled us to identify the number of day care centres which are registered and those which are not registered. But, as you know, the Ministry depends on a series of criteria, falling under Regulations 2000, to be able to give the licence for operation. What we have done is we have regrouped those non-compliant day care centres managers, we have spoken to them, and we have identified their lacuna, whatever problem there is, and these are referred to the appropriate service and for follow-up, whether it is for health issues, for fire services, land building or permit that they need to have. Following from that, once all the compliance is done, then we issue the licences. However, the Ministry of Finance also has set up a scheme where we have been able to support the non-compliant DCCs with regard to whether they would need finance to improve their service to be eligible for licence, and I think around 30 of them have been able to be registered, benefiting from this service. What we are going to do as from next year is to strengthen the service,

because we are going to strengthen the Inspectorate with part of the officers that we are going to have - enforcement officers -, and we are also going to urge the different departments to be more severe with regard to the respect of the different allocations of licences. We are also envisaging, if necessary, to amend the Regulations 2000 to strengthen it with regard to making the non-compliants pay a fine.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 636, item 27210 - *Social Assistance Foster Care*, may I ask the hon. Minister the number of children on the foster care and the number of foster parents affiliated to her Ministry?

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, regarding this question of foster care, we are on page 636, item 27210011, and when we go to page 632, the *Service Standard (Indicator) SSI*, we are given number of children under alternative, foster care and mentoring programme. Can the hon. Minister give us the number of children under the different cares and whether the programme of foster care is being supported, since we see the amount allocated remains the same for the four coming years? So, what is the status of this programme?

**Mrs Martin:** The programme is ongoing. At present, we have 60 children who have been placed in 55 foster care families. As you know, screening is necessary to be able to determine, and matching also is necessary to be able to see whether the child can adapt to the foster care family and the family can adapt to that child. With regard to mentoring, it is the same thing. We have, at present, 12 child mentors, issued with mentoring orders, who take charge of 16 child mentees. That's the figure I have as at October 2013. What was the last part of the question from hon. Miss Labelle?

**Mrs Labelle:** Number of children under the different services, because we are given a target of 1,700 for next year. So, how are we going to reach this figure under the different services, and what about the status of the foster care? We are keeping the same amount for the next three years.

**Mrs Martin:** From what I have gathered, under the different programmes with care and shelter, the total is 152 for foster care; the number of children during the reporting period is 4, the number of mentoring programmes, 23 etc., totalling 258, and the cumulative total of all these sums amount to 1,967. However, with regard to the monthly allowance paid to foster care parent, there is Rs1,500 that is paid to each foster care parent, and some of it has not been spent

last year. That is the reason why the sum is remaining the same, because the matching is particularly difficult and sensitive. That is the reason why we are very careful when we give a child to a foster care family. There are lots of criteria that need to be taken into account.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Chairperson, I am referring to item 22020 on page 636. We know very well that one of the problems that the CDU officers have to face is the lack of transport to be able to go to visit families where complaints have been made, and we have been very surprised to hear the hon. Minister say that no vehicle was attached to the CDU, and we even heard that officers took their own car. We would like to confirm that just for clarification. If I move to page 632, *Outcome Indicator, percentage of new cases of children victims of violence provided with immediate support services*, the target for next year 90%. Can I ask the hon. Minister to define 'immediate' for us?

**Mrs Martin:** Do I have to answer immediate, Mr Chairperson? Let me tell you that for vehicles, in fact, it is not true that there is no vehicle attached to the CDU.

**The Chairperson:** No cross-talking, please!

**Mrs Martin:** There is one vehicle which is attached to each of the Family Support Bureaux, and as and when required, the CDU also can avail itself of those services. Second, FWPOs working under CDU benefit from 70% duty free, and in their scheme of duty it is also said that they can also use their cars in lieu of travelling allowance, and they are refunded their fuel to be able to go. Sometimes, they use this when they have to go to court and do other sort of services. As regards 'immediate', what we do is that the CDU strives to attend to a maximum of cases as and when their services are required. However, there are some cases where children go directly to the Police, and if the parents are not available, that is when the CDU intervenes. That is what we call 'not really immediate service' because we don't come in the first instance. However, we always assist children as appropriate, whether they need medical services and whether they need psychological support.

**The Chairperson:** I invite hon. Ganoo for a short question. We are running short of time.

**Mr Ganoo:** I come back to page 636, item 22120012 - *Retainer fees to Counsel*, where Rs600,000 have been provided for next year and the two coming years. I link this question to the

one which has already been asked by my friend, hon. Uteem, about the counsels who have been retained, and also to the Child Protection Act, to the new Children Comprehensive Child legislation. Year in, and year out, Mr Chairperson, we hear about this new legislation which is being drafted. Can we know from the hon. Minister, in view of the urgency of the situation, when this Bill will be finalised and circulated, so that the House might adopt it?

**Mrs Martin:** We are working towards the target of 2014 for the Children's Bill to be presented to this House. As the hon. Member knows, this is meant to be umbrella legislation, harmonising all the existing legislations. This is why we had to take into account all the different stakeholders, to be able to have their views, and then to define whether one is policy, the other one has to be included in the law, discuss within the parameters of the Working Together Committee, discuss also with the CDU officers with regard to their parameters of work, and then submit it to the State Law Office for review, and come back for finalisation before it is presented to Cabinet. This is a process that has taken some time. We have even included Rodrigues in the exercise.

As for the answers required by hon. Uteem and hon. Ganoo on the counsels, they are Maître Jankee and Maître Jeewah.

**The Chairperson:** Time is up!

*Programme Code 523: Child Protection, Welfare and Development (Rs122,830,0000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*At 5.03 p.m the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.33 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

*Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Gender-Based Violence was called.*

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 637, item 22900919 - *Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*. From one of the publications of the Ministry, I noted that there were around 6,490 single mothers. Can the Minister say that the problem of single mothers will be addressed under this item, and if so, what she intends to do for single mothers?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Chairperson, the Special Collaborative Programme is a programme, in fact, designed to support NGOs, community-based organisations and non-state actors in formulating different projects relating to women and children in distress. Whatever projects that are related to those areas are examined under technical committees, and the sum that they require is voted for; up to a maximum of Rs2 m. As for now, no NGO, I am informed, has submitted any project regarding mothers which the hon. Member has mentioned.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Chairperson, I am referring to page 637, item 22900919 - *Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*. Mr Chairperson, on page 626, it is said that 23 projects aimed at empowering and supporting women and children in distress are funded under the Special Collaborative Programme. Could we have a breakdown of the NGOs that have benefitted from that Programme, together with details about the 23 projects under that Programme?

**Mrs Martin:** Mr Chairperson, for 2013, as indicated, there have been 23 projects. The different fields in which the NGOs and non-State actors operate are varied. In 2013, we have, for example, associations working with disabled children, associations working for empowering women and, among those mothers also, perhaps some single mothers are also included in that project with regard to cultivation of vegetables and flowers, so that they may sell them later on. There are also projects with regard to sensitisation, a list of them which I can, in fact, table for the hon. Member's purview.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 637, item 22900919 - *Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*. May we get from the hon. Minister some details about this particular Programme?

**Mrs Martin:** As indicated, Mr Chairperson, the objective of the Programme is to support women and children in distress. This is with the view to enhancing their livelihoods and integrating them in mainstream development also. The aim of the Programme is, in fact, to give support to NGOs, non-State actors and committee-based organisations that work for the welfare of women and children for a maximum duration of two years, up to a maximum amount under each project of Rs2 m. The Programme was set up in 2009 and is ongoing.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to the same Programme, on page 637, item 22900919 - *Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress*. Can we have from

the hon. Minister an idea of the number of women and children separately taken care of by that Programme in 2013, together with the number of women who have gained employment during 2013?

**Mrs Martin:** As regards the number of women who have gained employment under this Programme, I am not in a position to say, because it depends on the different projects which have been implemented. However, the total number of women for 2013 which has been reached under the Special Collaborative Programme is 1,026, and the number of children is 1,273, totaling a number of 2,299 people in all.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, under this Programme, following what the hon. Minister has just said, can we expect to have a list of NGOs together with the Programme which they have carried out, and the amount disbursed for each Programme?

**Mrs Martin:** I can table that information

**Mrs Labelle:** This is not my question.

*(Interruptions)*

I am on page 632, under *Services to be provided*. Mr Chairperson, when we refer to this Programme in the last's year Budget, there were *Service Standards (Indicators)* which indicated the number of men, women and youth sensitised on gender-based, violence and family issues. There was a figure of 12,000 for the year 2013. I would like to know whether this service had been provided and the reason why we don't find this service in the Budget Estimates of 2014. It appeared in 2013 Estimates and not in the 2014. Can we know whether the target of 2013 has been achieved?

**Mrs Martin:** I think more than 20,000 people have been reached, Mr Chairperson. In fact, we have through our different programmes reached the total of 27,461 persons, as far as I am informed.

**Mr Seeruttun:** On page 637, item 31132 - *Intangible Fixed Assets*, where a sum of some Rs3.8 m. has been provided for in 2013. May we know how much has been spent, what are the software that have been purchased and from which supplier?

**Mrs Martin:** Can I have another question? I will look for the answer and give it back in a moment.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I refer to Service Standards (Indicators) on page 632. There are two plans announced here, *National Action Plan on the Family*, and also a *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. I am bit lost. We spoke earlier of an integrated strategy to be ready by early 2014. There is a Children's Bill that is postponed from year to year, a Child Protection Strategy which is still awaited, and now there is mention of two other plans. So, are these separate plans? When will they be ready, and who is preparing them?

**Mrs Martin:** To reply to hon. Seeruttun, I am informed that as regards the Domestic Violence Information System (DVIS), a response is awaited from the GOC on whether it is agreeable to provide space, the Government online service, on a server at its end to accommodate the system. The technical requirements have already been submitted since 11 November 2013 by the Central Statistics Bureau.

As regards the Integrated Strategy, the long-term vision of the Ministry, as you know, hon. Obeegadoo, starts in 2014 and 10 years onwards. That is why, in fact, the strategy is being submitted in 2014 so that it starts as from there. *The Costed National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* for its part started in 2012 and it is ending in 2015. As at now, 40% of the Action Plan has already been implemented. As for the National Action Plan on the Family, the timeframe is from 2009 to ending 2015.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 637, item 22900 – *Other Goods and Services*, for example for 2014, there are Rs20,700,000, of which for Special Collaborative Programme, Rs17 m. So, there is a difference of Rs3 m. I would like to have a list of what these Rs3 m. relate to.

**Mrs Martin:** The Rs3 m. is to meet the operational costs of different international days which are commemorated by this Ministry, including the International Day against Violence against Women, also to finance different workshops falling under the Family Welfare and Protection Unit of the Ministry regarding gender-based violence.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 637, programme 524. We are voting a total of around Rs43 m. for protection from gender-based violence. I do not see anywhere in this programme any project or any strategy for perpetrators of gender-based violence. Can the Minister say in which line item she is dealing with that problem and whether she has a plan for perpetrators of gender-based violence? Because I think the problem has to be taken at the roots.

**Mrs Martin:** Indeed, Mr Chairperson, we have launched recently the Victim Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy. This policy follows the different actions which are recommended under the *Cumulative percentage implementation of the Costed National Costed Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. The money which is going to be allocated to those services is included in *Other Goods and Services*.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to page 632, Outcome Indicator. The *Cumulative percentage implementation of the Costed National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence* for the year 2012 was 20%, 2013, from what we hear, it was 40%. Can we have an idea from the hon. Minister of the main items which, by now, have been implemented?

**Mrs Martin:** We have concentrated our services under pillars 1 and 2 which, in fact, deal with mass sensitisation, training and empowerment of the different stakeholders in the fight against gender-based violence. The most recent one that has been launched is, in fact, the Victims Empowerment and Abuser Rehabilitation Policy framework (VEARP) which I just mentioned. Before that, there was training of the different people who deal with gender-based violence, including medical staff, the Police and so on. And we also have the different sensitisation campaigns which the Ministry undertakes with regard to the different stakeholders, including the members falling under the National Platform to End Gender-Based Violence, the Zero Tolerance Club, and also the Shared Faith Belief Programme which this Ministry has launched regarding the empowerment of religious leaders to help us in our fight against gender-based violence.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 632, and among the services to be provided, one service which was there last year, that is, sensitisation on gender-based violence and family issues, no longer figures under this programme. May I ask the hon. Minister why and how is she going to provide this service of sensitisation on gender-based violence and family issues? Why is it not under this programme, and how are we going to deal with that?

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, sensitisation is an ongoing programme falling under the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. We have several strategies, including sensitisation using new means of communication, including DVDs that we have created, and we are going to empower people with GBVs also; we will also be training people within the workplace now, and it is an ongoing process. That is why it is not written into the

programme. It was in there, but it still continues because last year we had not finished with our gender-based violence indicators.

**The Chairperson:** Any further questions? Yes, hon. Obeegadoo!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** On page 637, I want to ask about the Family Protection Service Units. One of the major problems, as the Minister will be aware, is that very often distressed women, women victims of violence will go to these offices, but there are no adequate staffs because the staffs are performing site visits. So, I would like to know whether the budget we are invited to vote for next year will allow for staffing of these offices every day of the week from 9.00 to 4.00.

**Mrs Martin:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, the Ministry of Finance, as I had indicated, has provided to us 24 additional officers, 12 of whom will go to the CDU and 12 of whom will be strengthening the services under the Family Unit. They will also be supporting the existing staff and the number will go from 38 to 50.

As regards the services provided, the services are available. The people come either on appointment or when necessary. In urgency cases, the officers attend to those different cases and assist the different victims.

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to programme 524. We understand that the Protection Officers have to go on site visits, at page 637. Can we know if there are vehicles at their disposal and what sum has been earmarked for fuel and oil of that Unit?

**Mrs Martin:** As I have already indicated, fuel is catered for under 521, and because of streamlining, MOFED did not repeat it through the different programmes.

As regards the vehicles, I have already indicated that the Family Support Bureaux are equipped with one vehicle each.

**The Chairperson:** I can afford to take one last question. Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, at page 627, we see that one of the major constraints is lack of technical expertise in dealing with child, gender-based violence and gender mainstreaming policies and programmes. When we look at the staffing, there is no increase. There are no more technical persons, and we cannot see any capacity building or training for the staff. Can the Minister enlighten us how her Ministry is going to tackle this major constraint?

**Mrs Martin:** I did indicate to hon. Obeegadoo that this year we are going to have 12 more FWPOs, and they are going to strengthen the service.

As regards to the technical expertise mentioned by hon. Mrs Labelle, the officers of the Ministry undergo regular training, and this year 33 officers benefitted from the Capacity Building Programmes organised by the Gender Unit in November and in October, one of the 13 officers of the Family Welfare Unit benefitted on a Capacity Building Programme on Gender-Based Violence. This is ongoing training that we give to our staff throughout the year.

**The Chairperson:** Time is over!

*Programme Code 524: Family Welfare and Protection from Gender-Based Violence (Rs43,385,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 526: Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities was called.*

**Mrs Ribot:** I am referring to page 633 where there is the services to be provided, the number of beneficiaries of welfare and empowerment activities and services etc. I would like to know from the hon. Minister which empowerment activities are carried out in these centres.

**Mrs Martin:** The social welfare centres and the community centres, Mr Chairperson, do a series of sensitisation programmes and empowerment programmes also. They also conduct training sometimes for women or youths who undergo different types of training. For example, for women entrepreneurs, they allow women entrepreneurs to be able to expose their products through what they call '*des foires artisanales*', for children there are creativity activities that are done. We also have advanced embroidery courses, different embroidery techniques that are given to women. There are also several other courses such as labelling, sales and marketing, packaging, public relations etc. which are given in collaboration with the other institutions and different Ministries.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 637, item 26313085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, I see a huge amount of Rs250 m. earmarked for SILWF. Can I ask the hon. Minister why, most of the time, the social welfare centres and the community centres are almost dead; there are no activities after 6.00 p.m.? In view of the new problems cropping up in our society, I would like to know whether the SILWF has a plan or a strategy for revamping these centres.

**Mrs Martin:** It is not really correct to say that the centres are dead, because the centres are used by different Ministries also to be able to implement their different strategies. For example, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life makes regular use of the social welfare and community centres to conduct their activities, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development does the same, and different Ministries do the same. As regards the different...

*(Interruptions)*

After 6.00 p.m. there are activities that are given, for example, *l'école des parents* is conducted in some of those community centres. There are also activities that are done for people, for example, as leisure activities, so that people of the locality can enjoy relaxing time which is leisure as well and included in the strengthening values for family life. And there are discussions also to see in what ways we can use them at their optimum level in the afternoon.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Chairperson, on page 637, item 28211 - *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, where we are being asked to vote, like last year, a sum of Rs11.1 m. I would like to know if the hon. Minister could give us a list of beneficiary social welfare centres, and the corresponding amount of money granted to each of them.

**Mrs Martin:** Yes, I can circulate this.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I want to ask about the indicator on page 633. There are some quite extraordinary figures there. Are these figures cumulative? I don't know whether the hon. Minister is with me; the figure mentioned for 2012 is Rs408,000 and for 2014, Rs542,500. This is what? 40% of our population! So, I want some clarity here. Are these figures cumulative or are we saying that for the one year 2014, the hon. Minister is going to reach 40% of the population and with what? Is it activities just of her Ministry or is she considering all activities of youth and sports, of health, of education carried out in this sentence?

**Mrs Martin:** The hon. Member has explained it quite well, in fact. What we do is that we organise, with the collaboration of different institutions, different activities. It means that one person might be interested in different activities and attend the different activities. We count the number of people who attend the different activities and that is the number which we compute, and that is the reason why this number is so high. In fact, it is very easy to calculate when we have 153 community centres and 57 social welfare centres. At each and every event that we

organise, we might get a minimum of 80 to 100 people, and if we count it even for 20 days, the number can be easily reached.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister to page 637, item 26313085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, and I will go back to page 629 with regard to major services offered at those social welfare centres. It is stated that recreation and leisure activities are held at those centres. For example, let me take the example of the social welfare centre at Cité la Cure and let the hon. Minister give us an indication of what leisure and recreation activities are being held after 6.00 p.m. in that centre.

**Mrs Martin:** I can circulate a list of activities that are being held in that centre, but the hon. Member may rest assured that these activities are going to be reinforced with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is going to make available services to the youths of this constituency and of this community centre.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Page 637, item 26313 - *Grants* going to the *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund* as well as those going to the social welfare centres. I have heard the hon. Minister stating that there are leisure activities carried out for the people of the region. May I ask the hon. Minister whether, during these activities, elected Members of the National Assembly are invited and, if so, why are Opposition Members excluded?

**Mrs Martin:** This question was put to me a few years back, and nothing prevents the hon. Members of the Opposition from attending.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Bhagwan! No cros-talking hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Chairperson, under item 26313085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, an amount of Rs250 m. has been earmarked. It also applies to the community centres. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether within this vote provision has been made for additional costs for stationery, that is, envelopes, papers, invitation cards for the coming year, and that Members of the Opposition in the different constituencies will be invited like it was the case when hon. Mrs Bappoo was responsible for the Ministry? There is a new policy. There is a reduction in costs for the stationery. So, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether for the coming year, the cost of stationery will be increased adding the total costs, for the Members of Opposition, for envelopes and invitation cards?

**Mrs Martin:** The hon. Member may wish to know that no policy has been earmarked, and the policy is unchanged throughout the years. I have not done anything to change the policy.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, again, on page 637, on the same item, 26313085 - *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund*, will the hon. Minister inform the House out of that Rs250 m. that we have been asked to vote for, how much goes for the costs of the personnel and how much is related to activities organised by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund?

**Mrs Martin:** From the information that I have, the grant to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is mainly for salaries and operating costs. I don't have the breakdown yet, but I can tell it later to the hon. Member. If I can have another question!

**The Chairperson:** Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Mr Chairperson, I am back on page 633, the service provided. The hon. Minister has clearly stated that these figures are nearly fake figures; they are not real figures. I don't know whether the hon. Minister can have the figures, because we are talking about beneficiaries of welfare and empowerment activities. Does the hon. Minister have the real figure for empowerment activities, and if she could let us know what type of empowerment activities have been carried out and by whom? Real figures!

**Mrs Martin:** I can give the hon. Member an indication of the type of empowerment activities that are being held. However, I don't have the exact figure for each and every activity that is being held with regard to the empowerment as such. But, regarding empowerment, for example, we are training regularly women under the Home Economics Section. The hon. Member is talking about embroidery with disdain, but she might be interested to know that just yesterday I had a meeting with the Minister Muniyappa from the State of Karnataka, and he was telling us how embroidery is one of the major industries in India and how it is, in fact, gaining ...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Labelle, allow the hon. Minister to answer!

**Mrs Martin:** We are training women ladies into advanced embroidery, whether it be Chinese embroidery, whether it be wali arts, whether it be classical embroidery, so that they will be able to do value added products. We have also set up like selling shops where we are, in fact, encouraging the ladies to expose their products so that they might be sold. This is one of the types of empowerment that we are doing, and it is a yielding result. We are also encouraging

people to be trained in environment protection with the Ministry of Environment. We have worked upon the rainwater harvesting project. We have worked with regard to the *compostage* also, where we have incited the beneficiaries to benefit from the different services that are being done. Those are the types of activities as well as sensitisation programme about sexual reproductive health and HIV/AIDs which are conducted, so that the people might also benefit from being empowered with regard to the different problems and how to deal with them.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Ribot!

(*Interruptions*)

Hon. Bhagwan, no cross-talking!

**Mrs Ribot:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I just wanted to ask the hon. Minister whether any political meeting is held in those centres and if yes, how often, and how many people have attended during 2013.

**Mrs Martin:** I am not aware of any political meeting being held in social welfare or community centres outside election period.

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** Mr Chairperson, I am coming back to the activities held at social welfare centres. I do not understand, I would say, *petits programmes* that are going on in social welfares, a little bit of embroideries. The hon. Minister just said it is doing so in India..

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines, what is your question, please?

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** My question is these programmes do not empower the women in any places in Mauritius. I have been over the social welfares looking at what the women were doing.

**The Chairperson:** Is it the question!

**Mrs Radegonde-Haines:** We are living in a context where the standard of living is rising and I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether she can open the parameters in capacity building in more specific programmes, in organisational programmes, in life skilled management or ICT programme that can really empower women in specific places of the country. There is not only embroidery around the island.

**Mrs Martin:** *Ce n'est pas la peine de monter sur ses grands chevaux.* It's okay. I will explain. The hon. Member doesn't need to be angry. If the hon. Member would care to come one day, I will show her what these women are doing and how proud they are of what they are achieving. I would also inform the hon. Member that I had given an indicative list of the different types of programmes that are provided - maybe the hon. Member said she visited different social welfare and community centres....

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, kindly address the Chair!

**Mrs Martin:** Yes, Mr Chairperson. But the hon. Member did not probably see that in her own constituency they have been equipped under the Net PC Programme, and now ladies are being empowered with regard to ICT and IT literacy programmes, and the computer clubs are working. We are working also with regard to empowering them in different other sectors. Like I said, the hon. Member is welcomed to visit me one day, and I will show her exactly what the beneficiaries are reaping; they will talk to her directly, and she will be convinced.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** At page 629, this relates to a question put earlier on by hon. Mrs Labelle. Among the *Major Services*, I see provision of community service at social welfare centres. I take it this is for sentencing purposes. Will the hon. Minister tell us how many offenders have been referred to social welfare centres in the course of 2013, and what is the nature of activities they are involved in?

**Mrs Martin:** I am informed that, as at October 2013, 26 persons were referred to social welfare centres and 66 to community centres under the provision for community service for minor offences.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister to *Grant to Social Welfare Centres*, page 637, item 26313085. I refer the hon. Minister to provision of temporary refuge to victims of cyclones and other natural disasters. Can I get an indication from the hon. Minister how many such centres are opened to victims of cyclones and other natural disasters? I again take the example of the Cité La Cure Social Welfare and Community Centre which is always closed to the inhabitants of that area whenever they are subject to cyclones or other natural disasters.

**Mrs Martin:** Let me explain to the hon. Member. You know for social welfare centres and community centres, as much as possible, we try to accommodate the refugees within areas that are conducive to welcoming them during periods of cyclonic weather and natural disasters. The Cité La Cure Centre is a very small one, that is why all the refugees are directed to Ste Croix, but we have, at present - to indicate the hon. Member - 44 social welfare centres that are available, including Ste Croix, and 72 community centres that are available to accommodate those refugees. One of the major things that we have done also this year is to allocate funds to be able to improve the conditions of those refugee centres, to accommodate them into better conditions, because we have noticed also that some of those centres have amenities that necessitate renovation.

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 629, Programme 526, *Major Services, capacity-building training, skills development programmes and training in income-generating activities for different age groups.* Can the hon. Minister inform the House, the population, the nation, the youth and women of Mauritius, in their programme, whether the competent consultants have been appointed to train women, so that in their future life, in their activities, not to cross the floor...

*(Interruptions)*

Under the main topic, for the future generation, if the hon. Minister can provide...

*(Interruptions)*

...civic education as one of the main topics; whether this has been recommended as one of the main topics?

**The Chairperson:** I disallow this question, and time is up!

*Programme Code 526: Social Welfare and Community-Based Activities (Rs293,490,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms*

*Programme Code 301: Civil Service Policy and Management was called.*

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Chairperson, on page 648, item 22030 - *Rent*, I have got two questions.

First of all, we see that...

**The Chairperson:** I'll allow the hon. Member one question, to start with.

**Mr Gungah:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. We were informed quite some time back from the Minister that the Ministry would move to another building in July 2012. May we know the reason for the delay, and whether the project has been abandoned, and if not, where matters stand?

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, on page 646, Programme Code 301 - *Civil Service Policy and Management; Outcome: A modern and efficient public service oriented towards excellence*. Can I ask the hon. Minister where is the project of coming with a Civil Service Reforms Act, in order to bring in the necessary reforms in the Civil Service?

**Mr Moutia:** Mr Chairperson, to reply to hon. Gungah, in view of an increasing number of officers at the Ministry of Civil Service, a tender exercise was launched for the renting of an additional office space between 5000 m<sup>2</sup> to 5300 m<sup>2</sup> in the region of Port Louis, within a maximum radius of 1 km from the New Government Centre, with an easy access to the general public in an environment compatible with the needs of the Ministry. Eligible bidders were invited to equally quote for amenities, including partitioning works, data cabling, telephone network facilities, parking and space according to the requirement of the Ministry.

A two-stage approach was carried out. First, expression of interest was invited from prospective bidders who met the above requirement, namely in terms of location, office space and amenities. Bidders were required to submit all relevant details, accompanied with drawings and pictures, as appropriate. No price would be mentioned in the expression of interest. Opening of responses, the closing date of the expression of interest was fixed on 18 April 2013, at 1300 hrs. By that date limit, only two organisations had submitted their responses, namely the Newton Development Ltd and Orland Ltd.

As provided in section 33(1) of the Public Procurement Regulations 2008, the Departmental Tender Committee instructed that the late bid from the third organisation be returned unopened to the senders. It was noted that the one bidder had deposited its response after the stipulated time limit of 1300 hrs. The envelope was received, and the Registry marked 13.10 hrs as time of receipt.

*(Interruptions)*

But I have to give all the details!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, you can circulate the information if the list is too long.

**Mr Moutia:** A two-stage envelope bidding procedure was adopted; bidders were required to submit their technical proposals...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, kindly circulate the information.

**Mr Moutia:** Okay, if you want, I can circulate the information.

**The Chairperson:** You are going to respond to the question set by hon. Ganoo?

**Mr Moutia:** Yes. To respond to the question of hon. Ganoo with regard to the Civil Service Reforms Act, modalities about the reform strategy to be devised by the Public Sector Re-Engineering Bureau is being finalised.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 648, item *21110 - Personal Emoluments*. With regard to officers who work on Saturdays, as announced by the Minister of Finance last year, can the hon. Minister say whether all departments or ministries are working on Saturdays, and if they are, whether the officers are being paid overtime, or given time off?

**Mr Moutia:** The officers have been paid overtime. Unfortunately, as expected by the hon. Minister of Finance, we expected a good number of customers coming on Saturdays. The result was not so good. So, that is why we are revisiting it. We have a few departments, for example, CABs that are going to remain open.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on page 649, item *31 - Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets*, sub-item *31132401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. May I know from the hon. Minister whether tender exercise has been launched for this provision? What is the total contract amount, and when is the project expected to be completed?

**Mr Bhagwan:** On page 648, *Personal Emoluments*, can the Minister inform the House whether all the issues pertaining to the Manraj Report and the PRB report have been settled; whether a *reliquat* has still to be paid to Government employees, and whether all the litigation issues have been settled?

**Mr Moutia:** It is being processed right now, Mr Chairperson. Provision required to meeting the cost of implementation of the Human Resource Management Information System

Project. The estimated project value has now been revised upward to Rs207 m. approximately, from Rs22 m., at the time when the scope and the complexities of the project were not yet defined. The total cost of the project is Rs206,382,034, inclusive of VAT for five different modules: Payroll, HR, self-service, Learning Management and Performance Management modules. The HRMIS will be implemented in October, and the contract has been awarded to SIL.

**Mr Gungah:** At page 648, item 22030 – *Rent*, we find that there is an increase in the Estimates 2014 from Rs18,250,000 compared to that of year 2015 which is Rs24,250,000. May we know the reason?

**Dr. S. Boolell:** Mr Chairperson, at page 648, item 22040 – *Office Equipment and Furniture*, where I note Rs4 m. for this year and Rs3.5 m. for next year. Further down, under item 31133 – *Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings* where a sum of Rs4,500,000 is earmarked for this year and again Rs4,500,000 for the next year. I would like to have some clarification on what type of furniture it is and whether all procedures have been respected in the purchase, and from whom did we purchase.

**Mr Moutia:** To reply to hon. Gungah concerning the rent, rental of buildings, the Ministry is renting some 6,620 square metres of office space at Atom House for a monthly rent of Rs148,650. We have also to pay for the parking slots. There is also rental of facilities for events, for example, for the organisation of workshops in outdoor venues. The increase is marginal and provides for any adjustment in the rate of parking slots or renting facilities, for example, for organisation of workshop in outdoor venues.

To reply to hon. Dr. S. Boolell with regard to office equipment and office furniture, provision is required to meet for the purchase of same. The substantial amount required is mainly due to the proposed moving of this Ministry to a new building. At present, several staff members do not have computer equipment. Furthermore, with the recruitment of additional staff in 2014, the purchase of additional furniture and equipment would be required.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** At page 649, item 22180 – *Overseas Travel*, where an amount of R2.1 m. is earmarked. Can I ask the hon. Minister what amount trickles down for offices, for capacity-building out of this amount.

**Mr Moutia:** An amount of Rs400,000 is for capacity-building. We have the mission, fairs, tickets, etc.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 649, item *31132401 – Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. Since the hon. Minister mentioned that a sum of around Rs2,700,000 is for the project, may we know what amount of this Rs2,700,000 m. represents licence fees and to whom are these licence fees payable, and why has not he used open sources which are freely available?

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, do you want to take some other questions?

**Mr Moutia:** Yes.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Seeruttun!

**Mr Seeruttun:** At page 649, same item, *Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. In the hon. Minister's reply earlier on, he stated that the initial project was estimated at Rs22 m. and now it has gone up to Rs207 m. nearly. May we know who is the Consultant who advised on that project, whether the same Consultant is now advising to upgrade to a bigger project which it was initially?

**Mr Moutia:** To reply to hon. Uteem, the number of Oracle licences to be purchased in respect of each module is as follows. We have HR: Rs52,000; Pay Roll: Rs52,000; Self-service: Rs52,000; Learning: Rs5,000; PMS: Rs52,000. With regard to licence already purchased, payment is in the process of being effected as the contract agreement has been signed on 29 November last. Licence will be purchased in 2015, depending on its status of project. Furthermore, licence will be purchased in 2016 depending on its status of project. To reply to my friend, hon. Seeruttun, no Consultant has been earmarked. The exercise was done by the officers in the Ministry.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 649, item *22180 – Overseas Travel*. The Minister just said that out of the Rs2.1 m. only a sum of Rs400,000 is for capacity building. Can the Minister say how he expects to get an efficient civil service when out of such a huge amount of money, only a sum of Rs400,000 is earmarked for capacity-building?

**Mr Moutia:** This is a new item under this Programme, because in the other Programmes also we have money for capacity-building. Training is also done in the Ministry in-house.

*Programme Code 301: Civil Service Policy and Management (Rs169,166,000) was, on question put agreed to.*

*Programme Code 302: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service was called.*

**Mr Gungah:** On page 649, item 22120008 – *Fees to Consultants (Public Sector Re-engineering Bureau)*. May we know from the hon. Minister who are these Consultants and whether any report has been submitted up to now?

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 642, under *Major Constraints*, we are being informed that a Public Sector Re-engineering Bureau is being set up. A sum of Rs500,000 was voted for last year. May we know, out of this amount, what amount has been used and whether the Re-engineering Bureau is operational right now, and who is heading this Bureau?

**Mr Moutia:** To reply to hon. Gungah concerning the consultant, Mr Chairperson, the consultant will now be recruited, and the Bureau will be set up in 2014.

For the Re-engineering Bureau, it is chaired by the SCE of my Ministry. This is a recommendation from the EOAC from the Manraj Report.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 649, item 22900937 – *Running costs of the Reforms Steering Council*.

**The Chairperson:** Page 649!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Yes, item 22900937 - *Running costs of the Reforms Steering Council*. Can the Minister tell us who chairs the Council and who forms part of the Council?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Would you like to take some other questions meanwhile?

**Mr Moutia:** I have it here. The Public Sector Reform Steering Council is going to be chaired by the SCE of my Ministry.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** On page 649, item 22030 – *Rent*, last year a sum of Rs50,000 was voted and this year the sum of Rs200,000 is being earmarked. It is a substantial increase. I would like to know the reasons thereof.

**Mr Moutia:** Mr Chairperson, for rent, it is the provision required to meet the cost of renting of facilities in the context of the Public Service Excellence Award. The Public Sector's Re-engineering Bureau will also require funding for the renting of facilities in connection with workshops, working sessions to be organised in the context of reform projects.

The reason for the increase is that the newly set up Public Service Re-engineering Bureau will need to organise working sessions with reform cells of other organisations for the implementation of reform projects.

The increase is also due to the fact that participation in the Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) has been made mandatory, and an increase in the participation rate is expected. For 2012, there was 36% of increase in the rate of participation.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Chairperson, I refer the hon. Minister again to page 642, to the Constraints and Challenges for the Civil Service Reforms. The hon. Minister has already answered about the Public Sector Re-engineering Bureau and the Council also. But it is mentioned in the Strategic Note “Inadequate technical resources in the Ministry to effectively drive the Civil Service Reforms Agenda”. This is again mentioned on the next line: “Inadequate resources to enable Strategic Human Resource Planning”.

We see, Mr Chairperson, in the Indicators, at page 646, that the percentage outcome indicator for Programme 302 is “*% increase in delivery units participating in system improvement programmes*”; for 2014 the target is 15% only, for 2016 it is 17%, and for 2023 it is 23%, which is still low. The document is talking about achieving excellence in the delivery of timely...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ganoo, your question, please!

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister how does he propose, therefore, to overcome these inadequate technical resources in his Ministry to effectively implement a Civil Service Reform agenda?

**Mr Moutia:** Mr Chairperson, in fact, the hon. Member is quite right when he says we have inadequate technical resources at the Ministry, and we are recruiting a number of staff next year. Provision has been made for new staff at the Ministry.

**Mr Gungah:** Under item 22120008, the Minister just informed us that the consultants would be selected by next year. May we know from the Rs500,000 that were in the 2013 Estimates how much has been spent and to whom was this paid?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chairperson:** Some other questions? Yes, hon. Mrs Labelle!

**Mrs Labelle:** I am on page 644, and under Programme 302 there is the promotion of good governance through continuous sensitisation of officers on the ‘Code of Ethics for Public Officers’ and values and norms of the Civil Service. We are talking about continuous sensitisation programme. May we know from the hon. Minister how these sensitisation programmes are being carried out, where and by whom, and how many we have had during 2013, if ever this has been done, and how he is planning to go forward with this issue during the coming year? Also, I would like to know where is the fund for this activity under Programme 302, because I cannot find any sum allocated to such an activity. Under which item will this activity be funded?

**Mr Moutia:** To reply to hon. Gungah, provision is required to meet expenses for consultancy services for short assignments and workshops to be organised by the Public Sector Re-engineering Bureau in the context of the reforms.

Concerning the promotion of good governance and ethical behaviour asked by hon. Mrs Labelle, fees for training, provision has been required to meet the expenses as follows –

- we have promotion of an ethical behaviour;
- provision has also been made for counter services and modernisation of projects;
- provision has also been made for training and capacity building, and also
- ISO certification at the Ministries and Departments.

A sum of Rs1 m. has been provided for these items.

**Mr Uteem:** May I take the hon. Minister to page 646, Programme 302, *Outcome: Achieve excellence in the delivery of timely, quality and customer-centric public services in all Ministries/Departments*. This being the objective, may I know from the hon. Minister whether any amount has been set aside in this Budget to set up a Complaints Bureau where people can complain about the level of civil service?

**Mr Moutia:** We have a desk at the Ministry's level on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor since last year.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** On page 649, I come back to item 22900937 – *Running Costs of the Reforms Steering Council*. Can the Minister tell us - because I asked him but he did not reply - who forms part of this Council and what are the terms of reference of this Council?

**Mr Moutia:** Well, to reply to hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, the Reforms Steering Council is chaired by the Senior Executive of my Ministry with the following key officials as Members. We have a representative from the PMO, we have a representative from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, a representative from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, a representative of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, a representative of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, and three representatives of recognised Federation of Trade Unions.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Ganoo, have you got a question?

**Mr Ganoo:** I will come back on the same point just raised by hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee. Does not the hon. Minister think that a member of the Office of the Public Sector Governance should have also been in this Council?

**Mr Moutia:** It has been proposed by the EOAC, in Mr Manraj's Report this year. We can just think about it.

*Programme Code 302: Administrative Reforms in the Civil Service (Rs22,835,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building was called.*

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Gungah!

**Mr Gungah:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Page 650, item 28213008 - *Civil Service College*, may we know from the hon. Minister where we are with this project? Because if we link it with the page 653, Programme Code 303: *Human Resource Development and Capacity Building*, there are no fund positions for the Director, Civil Service College (*New*); the Coordinator, Civil Service College (*New*) and the Trainer (*New*) for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.

**Mr Moutia:** Concerning the Civil Service College, Mr Chairperson, it is already operational since 16 November 2012 and is gradually picking up. The Board of Directors has not been fully set up. We are looking for persons of the right profile to Chair the Council as well as the Head of the College, and we envisage seeking the assistance of international organisation like the COMSEC to assist in identifying candidates for the position. So far, over 100 officers have been trained, and the college is a State-owned enterprise and its personnel will be recruited by the Board of the College. The HRDD has implemented training programmes for various grades actually.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Mr Chairperson, on page 650, item 22120 - *Fees*, there is a substantial increase in the amount earmarked going up to Rs4 m.; in fact, a twofold increase. I would like to know to whom these fees have been paid this year and will be paid next year, and the purpose thereof.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, on page 647, for this programme Human Resource Development and Capacity Building, we see the outcome of this programme is: *technical capacity and skills of public officers enhanced for efficient service delivery*. But, when we look at the percentage of successful transfer of learning, we see for 2012 it was only 55%, and for 2014 it's only 60%. Can the hon. Minister give us some explanation on this?

**Mr Moutia:** In reply to hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, the substantial increase has been doubled from Rs2 m. to Rs4 m. The reason for the increase is that the provision for the fees, from Rs2 m. to Rs4 m., encapsulates the financial commitment towards the universities, tertiary institutions to which the multitude of award courses would be outsourced to cater for 1,100 officers - OME, WPO, CS; these courses will cut across different grades and cadres of the public service as per the recommendation of the PRB/EOAC Reports.

To reply to hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, in fact, the figures should turn around 80% if the percentage were based on the actual number of responses received when the following survey is carried out.

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** On page 650, item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, a sum of Rs265,000 was voted last year, and this year, the sum of Rs1,065,000 is being earmarked. I would like to have details on this item.

**Mr Moutia:** I can circulate the detail, but at the same time, I can give the hon. Member the reason for the increase. The Civil Service College will provide some specific training programmes. Other training programmes will continue to be run by this Ministry, refreshments and lunch are provided to officers following training courses at this Ministry. And if the hon. Member wants a breakdown, I can circulate it.

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Chairperson, under the same item Civil Service College, I remember the hon. Minister in the year 2011 saying that with the training centres available at his Ministry, some 3,000 officers were being trained. Now that the Civil Service College is operating, may we know how many officers have been trained?

**Mr Moutia:** We have, in fact, trained a bit above 3,000. It's around 3,500, and we expect to train more next year.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, coming back to the Civil Service College, I have heard the hon. Minister stating that this college is operational since November 2012, but without a Board of Directors up to now.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether his Ministry has a timeframe to appoint this Board, particularly when he has stated that recruitment will be effected by the Board? So, can he enlighten us about the timeframe to finalise this issue?

**Mr Moutia:** I think, by the end of this year or early next year, it is going to be constituted. I can assure the House.

**Mr Ganoo:** On the same item *Transfers to Non-Financial Public Corporations*, Mr Chairperson, can the hon. Minister tell us how much of the Rs10 m., which were budgeted for this year, have been spent? Although we have just heard that this College was set up in November 2012, was it set up administratively, or does the hon. Minister intend to legislate to set up the law and the Board also?

**Mr Moutia:** If I am not mistaken, we have not used money from this item to run the College, and it is a State-owned company that has been incorporated to run the College.

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** Mr Chairperson, I come back to page 629, item 28213008 - *Civil Service College*. The hon. Minister just said that training is ongoing, thousands of officers have

been trained, but still I see that this line item is still under *r.i.e.* So, is that the importance that Government is giving to the Civil Service College, so that this item is still under *r.i.e*?

**Mr Moutia:** Actually, the training is going inhouse. At the Fook House, we have the training centre. Hon. Gungah knows. We have the training centre at the Fook House, and the training is done inhouse actually.

**Mr Chairperson:** Mr Chairperson, on the same item, Civil Service College, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that no funds have been disbursed to that College. Is it intended that the College will, once it is operational, charge fees to the Government to provide the training?

**Mr Moutia:** No, in fact the money is here for the College itself. Last financial year we had Rs10 m., and for the coming financial year we have earmarked Rs 5m. No fee is charged because the College is meant for civil servants. So, no fee is charged to anybody.

**Mr Gungah:** Mr Chairperson, concerning the Civil Service College, a Bill was supposed to be presented in the National Assembly before mid 2013. May we know the status?

**Mr Moutia:** Just as I said, we prefer to have a State-owned company to run the College.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister indicate to the House whether the Board of Directors will be civil servants?

**Mr Moutia:** Not exactly civil servants, because we are looking for the Chairman, we are looking for the Director, but not civil servants. It does not mean that they should be civil servants.

*Programme Code 303: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building (Rs23,399,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 304: Human Resource Management was called.*

**Mr Gungah:** On page 651, item 2290093 - *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*. We see that there is a reduction in the Estimates for the year 2013; it reduces, up to 2016, to Rs15 m. May we know the reason why this reduction? Whether it means that that work environment of all Departments and Ministries have been ameliorated...

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Gungah which page are you referring to?

**Mr Gungah:** Page 651.

**The Chairperson:** It is Programme 305. We are still dealing with programme 304. Hon. Hanoomanjee!

**Mrs Hanoomanjee:** I am on page 647, for this programme Human Resource Management. I recall – it was last year or this year – the hon. Minister came to this House with a Bill to expedite matters for schemes of service, and I find now, on page 647, in *the Outcome Indicator performance*, that still it takes around four months to prescribe a scheme of service. Can the hon. Minister say why it takes so long?

**Mr Moutia:** Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee knows very well it is a very complex issue, and we intend to consolidate the layers of the scheme of service. But it is not so easy. From 2500, we have reduced and come up to about 2000, but less than 2500. Formerly, we used to take six months to come with a scheme of service, and we have reduced it up to four months. We are just consolidating. It is not so easy. It is a very complex issue, and definitely we have to reduce it.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On page 650, item 22120 - *Fees*, can the hon. Minister give us some explanation why the fees have increased by Rs2 m., what is it to be paid for and to whom?

**Mr Moutia:** Yes, the fees for training; provision is required to meet the cost of sponsorship of officers for the Diploma and BSc courses in Human Resource Management and other training in connection with Performance Management Systems (PMS) courses. Diploma and BSc qualifications are required for promotion in the HR Cadre. This Ministry has to provide training facilities according to the PRB report 2013. It is in the PRB report, and we have to provide training to these officers. These fees are meant for training.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on page 650, the very last line, *Acquisition of IT equipment for Electronic Attendance System*. May I know from the hon. Minister what is the total contract value of this project, and whether this project involves fingerprinting for attendance?

**Mr Moutia:** Well, this is provision required to extend the electronic attendance system project to 66 State Secondary Schools and 29 additional identified sites. If the hon. Member wants additional information, the procurement exercise conducted in 2013 did not materialise in view of non responsive bids. The amount of Rs5 m. could not, therefore, be spent, and a fresh exercise will have to be undertaken in 2014 to cater for the number of machines that would have to be procured with regard to additional sites identified for 2014.

*Programme Code 304: Human Resource Development (Rs305,723,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Programme Code 305: Occupational Safety and Health was called.*

**Mr Ganoo:** I refer the hon. Minister, Mr Chairperson, to page 647, the *Outcome indicators, Compliance rate of safety and Health requirements in the Civil Service*. As we can see in the figures given by the Ministry, number of safety audits carried out in work places for 2012, the figure is 1,100, and the target for the next three years is 1,500, 1,700 and 2,000. Can the hon. Minister firstly tell us who carries out these audits in the work places, and what does 1,100 represent in terms of percentage? Does the hon. Minister have the figure for the total number of work places that he has in mind and, therefore, the figure 1,100 represents what percentage? Mr Chairperson, I come to page 651, item *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*, which is linked to the issue I just raised. In view of the presence of asbestos partitions and ceilings in many offices of the Civil service, can the hon. Minister indicate to the House what action does his Ministry intend to take to, once for all, eliminate all the presence of asbestos in the offices where the civil servants are working?

**Mr Moutia:** Mr Chairperson, in year 2013, 1,100 audits were targeted, and the number of SHOs in post was 16. In May 2013, 10 additional SHOs were recruited, and had to undergo on-the-job training till September 2013, to be able to join their assigned ministries and departments. In spite of the above mentioned constraints, the target of 1,100 audits has been achieved. As from January 2014, next year, these SHOs would be fully fledged to operate at their best of their capacity, together with the existing cohort, to deliver services in the ministries and departments. Thus 1,500 audits have been planned.

Concerning asbestos at New Government Centre and Emmanuel Anquetil building, for the year 2013, eight tonnes of asbestos-containing materials in form of partitioning have been removed from the Registrar General Department, level VI, Emmanuel Anquetil building.

In the month of October, a door made from asbestos-containing materials has been replaced in the basement of the Emmanuel Anquetil building for the Energy Services Division. Preventive maintenance is carried out regularly as regards asbestos-containing materials found in both buildings, and replacement of same is done when needed. During the month of November

2013, it is planned to remove around 12 tonnes of asbestos from the Registrar Building, as the Department is under renovation in view of E-registry project.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Chairperson, I will refer the hon. Minister to page 651, item 22900934 - *Enhancement of Work Environment in the Civil Service*. We see that for the year 2013 we had budgeted Rs30 m., and there is a drastic decrease in the year 2014 to Rs20 m., that is, a decrease of Rs10 m. Can I ask the hon. Minister why that decrease? Since we are talking of enhancement of work environment, we know that Government offices are now housed in many private buildings, and the number of offices is increasing. How is his Ministry going to cope with that decrease of Rs10 m?

**Mr Moutia:** Enhancement of Work Environment Programme: a new approach was adopted for the year 2013 to utilise funds earmarked, that is, Rs30 m. that have been already earmarked. Based on safety audits and risk assessment report, 70 projects were considered, amounting to an estimated cost of Rs14.9 m. 57 projects were recommended by the Enhancement Committee for new projects, amounting to an estimated cost of Rs12.3 m; 26 committed projects, amounting to Rs4 m. As at date, Rs20.2 m. have been released for some 109 projects identified through safety audits, new projects and committed projects, and for fresh warrants issued.

Almost all the ministries and departments have benefited from this programme such as MPI, NDU, Shipping, Agro-Industry, Food Security, Mauritius Police Force, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, Ministry of Health, Business Enterprise and Cooperatives, Local Government and Outer Islands, amongst others.

A new strategy would be adopted to turn around the Enhancement Programme to make it more strategic, flexible and effective as from next year. It is also proposed to create greater awareness on the programmes and projects directly related to safety, and health issues would be funded henceforth.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, page 647, *Outcome Indicator - Compliance rate of Safety and Health requirements in the Civil Service*. We see that only 55% are compliant. So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether non-compliance relates to equipment and furniture, or building? If it relates to equipment and furniture, what remedial action has been taken?

**Mr Moutia:** In 2012, the rate of compliance of ministries and departments of OSHA 2005 was rather 40% due, amongst others, to the scarcity of Health and Safety Officers. Despite several recruitment exercises, this Ministry was unable to recruit adequate number of Safety and Health Officers for 55,000 civil servants. In May 2013, additional Safety and Health Officers were recruited. The services were, however, not immediately available, just as I explained earlier, because they had to be trained. They have undergone the training, and we are now going to make optimum use of those officers, so that next year there won't be any problem concerning health and safety.

*Programme Code 305: Occupational Safety and Health (Rs35,326,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Centralised Operations of Government - Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, on page 656, item 21110012 - *Performance Related Incentive Scheme (PRIS)*, a sum of Rs50 m. is provided for 2014. Can we have more details about this scheme, what are the criteria for awarding the incentives, whether it is all in cash, and is there any committee which is going to determine how the incentives are going to be disbursed?

*(Interruptions)*

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

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Regarding the point raised by hon. Li Kwong Wing, this is a provision, in fact, made for the implementation of a New Civil Service Performance Related Incentive Scheme, in line with the 2013 PRB and Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee Report; Manraj report. The Performance Related Reward and Incentive Scheme would be effective as from 01 January 2014, and would cover all employees in an organisation. I am also informed that the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms and the Public Sector Re-engineering Bureau will work out the guidelines and methodology for the operationalisation of the Scheme, and submit same to the Reforms Steering Council for consideration.

**Mr Jugnauth:** On page 656, item 28217002 – *Compensation arising out of Government Liability*. May we know if there are cases which have been settled with regard to Court and who appeared for Government, and also if he can circulate the list of cases?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have a list of cases - now if a precise question is put on a particular case - but I can circulate the information.

**The Chairperson:** Please do!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On that same issue of *Performance Related Incentive Scheme*, when we talk of incentive scheme, the provision that is made to incentivise public officers or any enterprise, the amount is normally quite substantial. In the case of banks, for example, or public private enterprise, the amount goes to 20% to 30% of salary package in terms of cash, in terms of Share Options Scheme, in terms of Employees' Participation Scheme. Can I know from the Minister whether this Rs50 m. is not just an insignificant figure which is tagged on in this Budget and which, actually, means nothing and is not properly planned for incentivising public officers?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** We are just starting. In fact, there was nothing for 2013. We are starting with Rs50 m. I think we have to start it and then see what it gives.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 656, item 25210008 – *VAT Refund Scheme for Planters, Breeders, Fishermen and other Specific Sectors*. We see that Rs10 m. were provided for in 2013. May we know how much has been disbursed as at to date, and how many other planters and fishermen have benefitted from that scheme?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** With regard to the sum disbursed as at until October 2013, it is more than Rs10 m. In fact, it is Rs18,015,418. I do not have the number of persons who have benefitted. I will have to look for it, and then I will circulate it.

**Mr Uteem:** On page 656, under item 21210002 – *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*. There is a steady increase from Rs25 m. to Rs50 m., and then to Rs90 m and Rs125 m. May I know from the hon. Minister who are the employees concerned by that *Defined Contribution Pension Scheme*?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** In fact, as from 2013, there is a new system. Provision is made for the pension contribution in respect of all these new entrants as from January 2013. Higher provision is made in 2014, because the full amount will have to be contributed in respect of the staff

recruited in 2013, and the provision will also be required for the new entrants in 2014. So, provision represents Government's contribution at a rate of 12% of pensionable emoluments of new entrants. As we know, the workers pay for the 6% and Government contributes to 12%. I think I have given the information. Regarding the number of beneficiaries, it is 123.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** At page 656, item 22120 - *Fees*, we see that an amount of Rs3 m. is being provided, but we know that for each Ministry, there is a provision for fees. So, this residual amount is derived from where? The Rs3 m. is for what? Because, Mr Chairperson, if it is allocated in each Ministry, why do we still have a *reliquat* of Rs3 m. here - just added here as a budget?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is essentially for Committees and Commissions of Enquiries and fees to supporting staff. The actual expenditure up to October 2013 is Rs1.1 m., but it is essentially for Committees and Commissions of Enquiries.

**Mrs Labelle:** I am on page 656, item 26313035 – *Current Grant - Mauritius Ex Services Trust Fund Board*. Out of the Rs60,500,000, may we know how much has been disbursed and the number of beneficiaries that we still have under this scheme?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** In fact, we know, unfortunately, our ex-servicemen keep on leaving us, but this is a fact of life. Therefore, there is a lower provision as the years go by, and then that will fade off when all our ex-servicemen, unfortunately, will leave the world. The number has fallen by 12.7% from December 2012 to October 2013. There were 3,200 in December 2012, and we are left with 2,840 in October 2013.

**Mr Jugnauth:** On page 657, *Sub-Programme 95102*, item 31121801- *Acquisition of Vehicles for Ministers and Senior Civil Servants*. I see for this year Rs70 m. May I know how much has been spent for *Acquisition of Vehicles for Ministers*? And again, I see Rs70 m. for next year, 2014. So, may I know how much is earmarked for *Acquisition of Vehicles for Ministers* for next year?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, it is not only for Ministers. The provision is for replacement of cars, for Ministers, PPSs, Members of Parliament, Judges, Permanent Secretaries, and other Civil Servants who are eligible to a chauffeur-driven car or a self-driven car. It also, of course, includes the purchase of cars for Ministers. The amount is there. *Il est précisé qu'il y a une*

*somme de R 70 millions en 2013 et R 70 millions en 2014. We have spent, I think, up to now, Rs53,154,261. I do not have the breakdown séparément pour les ministres. J'ai la liste.*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 656, item 28217003 – *Refund of Revenue*, where a sum of Rs 20 m. is earmarked. May I ask the hon. Minister what is this refund? Can he give us some details?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is provision required for *Refund of Revenue*, as we said, that is, registration fees, licence fees, work permit fees, overpayment, rental, and land transfer tax and registration duty, interests on car loan which have been collected and accounted for in previous financial years by Ministries and Departments. If you want to get more details, we can circulate the expenditure up till October 2013.

**Mr Seeruttun:** On page 657, under item 32145 – *Loans to Non-Financial Public Corporation, 32145513 Airport of Mauritius Co. Ltd.* I find that a sum of Rs175 m. has been granted as loan in 2013. May we know for what purpose that loan has been granted, what are its terms and conditions and the repayment period?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I do not have the details, but I will look for the information and circulate. But for 2014, there is no budget allocated.

**Mr Uteem:** I am on page 657, item 26210105 – *Contribution to Permanent Court of Arbitration.* There was an amount of Rs8 m. voted last year and another amount of Rs8 m. earmarked for this year. May I know from the hon. Minister, being given that we are spending so much money on the Permanent Court of Arbitration, how many cases have been heard by the Permanent Court of Arbitration to date for Mauritius?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I do not have this information on the particular number of cases, but, be assured, I will look into it and let the hon. Member know.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On the item 26 – *Grants...*

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Grants?

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Grants, contribution...

**The Chairperson:** On which page is it hon. Li Kwong Wing?

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** On page 657, under item 26 – *Grants*, we have item 26210 *Contributions to International Organisations*, and the biggest contribution goes to *Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC)* at item 26210034, a contribution of Rs9.5 m. every year. May I know from the hon. Minister whether it is a contribution for the current expenditure to pay their salaries and fees? Why is this the highest figure for all the organisations for which we are contributing, and also what do we get in return?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I need to get the information to be able to enlighten the House. If I do not get it now, I will circulate.

**Mr Lesjongard:** On page 656, item 28217005 – *Refund of taxes icw projects/schemes financed by development partners and under special social programme*, can we have an indication from the hon. Minister which projects we are talking about and what are those schemes?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** As regards the refund of taxes, we have, first of all, the refund of taxes in connection with project schemes financed by development partners and under special social schemes, Tax refund scheme on export of PET bottles. Then we have the VAT Refund Scheme in connection with residential units. This is a project that has been announced, as we know, in the Budget for people of middle income salary not exceeding Rs50,000 per month.

**Mr Jugnauth:** On page 657, item 28216013 – *AFRITAC South*, it is the organisation that is conducting training now in Mauritius. May I know if we are getting any financial contribution from international organisation and, if yes, how much, and whether it is included in the Rs8 m. that have been earmarked for next year?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The annual contribution is USD250,000. The operation cost of the centre is meant by a contribution from Member States, and AFRITAC South is an IMF Capacity Building Institution focusing mainly on macroeconomic monetary and fiscal capacity building programmes. It assists mainly central banks and Ministry of Finance of the SADC region, and it is located in the Bank of Mauritius Building. But some more information is being asked for, which I do not have. I will have to give it to the hon. Member at a later stage. I will circulate.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Item 32145513...

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Which page?

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Page 657, *Airport of Mauritius Co. Ltd.* There has been an amount of Rs175 m. which was invested last year. May I know from the hon. Minister what has been the total investment in AML Ltd. so far, and what has been the dividend rate from AML Ltd?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have just replied partly to the question, but I do not have this information. I will have to look for it because it is for what has been going on this year. In any case, for next year, there is no budget earmarked. It is only for this year; *ils ont déjà fait le travail.*

**Mr Seeruttun:** On that same page, item – 32155 - *Shares and Other Equity Purchase*, 32155003 *Airport of Mauritius Co. Ltd.* a sum of Rs175 m. has been earmarked. May we know if it is for the purchase of shares in that company and, if so, how many shares have been purchased, and at what price?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I need notice of this question. I will rather transmit the question to my hon. colleague who will send the information.

**Mrs Labelle:** I am on page 659, sub programme ...

(*Interruptions*)

Are we taking all the sub programmes?

**The Chairperson:** No, we are still dealing with Programme 951!

**Mrs Labelle:** Okay, I am sorry then.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Chairperson, on page 657, the last item 32155105– *African Development Bank (ADB)*, every year, there is an amount of Rs100 m. which is invested in this bank. May we know the total investment of the Government of Mauritius in the African Development Bank, and so far what has been the rate of return for such huge investment?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, this is a Parliamentary Question - the rate of return. I can tell the hon. Member that there has been some investment in shares. Mauritius was allocated 28,222 new shares in the capital stock of the African Development Bank, and out of this, 6%, *c'est-à-dire*, 1,693 shares would be paid up shares of the value of USD25,285,971. This amount had to be paid in eight annual instalments, but Mauritius is paying the amount in seven annual instalments to benefit a discount on accelerated payment. As a result, Mauritius is paying USD3,579,245.

For the rate of return, I do not have this information, but I will look for it and let the hon. Member know.

*Centralised Operations of Government – Programme Code 951: Centrally Managed Expenses of Government (Rs1,505,360,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*Centralised Operations of Government – Programme Code 952: Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Under item 21110010 - *Service to Mauritius Programme (a) Internships for Graduates* Rs25 m., can the Minister give us some details about how many graduates were involved and how were they allocated between the different Ministries?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The provision is required to cater for additional requests of interns under the Service to Mauritius Programme by Ministries and Departments. Provision is made for some additional 85 graduates. Funds from this item are reallocated to programmes of Ministries upon request for additional interns. At the end of October 2013, there are some 323 service to Mauritius graduates who are posted to Ministries and Departments. Out of this number, I must mention that 12 are differently abled. I can give the details by Ministries also if the hon. Member wishes.

The other information that I can give here is that the Service to Mauritius Programme is an internship programme designed for young and bright minds. The main objectives of the programme are, as we know, to attract the best and the brightest young minds, to get work experience in the public service, to enable these young people to contribute their knowledge, to attract resources for a well-defined task, to deal with a shortage of skills.

I don't know whether the hon. Member has asked for these details, the eligibility criteria, but the duration is for a period of six months to a maximum of three years. The allowances paid to these graduates are Rs20,000 per month and post graduates Rs25,000 per month. I said there are some differently-abled people also who have joined the team, and provision has been made. A start of 30 is reserved for candidates with disabilities. We have already 12, I said, but we still have the scope for improvement.

**Mr Jugnauth:** At page 658, under item 22210 - *Reform Study Tour*, may we have some details about what is this Reform Study Tour for next year?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Reform Study Tour is for specialists. Provision is made to cater for expenditure in connection with high-level study tours, including Ministers and Supervising Officers of Ministries with a view to accelerate reforms programmes. Government had decided to finance a maximum of two trips per Ministry for each financial year to enable the high-level specialists at the level of the Ministries, Minister also, accompanied by Supervising Officers to proceed on such tours in countries which are at the forefront of best practice in the area of interest to the Minister.

*(Interruptions)*

Also! The objective of the new incentive is to assist Ministries in adopting innovative solutions which may have been successfully implemented in other countries - in the field of education, we have brilliant examples. I mentioned that in the course of my speech on the Budget - and also to build on the success of a number of countries which have implemented breakthrough policy measures that have triggered constructive transformation in the various sectors of the economy.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 659, item 25110010 - *Bunkering Project Scheme*, Rs125 m. is earmarked for next year. May I know from the hon. Minister what this relates to being given that earlier the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection stated that there is no amount to be spent by STC in connection with the bunkering project?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This has something to do with the liberalisation of the bunkering business, and provision is required to partly subsidise the State Trading Corporation for its shortfall in revenue following, in fact, the liberalisation of the bunkering business. With this liberalisation of the bunkering business, the STC is expecting a shortfall in revenue and the STC presently, we know, relies on surpluses generated through the bunker business to partly meet subsidies on essential commodities such as ration rice, flour, and LPG. The estimated subsidy for 2013 amounted to Rs1.3 billion and accordingly, therefore, provision is being made to compensate the STC for the loss in revenue.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** On page 659, item 28225010 - *Film Incentive Framework*. Last year there was an amount of Rs100 m., this year Rs150 m., and every other year Rs150 m. May we know what is this Film Incentive Framework where we are investing almost half a billion in less than four years and who will be the potential actors in this Film Incentive Framework?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** In fact, Mr Chairperson, this provision is required for the refund of 30% of what we call the Qualified Production Expenditures (QPEs) incurred in Mauritius with respect to the production, shooting of future films, television serials, digital animated films, high-end TV commercials and documentaries. The QPEs include transport, accommodation, manpower, catering, and the hiring of equipment and premises in Mauritius. The QPEs are exclusive of sponsorship or any other financial assistance obtained. The objective of the scheme - a question has been asked - is to attract international film producers and promote the setting-up of a film industry in Mauritius. On one hand, attract the film producers and also on the other hand, promote the setting-up of a film industry in Mauritius. It is being implemented by the BOI with the support of a film framework committee comprising the BOI, the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Arts and Culture, MOFED, that is, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and the Mauritius Film Development Corporation. I have a list of programmes already ongoing, I must say, and there is one film – it's interesting to know - 'Love in Port Louis' which is going to take place next year.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Chairperson, page 659, last item *31113999 - Infrastructure Projects in preparation*, may we know from the hon. Minister what are those projects that are in the pipeline and whether this list can be circulated?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Infrastructure projects in preparation - Rs200 m.; provision made to cater for expenditures in connection with new projects that are at feasibility or preparation stage, funds will be disbursed on this item to Ministries and Departments on a first come, first serve basis. There are various projects that have been approved by the Project Plan Committee or are at a feasibility stage. Additionally, other new projects will be approved by the PPC in the course of 2014, and studies may be required for some of these projects. So, accordingly, a provision of Rs200 m. is being made in respect of these projects in case of speed up in implementation.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Page 658, Sub-Programme 95201, item *21110010 – (c) Re-employment in Government*, I see for this year, at least, there is an estimate of Rs61 m. So, may we have some details about this item?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** For the year 2013, staff of the Tea Board, Tobacco Board and CESS dependent institutions were redeployed in Ministries and Departments. The total number of staff

redeployed was around 130 and provision has been made, therefore, to cater for the re-employment of the employees and maybe other Parastatal Bodies. The amount required is Rs40 m.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, with reference to *Subsidies to Non-Financial Public Corporations*, item 25110010 - *Bunkering Project Scheme*, Rs125 m., can the hon. Minister inform us how was this amount derived, on the basis of how many tons of bunker fuel? And also, this is a subsidy to a public corporation by the reason of liberalising trade for private enterprises. So, is this a current approach of taking money from the kitty like the R1 petroleum levy from the public in order to subsidise private companies?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is a matter of policy, Mr Chairperson.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson, I am on page 658, under item 22130 - *Studies and Surveys*. There was an amount of Rs20 m. for this year, and we see Rs20 m. for the next three years. Can we have some details from the hon. Minister what studies and surveys we are talking about and the amount disbursed for 2013, and to whom this amount was paid for studies and surveys?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Well, actually, up to the end of October 2013, Rs600,000 only out of the earmarked Budget of Rs20 m. have been paid. The provision made is to meet the requests of Ministries and Departments for -

- (i) commissioning of feasibility studies for new capital projects, and
- (ii) payment to expert consultants hired for studying reform issues in sector areas.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. On page 659, item 31113 - *Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets Other Structures*, I see that we are asked to vote Rs75 m. for the creation of market fair in the constituency of the Minister of Finance. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there is any amount earmarked for any market fair to host the hawkers of Port Louis?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I don't think this question arises from this one. The item is very clear here – *Market fair/Citizen Centre at Quatre Bornes. L'honorable Ramano sera content.*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Chairperson, coming back to the item *Film Incentive Framework*, there is an amount of Rs150 m. which is earmarked. If I understand well the hon. Minister, it is meant not only for local production, but also for both productions. Can we have an idea of the percentage of apportionment between the local production and foreign production?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have replied to this question. I think it is about 30%; I have to check again.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Chairperson, on page 659, item 28213009 - *Cleaning programmes*, there is an amount of Rs75 m. earmarked for the cleaning programme in our villages. Does the hon. Minister have a list of those villages that are concerned with this cleaning programme?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is a Budget proposal. I don't have a list of the villages. I think the villages will come up by themselves, but the Budget has been earmarked, and this is a new revolutionary measure, I must say. The villages will come forward with their plans, and then there will be certainly a committee which is going to approve it.

**Mr Seeruttun:** Mr Chairperson, on page 659, item 28222007 - *Grant/Loan Scheme for Small Planters/Workers Participation in the Equity Capital of Sugar Sector Companies*, Rs 75 m. have been provided for in the year 2013. May we know if that amount has been spent and how many shares have been bought by those small planters and workers, and in which sugar sector companies those shares have been bought?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Chairperson, we will have to get the right figures and then circulate. I don't have them with me.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Well, let me ask another question then.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Nil spent!

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jugnauth!

**Mr Jugnauth:** Then, I can come back on this item. This, I believe, is the promise that was made for planters and workers to acquire 35% of shareholding in the sugar sector. As the hon. Minister is saying, none has been spent for this year, and I see that there is no provision for next year and years to come. So, has Government abandoned this measure to allow the planters and the workers to acquire shares?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Government will never abandon the planters. We all know this, especially this Government, but for the time being I have the information that nothing has been spent. But we will have to look into the matter. Maybe the hon. Minister will come with a statement to the House to give more information on exactly what is being done. There is certainly some special programme that is being worked out for them.

**Mr Nagalingum:** On page 659, item 31113999, the last one, *Infrastructure Projects in preparation*, the sum of Rs200 m. is earmarked. Can we have some details as for the project in preparation?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I have already replied to this question.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Jugnauth, you have got another question!

**Mr Jugnauth:** With regard to page 658, I come back again on this internship for graduates. Can the hon. Minister circulate the criteria for the recruitment of the internship?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, no problem. I will circulate that. I was going to give it, but the hon. Member did not mention it at that time.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Chairperson. I am on page 659, item 28225009 - *Support to Child Day Care Centres*. There was an amount of Rs20 m. voted for this year and Rs20 m. for next year. May I ask the hon. Minister about the amount disbursed under this scheme and the number of Day Care Centres which have benefited from it? Maybe, later on, he can circulate the list.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The list can certainly be circulated, but the amount that has been spent till October 2013 is Rs2,901,438.

*(Interruptions)*

Rs2 m. only! This provision is made to provide one-off grant of up to Rs200,000 to existing Child Day Care centres in disadvantaged areas that need to upgrade their standards so that they can be registered. In April 2013, a call for proposals for upgrading works was launched, 68 applications were received. 35 of these centres were in compliance and were approved by a steering committee for disbursement of funds.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson. On page 659, item 25120001 - *Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd – Interest Subsidy on Loan*, there is an amount of Rs 30 m. which was voted last

year and Rs10 m. earmarked for next year. May I know from the hon. Minister how much of the Rs30 m. has been spent, and what happened to the project of converting the Development Bank of Mauritius into a SME bank?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The second one is a question of policy and we cannot enter into the details today, but there is a reform programme which is on for the DBM, and the amount which has been spent till October 2013 is Rs4,842,424. The provision made is less for this year because in 2013 we had Rs30 m., and this year we have Rs10m. The reasons are that the new schemes are now being funded by Government, and DBM is only managing them whereas we know that, in the past, DBM was going and looking for loans and then the differential between the interest paid by DBM and the interest charged to the clients were being taken care of. Now, it is different. Therefore, the new schemes are being funded by Government, and just managed by the DBM. Therefore the weighted average cost of capital has decreased to 5.9% in 2013 compared to around 8% in 2011. This explains the decrease, and there is also the restructuring question that has been put, that is, the restructuring question of DBM which is ongoing.

**The Chairperson:** Time is up!

*Programme Code 952 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs835,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to*

*Programme Code 989: Contingencies and Reserves was called.*

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Minister why is it that the same sum is being provided as last year, Rs1.6 billion? Is this based on any formula or methodology?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** We must be happy that it is the same, at least, in the difficult circumstances. The question was whether there is a formula. I don't think there has been a change in formula, but I am speaking from my knowledge. I will get the information if ever there is one, and I will let the House know.

**The Chairperson:** Hon. Uteem!

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Chairperson, on the same item, may I know from the hon. Minister, for 2013, the amount of contingencies, out of the Rs1.6 billion, that have been spent, and if he can circulate a list of items on which that money was spent?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Yes, I will circulate it. The total amount is Rs1,430,000. For 2013, funds have been reallocated to programmes requiring additional funding. Some of the areas requiring additional funding are grant to local authorities, fees in connection with 2012 Village Council and Municipal elections, grant to Irrigation Authority, Land Drainage Programme, IMF subscription in connection with special drawing rights transactions.

*Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms - Programme Code 989: Contingencies and Reserves (Rs1,600,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

*The Schedule was agreed to.*

*Clauses 1 and 2 were called and agreed to.*

*The title and the enacting clause were agreed to.*

*The Bill was agreed to.*

*On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.*

*At 8.20 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 9.24 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

*Second Reading*

## **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL**

**(No. XXIV of 2013)**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIV of 2013) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me, first of all, explain to the House the reasons behind the introduction of the Local Government (Amendment) Bill into the National Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are aware that a number of electoral petitions were entered before the Supreme Court challenging the election of various Municipal and Village Councillors following the Municipal and Village Council elections of 2012. In one of these

cases, Mr Sookooa and others made an application on 11 December 2012, before the Supreme Court challenging the election of Mr Naradeosing Keenoo, who had been elected under the banner of the “*Groupement Progressiste*” as a Councillor for the Village Council of Petite Rivière, on the ground that Mr Keenoo had been convicted of three (3) drug-related offences and fined in respect of each offence by the District Court of Black River on 28 of December, 2011, and was, therefore, disqualified to be elected as a Village Councillor under section 16(e) of the Local Government Act.

Following deliberations, the Supreme Court ruled that the nomination of Mr Keenoo was tainted with illegality and thus *null* and *void*. The Court further held that Mr Keenoo was, therefore, not entitled to be replaced by another person from his group’s reserve list as provided in the Local Government Act and ordered the Electoral Commissioner “*to hold fresh elections in conformity with the Local Government Act for the replacement of Mr Keenoo*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Section 42 of the Local Government Act 2011 provides for vacancies in the office of Councillors to be filled by the “*first available person on the group’s reserve list in the order of precedence in which his name appears on the list*”. On the other hand, where no remaining person is available in the group’s reserve list, or where the vacancy occurs in the office of a Councillor who is either not a member of a group, or who is a member of a group which did not submit a reserve list, the Minister may appoint any qualified person to fill the vacancy. This provision was more democratic than the provisions of the previous legislation where the Minister would be able to appoint any qualified person to fill a vacancy arising in a Village Council.

The reserve lists also ensure that vacancies in Municipal Councils are also quickly filled, as was the recent case in Quatre Bornes. It is to be noted that prior to this provision, Municipal Councils elected in 2001 and 2005 ended their terms with over 25% of vacancies, the last bye-elections being held in 1993.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at the time of the drafting the Local Government Act 2011, neither myself nor anybody else involved in the drafting of the legislation could have foreseen that the Supreme Court would declare an election null and void, as opposed to simply declaring a seat vacant. In fact, both the two previous legislations, the Local Government Acts of 1989 and 2003,

have no provisions to deal with such a scenario, only for the filling of casual vacancies for seats declared to be vacant.

Now we have a case on hand where a Councillor, though disqualified to be a candidate, was actually elected. And the Supreme Court has delivered a judgment which is possibly a first in local government history in this country.

Therefore, being mindful about the democratic foundation of the Local Government Act, I am coming forward with a few amendments to the Act so that provision is made if such an event occurs again in the future, as well as to comply with the judgment of the Supreme Court in this particular case.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the two amendments being brought to the Act are –

Firstly, section 42 of the Act is being amended so that whenever the Supreme Court declares that someone has been unduly elected, the vacancy thus occurring will be filled by the unreturned candidate who has obtained the highest number of votes. This system will have the advantage of democratically favouring someone who has passed the test of an election to become a Councillor and secondly, though we say that democracy has no price, the system will relieve the nation from the burden of organising a new election. In all other cases, the reserve lists will be used to fill vacancies arising in the office of Councillors.

Secondly, in line with the philosophy and stand of the Supreme Court in the case Sookooa & others v/s Electoral Commissioner & Ors, a transitional provision is being made in the Act for the holding of a Village Council election to fill the vacancy that has occurred. According to the provisions in the Representation of the People Act, the Electoral Commissioner will have between 30-90 days as from the date the writ of election is issued by the President for the holding of the Village Council election.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will be proposing amendments to the Bill at Committee Stage, which have been circulated to hon. Members.

Following the introduction of the Bill last week, and after consultations with the State Law Office and the Electoral Commissioner's Office, these amendments will be more in line with the provisions of the Local Government Act and the Representation of the People Act with regard to the preparation and the organisation required for holding the bye-election.

As I pointed out just now, this is the first time that an election is being held following a judgment of the Supreme Court invalidating a result.

Though by-elections have been held on several occasions for the National Assembly, a bye-election in a local authority is more complicated in view of special provisions contained in the Local Government Act with regard to the registration of groups, reserve lists and gender requirements.

The problem of reserve lists is now covered in subsection 4(3) of the amended Transitional Provisions, while any other matter will be dealt with by the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, as contained in the newly amended subsection 4(2).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Thank you.

**Mr Choonee rose and seconded.**

(9.31 p.m.)

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger):** Mr Speaker, Sir, as we have just heard, it was obvious that these amendments to the Local Government Act of 2011 have become necessary as a result of judgment of the Supreme Court, but also *à la lumière de certaines lacunes constatées dans la loi*, the main Act of 2011.

Let me put on record, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, our fundamental objection to the main Act itself. We are being asked to amend the main Act, but I wish to put on record our fundamental opposition to the main Act itself which, according to us, *représente un recul considérable par rapport à la loi de 2003*. Let me *renouveler l'engagement* that we have taken in the Opposition to replace the Local Government Act of 2011 by an improved 2003 Local Government Act to give maximum powers and means to municipalities and village and district councils.

I wish also to renew *notre engagement non seulement de remplacer la loi de 2011 par une loi encore plus démocratique que celle de 2003, mais* let me renew *notre engagement* to put in the Constitution that new law to be enacted, just as we put into the Constitution the maximum autonomy given to Rodrigues. It is now in the Constitution, and it cannot be just removed by a

simple vote of the House. It is now part of the Constitution, and this we will do in the future, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As far as the amendment itself is concerned, as I said, we are dead against the main Act. These are amendments brought to that main Act that we are dead against, because of a Court judgment and because *certaines lacunes ont été constatées*. Therefore, we do not have much to say, being in Opposition, fundamentally to the main Act itself.

But even if we are dealing with minor amendments to the main Act, still the Minister has managed to make such a mess of things that amendments to the amendment have become required, and have been circulated some time back. I was going to object that I only received the amendments two days ago, but, in fact, it is not the Minister's fault. I understand that there was a *cafouillage* at the level of the administration and that, therefore, what had been put in by the Ministry was circulated about a week late. So, on that, I can't take to task the Minister. But it is not acceptable that on a minor amendment of that sort, still an amendment to the amendment has been necessary and has been circulated.

I did not hear the hon. Minister make reference to it; Committee Stage is Committee Stage, but now it is debate stage. And the amendment to the amendment says, Mr Speaker, Sir, that –

“Any person whose name appears on any reserve list submitted for the purpose of the Local Government Elections held in 2012 shall not be eligible to stand as candidate for the election under subsection (1).”

That is, that election, as a result of the Supreme Court judgment. *Quelle ironie*, Mr Speaker, Sir! *Quelle ironie!* I find that - I will not say just *ironie*; *infamie*! Because why is there going to be a by-election? Why did the Supreme Court come with that judgment? Because somebody elected on their list, a local name - but the Labour Party led list - lost his seat because he had already been condemned, been found guilty by the Court for an offence linked to drug trafficking. This is the kind of candidate whom they had put in the last municipal elections!

*(Interruptions)*

Village council! Probably in general elections also, Mr Speaker, Sir!

*(Interruptions)*

So, what I call *une infamie* is that this amendment becomes necessary because one of their candidates to village council elections has been found guilty of an offence linked to drug trafficking. And who pays for that? Somebody who has agreed to have his name submitted on the reserve list on the occasion of the last elections! *Quelle infamie!* Those who volunteered to be on the reserve list are now prohibited - not drug traffickers - to stand in that election! I call that *une infamie*, Mr Speaker, Sir!

When they submitted their name to be on the reserve list, nothing said that they could not be a candidate in any election. Nothing said that! So, they submitted their name, and as a result of their submitting their name, supposedly now they are barred from standing as a candidate! I wonder whether this is constitutional! In fact, I think it is not constitutional. When they gave their name to be on the reserve list, there was no question of their losing their constitutional right to be a candidate in any election, including a by-election. Any election! Village council election, in this case! That is why I call that, Mr Speaker, Sir, *une infamie*!

I put the question, unless the Minister is going to bring an amendment to the amendment to the amendment, because it reads –

“Any person whose name appears (...).”

*Au présent!*

‘(...) on any reserve list submitted for the purpose of the Local Government Elections held in 2012 shall not be eligible (...).”

What happens if we want to put as a candidate somebody who was on our reserve list, and that person resigns? So, when the nomination day comes, his name does not appear! Is the Government going to tell us that because his name appeared in the past, he has lost his constitutional right to be a candidate? That is why I talk of *une infamie*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not even sure that it will work! But, if the intention is to ban people who put their name on a reserve list when there was no question of their losing their constitutional right to stand as a candidate, this is totally wrong, and I believe unconstitutional.

Now, I heard the hon. Minister say that this piece of legislation has been presented, barring people supposedly on the reserve list from standing as candidate, if I heard him right, after consultation with the Electoral Commissioner. I put the question whether the Electoral

Commissioner approved that paragraph, as worded. I was going to raise the point differently, Mr Speaker, Sir. As you know, the Constitution provides at section 41 (3), under the title 'Functions of Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Commissioner' -

"Every proposed Bill and every proposed regulation or other instrument having the force of law relating to the registration of electors for the election of members of the Assembly - Legislative Assembly - or to the election of such members shall be referred to the Electoral Supervisory Commission and to the Electoral Commissioner at such time as shall give them sufficient opportunity to make comments thereon before the Bill is introduced in the Assembly (...)."

Granted that we are talking about Members of the Legislative Assembly, *mais l'esprit de la loi aussi compte*. That should apply also to any piece of legislation that amends the law pertaining to the election of Municipal Councillors and Village Councillors. It should. *L'esprit de la loi est là*. I was going to ask whether the Electoral Commission plus the Electoral Commissioner have been provided with this piece of legislation at such time as shall give them sufficient opportunity to make comments thereon. From what the hon. Minister has just said - this what he said: 'the Commissioner has been consulted.' When? We don't know. What has been his reaction? We don't know. But the Commission has not been consulted. We would like to know whether the Commission also has been consulted because after all, the Commissioner, with due respect, is the Executive Arm of the Commission, as we all know. So, as I said, I know that the law applies to Members of the Legislative Assembly, *mais l'esprit de la loi* should apply also to elections of Municipal Councillors.

Now the question which I put is: being given that the hon. Minister says that the Electoral Commissioner has been consulted and supposedly has agreed to the drafting of that paragraph, what does that mean? My question is: is the supposedly Returning Officer going to be provided with the list of people who are on the reserve list? He will keep it in his pocket or on the table, and although the law provides for what disqualifies somebody from being a candidate, crimes, fraud and this and that, now we have added a condition. So, I put the question, and the Electoral Commissioner and the Electoral Commission would react if they feel fit. Does that mean that the Returning Officer will have an additional reason for disqualifying somebody? Is the Returning Officer going to be told there is a list of people on the reserve list, if he finds

somebody who comes and qualifies fully to stand as a candidate, but is on that list, he refuses his candidature? Has the Electoral Commissioner agreed to that? I have every respect for the Electoral Commissioner and, in fact, for years my fear has been that we'll lose him - he is so good that we will lose him to the Commonwealth or some other international body.

So, I put the question: is it so that the Electoral Commissioner has agreed to what I have just said? That we have added a disqualifying clause; somebody perfectly entitled to stand as a candidate before, because he is on the reserve list, he will be disqualified by that Returning Officer with the possibility of that going to the Supreme Court? I mean, we should be more serious when we are dealing with the Electoral Commission, with the Electoral Commissioner, with the qualifications for somebody to stand as a candidate, because to me, standing as a candidate in Village Council Elections is as important as standing for the Legislative Council. We should pay due respect to the Commission, to the Electoral Commissioner, but also to these individual Mauritians who are qualified constitutionally and legally to stand as candidates. We, supposedly, are going to be disqualified by adding this little clause in the amendments to the amendments that are being proposed today, Mr Speaker, Sir.

So, I don't think the hon. Minister, his Advisers, will have time to reflect on what I have just said, but I find this repugnant. I believe that this clause that has been added, this amendment to the amendment, is repugnant. *C'est une infamie*, and we are going to vote against that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(9.46 p.m.)

**The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General (Mr S. Faugoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Local Government Bill came before this House, it was back in 2011. It was lengthily and extensively canvassed, debated on all aspects of the Bill, including the pertinent issues which had a profound, or which, at least, purported to have profound substantive, proactive changes in order to modernise the law governing local government in general.

In fact, the Opposition, the other side of the House, were against the Bill. Today, we hear it from the hon. Leader of the Opposition that he is against the law, the Act as it is today. But, let me remind hon. Members present today in this House that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he took the floor during the debates on the Local Government Bill, had said there are

certain things that were very serious and grave; not on one occasion, at least 20 times - serious and grave, illegal, unprecedented, unconstitutional, that we were in contempt of the Office of the President, we should stop where we were with the particular Bill, have a fresh look and come back to the House. He said, at the end of his speech, that he will go to the Supreme Court to challenge the Local Government Act if passed and, if need be, if he is not satisfied with the Supreme Court, he will go to the Privy Council. It is not my invention; we can check it from the Hansard. This is what he said.

Today, he is still in opposition with the law, not physically in Opposition; in opposition with the law, with the Local Government Act. So, where is the case before the Supreme Court or Privy Council? The least we expected. In fact, we have a judgement before us today, a judgement with very high jurisprudential value, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir. A judgement that has shown that the Bill which was passed in Parliament, in this very House, in 2011, is legal. It has gone through a test of legality, I must say, and it has passed the test of legality today, because this was the first case which went to the Supreme Court concerning this particular piece of legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me, to start with, reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition on two pertinent issues which he has raised. He said that when they will come to power - which is not likely; it does not seem to be so - they will put in the Constitution that new law to be enacted. Were they not in power between 2000 and 2005? They came with the Local Government Bill of 2003, and what a mess. If we go through Hansard, the hon. Prime Minister took his time, last time, during the debate, and he enumerated lengthily what happened and what confusion was there between the 1989 Act and 2003 Act, so much so that they were confused, and most of the provisions of 2003 Bill were never proclaimed. So, there were two parallel Acts of Parliament. First time I have seen this, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, they could have enacted, they could have amended that Constitution. They had an absolute majority. They could have done it. That is why we say they always dream when they are in Opposition, but they don't act when they are in Government. This is what they do.

The second point which the hon. Member raised is about the amendment to the amendment. This is parliamentary process. Had it been different that when a Minister comes with a particular Bill and he is not allowed to amend same if in the course of things he sees that

something needs to be changed, that could have been absurd. This is quite normal, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is parliamentary democracy. This is the parliamentary process. On two particular points which the hon. Member has raised, one is pertinent. He said that, according to the amendment that is being brought today, any person whose name appears in the reserve list cannot stand as candidate. This is exactly what we are proposing. This is what exactly we are moving through the amendment we are bringing today: the amendment to the amendment. Why, Mr Speaker, Sir? What motivates us to do this? How can someone who is on the reserve list, where he got the chance to go and serve in a Council or Municipality or whatever, stands as a candidate? If he does not get elected here, he again stands a chance as if he is having a second bite at the cherry. He is not a prisoner of the reserve list, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition saying that in a country where there is rule of law, where there is Constitution, where there is liberty of the citizens, where there is right of the citizens, he is not allowed to withdraw himself from the list? He has got all the rights to withdraw and resign from the list. The party can take him out from the list, and he becomes a citizen like any other citizens and stands as a candidate. I do not see any problem to that.

*(Interruptions)*

Where is the problem? On the day of nomination, if the prospective candidate wants to stand as candidate, if his name does not appear on the list because he has resigned or his party has taken the decision to pull him out of that list, he is not a prisoner, Mr Speaker, Sir. He is not stuck on that list. If he comes out of that list, he is able and must be able to stand as candidate. I don't see any problem. We don't see any problem, and this is the intention of the legislator. This is the intention of Government. We are firm on that. This is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir.

There is another point which has been raised on Constitution. Let me first of all say that there is no law in the Constitution which deals with local government election. There is no law at all. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has referred to section 41 (3).

*(Interruptions)*

May I read, as it is subsection 3 of section 41 of the Constitution. It says –

“Every proposed Bill and every proposed regulation or other instrument having the force of law relating to the registration of electors (...)"

It is very important, these words of essence.

“(...) for the election of Members of the Assembly or to the election of such Members shall be referred (...).”

Members of the Assembly; it has not to do with local government, and there is no *esprit de la loi ici*. If it had something to do with the Assembly, something else to do with the Assembly, not for registration, not for registration of electors, something else to do with National Assembly, then we can import from there. But we cannot import from this particular section something to do with local government election, Mr Speaker, Sir. We cannot, at any rate, if we were to give benefit of doubt to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. But this talks about registration of electors, and the amendment we are bringing is far from registration of electors, Mr Speaker, Sir. Even if we were to extend to that extent and share the argument of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, we cannot! By any stretch of imagination we cannot, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it does not have to do with registration of electors! First, it is out; it cannot be local government. Election is not provided for, and there is no provision in our Constitution to do anything with local government. It is clear.

These were the main points which were raised, As I said, we have a judgment before us, with very high jurisprudential value. We have a judgment before us given by the Supreme Court which has ordered the Electoral Commissioner to hold fresh elections in one particular case. They have ordered, but there is no law as such so that we can execute that order of the Supreme Court, Mr Speaker, Sir. What do we do? Let me briefly explain. The issue, in fact, before this august Assembly, is simple, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Government is moving for an amendment in the Local Government Act to provide for a specific situation where a seat becomes vacant following a declaration of the court when a candidate has been unduly nominated and elected and, therefore, his election and nomination is for all intent and purpose void *ab initio*. We have a choice. We are saying, on this side of the House, we have passed the Local Government Bill; today, it is an Act of Parliament. There was a case which went before the Court, an order given by the Supreme Court of the land. It is the Electoral Commissioner asking Electoral Commission to hold the elections, and there is no provision in the particular Bill. We had a choice, Mr Speaker, Sir. We could have argued. We

could have gone on appeal to quash that order. We could have appealed to Privy Council. In fact, by the way, I must say that we have consulted the Electoral Commissioner.

The Electoral Commissioner, in light of the judgment, has consulted the Attorney General's Office, not once, not twice, but so many times, because we had to find a way out. One of the possibilities was that the Electoral Commissioner appeals against this order to the Privy Council, and I must say that leave has been granted. They had applied to the Supreme Court for leave, and leave has been granted. They could have gone as far as Privy Council to contest, to quash this particular order, but then we have a choice. We had an option. This was the first option, and secondly, we thought that the best would be in the interest of the law, as it is, in the interest of all parties that we bring a very small amendment for this particular case. Just in one case, concerning the Petite Rivière Village Council to hold by-elections. This is why there is a special provision in the amendment Bill to provide for one single by-election in that particular case, to respect the order which has been granted by the Supreme Court, and in all other cases there is a distinction which the Supreme Court has made.

They have said section 42, sub-section (2) of the Local Government Act. They said they could have applied. They can apply to any other circumstances where a seat becomes vacant; any other circumstances, except for one. Which one is it? The one where a person goes for nomination of his candidature, and that nomination is not valid because he was disqualified under section 16 (e). So, if the nomination is not valid, how can the election, if he is elected, be valid? It cannot stand. If the nomination cannot stand, the election of that particular member, of that candidate cannot stand, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is not null and void *ab initio* from the beginning. The process itself is wrong. It is as good as saying that there was no election in that particular case. We are saying, by the amendment that we are bringing, in such circumstances where we say there was no election, then the candidate having scored the highest number of votes comes in to replace that particular person, and in all other circumstances it is going to be according to the list, which is altogether legal.

If we were minded, Mr Speaker, Sir, even in this case - because Parliament is supreme, Parliament is sovereign - we could have gone to the Privy Council and argue that the order has no value, that the order is *ultra vires*; the Local Government Act. We could have easily argued that. But we found a solution for the short term and a solution for the long term also. We stand

by our principles. We stand by our philosophy that, in the case of local government election, there is no space, for so many reasons which have been enumerated, which have been ventilated amply, lengthily during the debate; that it is not required, it is not proper to have by-election at local government level.

There are more than 1,200 councillors. We can find ourselves in a situation where we have to do a by-election every other week, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is this what we want? This is not what we want. So, the system of party list is transparent, democratic. I don't see any problem. Even the proposition that we were making to review the law is transparent and democratic. The person was a candidate for all intents and purposes. He was not returned. But, if ever someone was returned as a candidate and his election was a nullity, it was null and void *ab initio*, then that particular person comes up and he replaces. This is exactly what we were bringing.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very simple amendment that we are bringing. We shouldn't make a mountain out of a molehill. We will wait for the Leader of the Opposition to go to the Supreme Court and the Privy Council, and show us that we were wrong. We were not wrong then, and we are not wrong now, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Thank you.

(10.05 p.m.)

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank Members from both sides of the House for their interventions, which I listened to carefully. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, this is the first time that we have been faced with a situation where, at the local government election, a person has fraudulently stood as candidate, and had his election declared null and void by the Supreme Court, as opposed to simply declaring his seat vacant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the second reading, I made mention that when we were drafting the Local Government Act, nobody could have predicted. And in the law itself, there was no way for me to predict that somebody would act fraudulently. In fact, organising elections, Mr Speaker, Sir, falls under the RPA, and the RPA is not the same as to what we provide in the Local Government Bill.

M. le président, je vais répondre à deux choses que le leader de l'opposition a dites. Il parlait de la loi de 2003. Déjà, je dirai que la loi de 2003, avec tout ce qu'il a mentionné de meilleur dans cette loi, n'avait pas été proclamée *in toto*. Pourquoi ? La raison c'est lui-même qui pourra nous le dire ; je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails. Mais, il se trouve que lorsque je suis arrivé à ce ministère, il y avait deux lois parallèles. Sur quelle loi allions-nous travailler au *Local Government*?

Deuxièmement, il parlait de la démocratie locale, comme si, nous, au gouvernement, avec la loi qu'on a amenée, le *Local Government Bill*, on a bafoué la loi, les conseillers n'ont pas assez de pouvoirs. Mais, j'aime tant rappeler au leader de l'opposition que la loi de 2003 ne donnait absolument pas de pouvoirs aux conseillers, c'était aux officiers. Les *Councils* en général étaient comme des *rubber stamp*. Ils n'avaient aucun droit de décision, alors qu'aujourd'hui, les conseillers ont ce droit fondamental d'agir au conseil, et de prendre des décisions vraiment vitales. Donc, je ne comprends pas l'attitude du leader de l'opposition.

J'ai écouté mon collègue, l'honorable Satish Faugoo, qui a parlé de participation. J'aime autant vous dire que le jour où le *Local Government Bill* a été passé - je me souviens comme aujourd'hui; c'était en décembre de 2011 - ils ont fait un *walk-out*. Donc, il y a une bonne partie des discussions qu'ils ont laissée derrière eux.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the time the Local Government Act 2011 was being prepared, this was a situation unthought-of either by me, or anybody else involved in the drafting of the legislation. The judgment is a first in the annals of local government.

Comment quelqu'un aurait pu prédire - dans le *Local Government Bill* - que quelque chose qui tombe sous le RPA serait avec l'*Electoral Commissioner* ? Même si on avait prédit, je ne pourrais pas mettre cela dans la loi. Ce n'est pas normal, parce que le RPA (*Representation of People Act*) est quelque chose à part.

Not only that, both Local Government Acts of 1989 and 2003 had no provisions to deal with such a situation. If either of those two laws was still in operation, they would have had to be amended just like today.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is now nearly two years since the Local Government Act 2011 was voted in the National Assembly and proclaimed *in toto*.

The provision contained in the Act with regard to the filling of vacancies, through reserve lists, has been used on several occasions since then; in cases of death, resignation, disqualification and even crossing the floor.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence! Order, please! No cross-talking!

**Mr Aimée:** This has brought stability at the level of the different Municipal and Village Councils, where two towns and 30 villages have Councils with only a simple majority, i.e a majority of one.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a person appearing on a reserve list cannot stand for direct election to the Council, and vice versa.

One of the amendments to the Bill, at Committee Stage, will explicitly maintain this provision for this exceptional by-election. Groups that were registered in the December 2012 local government elections and submitted reserve lists at that time will not be required to do so again.

Reserve lists have acted fairly to all sides, and the amendments brought today will only reinforce the democratic principles embodied not only in the Act, but in our political system as a whole.

Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read a second time and committed.*

## COMMITTEE STAGE

*(Mr Speaker in the Chair)*

### THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL

**(No. XXIV of 2013)**

*Clauses 1-3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 4 (Transitional provisions)*

*Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill”.*

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Chairperson, I move for the following amendment –

“(a) in clause 4 –

(i) by deleting subclause (2) and replacing it by the following subclause –

(2) Section 44 of the Representation of the People Act shall apply to an election under subsection (1).

(ii) by deleting subclause (3) and replacing it by the following subclause –

(3) Any person whose name appears on any reserve list submitted for the purposes of the local government elections held in 2012 shall not be eligible to stand as candidate for an election under subsection (1).

(iii) by deleting subclause (4);”

*Amendment agreed to.*

*Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 5 (Commencement)*

*Motion made and question proposed: “that the clause stand part of the Bill”.*

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Chairperson, I move that in clause 5, the figure “23” be deleted and replaced by the figure “28”.

*Amendment agreed to.*

*Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Chairperson, I move that the Schedule be deleted.

*Amendment agreed to.*

*The Bill, as amended, was agreed to.*

*The title and enacting clause were agreed to.*

*On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.*

*Third Reading*

*On motion made and seconded, the Local Government (Amendment) Bill (No. XXIV of 2013) was read the third time and passed.*

(10.12 p.m)

*Second Reading*

**THE SPORTS BILL**

**(NO. XXV OF 2013)**

*Order for second reading read.*

**The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Sports Bill 2013 (Bill No. XXV of 2013) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is privilege and honour for me to present this Bill to the House today.

Mr Speaker Sir, the main object of this Bill is to repeal and re-enact the law relating to sports in Mauritius.

This Bill is a modern and appropriate legislative framework designed to promote better management and organisation of sports in Mauritius, in line with the Olympic Charter.

Our vision, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to create an enabling environment for the advancement of all sports at all levels.

We strongly believe that sport can bring positive change in our society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Bill underpins the ambitious measures announced in the Budget of 2014 which illustrates Government's unwavering commitment to provide the appropriate environment to enable our athletes to attain higher summits and break new records.

The current legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir, contains various flaws which have been undermining the smooth running of the sport sector. We thought the fastest and easiest way was to correct them and proceed with amendments.

But, given the number of amendments to be brought, the State Law Office has advised us to come up with a new Sports Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have reached a crossroad on our legislative journey for sports in Mauritius which started in 1984. Various amendments have been brought to the Sports Act by successive Governments in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively.

Today, sports in Mauritius is at a turning point. The establishment of a new legislative framework in this constantly changing and dynamic sector has become imperative in our pursuit for sports excellence.

We have taken into consideration current trends in the sports sector worldwide as well as flaws in past legislations in drafting the new Sports Act to pave the way for sustainable sports development.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is crucial for us not to lag behind our competitors.

During the elaboration of this Bill we stood guided by the highest standards of ethics and fairness. We adopted an open door policy and a result-oriented approach.

It was not an easy task. We have had to address discrepancies and inaccuracies in the existing legislation that have often led to misinterpretation resulting in unnecessary conflicts.

I wish to point out that each section of the existing legislation has been meticulously examined with the view to fine tuning clauses that created ambiguity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sports Bill is a culmination of wide consultations with all stakeholders, in particular, the Mauritius Olympic Committee, but most importantly the International Olympic Committee. I must add here that discussions sparked hot debates at times.

It was a lengthy process, but I am satisfied that no stone was left unturned in the establishment of the new Sports Bill.

My priority is to shape the sports scene in Mauritius in such a way so as to put it on the track of good governance, transparency and democracy and to further improve our performances and maintain high levels of success. I have brought my personal touch to the new Sports Bill by putting forward my past experience in the sports arena.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now elaborate on the objectives of the Bill.

The Bill –

- (a) abolishes the Regional Sports Coordinating Committee which has never been made functional;
- (b) makes provision to prevent the proliferation of fictitious federations and sports clubs;
- (c) provides for the regulatory framework for the setting up of semi-professional clubs and association of semi-professional clubs;
- (d) provides for the autonomy of National Sports Federations;
- (e) replaces the Mauritius Institute for Drug-Free Sports by a National Commission for Drug-Free Sports with the same objective of promoting participation in sports free from the use of prohibited substances, but with a more simple and flexible mechanism to conduct its activities, and which will lay more emphasis on education and prevention in anti-doping, taking into account the latest developments at international level;
- (f) provides for the setting up of the National Women's Sports Commission which shall, *inter alia*, encourage and promote the practice of sports by women, and in particular, schoolgirls;
- (g) establishes the National Institute of Sports which shall –
  - (i) act as the main centre for the consolidation and development of the sports community through education and training, and for the exchange of information in the field of sports, and
  - (ii) promote and develop capacity building and sports leadership;
- (h) The Bill provides for –
  - (i) the setting up of an arbitration mechanism at the level of National Sports Federations and the Mauritius Olympic Committee;
  - (ii) a Sports Arbitration Tribunal which shall adjudicate on any dispute relating to sports referred to it by any person who feels aggrieved by a decision of the Mauritius Olympic Committee, a National Sports Federation, a Multisport Organisation, a regional sports committee, a

sports club, an association of semi-professional clubs, a licensee, any member, referee, coach or other official of a sports organisation;

The Bill provides for the appointment of an Ombudsperson for Sports to encourage voluntary and amicable settlement of disputes relating to sports. The Bill sets up a Sports Development Council to advise the Minister on all matters relating to the promotion and development of sports at regional and national level. And, the Bill also provides for the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion by all sports organisations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now go into further detail on major proposals provided in the new Sports Bill and to explain the rationale and the guiding philosophy behind each one of them. The first one is that prior recognition of the Ministry should be obtained before registration of clubs and national federations by the Registrar of Associations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is observed that in the past certain sports leaders have capitalised on the weak legislation in place to retain control over the management of federations. It is sad to say that tricks and subterfuges have frequently been used to consolidate power within federations to the detriment of sports. The intention behind this amendment is also to facilitate and assist new clubs and federations to operate in line with the principles of good governance, transparency and democracy as enunciated in the Olympic Charter. We have also to ensure that the federation meets the legal requirements of regionalisation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this provision will go a long way towards fighting against the proliferation of fictitious clubs and federations while at the same time ensuring that only those sports bodies that are exercising a specific, real and on-going activity (again as specified in the Olympic Charter) are allowed to operate at National Federation level. The existing law already makes such provision, Mr Speaker, Sir, but certain federations have used a loophole to get registration from the Registrar of Associations without prior recognition from the Ministry.

The intention in this new legislation is to simply plug a loophole in the law which has ended up with the Supreme Court judgement *qui a tenu le mouvement sportif en haleine pendant plusieurs mois. Il y a eu aussi l'intervention du Comité International Olympique brandissant la feuille de route.* The issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, was precisely about fictitious federations and probably fictitious clubs. In order to prevent the proliferation of fictitious federations and clubs,

my Ministry will henceforth exercise better control by streamlining procedures for recognition purposes.

The second major proposal stipulates that federations can have their own internal rules as vetted by the Ministry. We should keep in mind that many changes in statutes, charters and rules of sports organisations both at national and international levels have taken place during the last decade.

This proposal would ensure that national federations operate on principles in accordance with the Olympic Charter. This is, in fact, the process of giving full autonomy to federations. However, in order to ensure autonomy with responsibility, the internal rules will have to be vetted by the Ministry. Only then can we prevent problems cropping up at federation level. In fact, prevention is better than cure, Mr Speaker, Sir!

The third major proposal stipulates that in case of impossibility for federations to have the prescribed minimum number of clubs per region or the minimum number of regions, the Minister would be empowered to give derogation to operate in a lesser number of regions with a lesser number of clubs. Experience has shown that the regionalisation of sports is a slow process depending on a number of factors such as the popularity of the discipline, facilities available and the level of participation.

Consequently, imposing that sports federations should operate in a given number of regions to ensure the practice of the relevant discipline across the country is not practicable. The actual context of Mauritius does not allow certain specific sports, such as rugby, equestrian and golf to be practised all over the island according to the regionalisation requirements. In line with Government's policy to make regionalisation process more flexible in its application, the Minister would be empowered to grant derogation where warranted.

The fourth major proposal makes provision for aggrieved parties to appeal to the Ombudsperson for Sports for amicable settlement of disputes. It is noted that recurrent disputes within sports federations hamper the smooth running of activities thereby penalising athletes. It is estimated that 80% of disputes can be sorted out through mediation and conciliation by the Ombudsperson for Sports. If we allow all petty issues to go to arbitration, we will create such bottlenecks that the whole system will become dysfunctional.

The new Sports Act will make provision for arbitration at federation level and at Mauritius Olympic Committee level. Furthermore, there will be an independent Sports Arbitration Tribunal at national level chaired by a Magistrate. The main objective of establishing a Sports Arbitration Tribunal with powers of sanction is to avoid unnecessary delay in dealing with such disputes and hence uphold the good image of sports. The existing provision in the current legislation has never been set up. It has therefore been revisited to make it workable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is noted with concern that one of the weaknesses of the present Sports Act is the lack of guidance to enable one and all to comply with the law. Hence, besides various mechanisms included in the new Sports Act, my Ministry has spelt out new guidelines to facilitate communication with and to provide assistance to sports federations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the custodian of the trust which this Assembly has placed in me, I feel duty bound to ensure that available resources are judiciously utilised for the promotion and development of sports. That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, emphasis has been laid on the principles of good governance, transparency and democracy in the management of federations and other sports organisations to ensure that the law is being respected in all fairness.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have also done away with a number of structures and mechanisms that were heavy and not working. For instance, the Regional Sports Coordinating Committee figuring in the existing law was difficult to implement as its structure was administratively heavy and not practicable. Furthermore, too many institutions were involved. So, this Section has been completely removed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sports Bill 2013 contains innovative ideas and traces the way forward. Apart from the major provisions that I have just highlighted, the Bill also provides for the following -

- a mandatory annual championship for all sports;
- all sports organisations should strive to achieve harmonious relationships with public bodies, promote multi-culturalism and social cohesion and comply with the Equal Opportunities Act with regard to non-discrimination on the basis of creed, colour, race or religion;

- reinforcement of accountability for funds put at the disposal of federations and other bodies;
- reinforcement of the autonomy of the Mauritius Olympic Committee, and
- signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with relevant bodies for the management of sports infrastructures.

In order to keep abreast with the world trend in modern sports, particularly in team sports, the appropriate framework will be provided in the new Sports Act for professionalising sports in Mauritius. The starting point, Mr Speaker, Sir, is semi-professional football clubs as announced in the 2014 Budget.

*M. le président, il apparaît souhaitable d'apporter quelques éclaircissements à la Chambre concernant le football semi-professionnel et donner la garantie que loin de basculer dans le communalisme nous allons cultiver le concept de vivre ensemble via le sport. Et le football, en particulier, doit évoluer comme la société.*

*Les clubs semi-professionnels seront appelés à souscrire à un cahier des charges pour pouvoir bénéficier de l'aide du gouvernement. Ce cahier des charges définit les engagements à respecter afin de garantir la paix sociale.*

*Voici un aperçu des différents garde-fous qui seront mis en place -*

- (i) Internal rules of the clubs will have to be vetted by the Ministry.
- (ii) Clubs will have as one of their objectives the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion.
- (iii) They will have to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Sports Act and specially ensure that their activities do not create any ill-feeling towards any section of the community.
- (iv) They will have to comply with the Equal Opportunities Act with regard to non-discrimination on basis of colour, creed, race or religion for admission of their members.
- (v) They will not be allowed to have communal connotation in their appellation
- (vi) The Ministry's funding will serve as a means of control to check any 'dérapage'.

- (vii) Funding from corporate sponsorship will also act as a deterrent to any ‘*dérapage*’, and
- (viii) Regulations may be made to prevent any such ‘*dérapage*’.

Today, the new Sports Act is about creating a step change for better management and organisation of sports. The foundations which have been laid should be used to renew our commitment to pursue our primary objective which remains the continuing promotion and development of sports in Mauritius.

This new sports landscape, Mr Speaker, Sir, is meant to provide a conducive environment for the development of sports in Mauritius. It not only empowers sports organisations, but at the same time establishes responsibilities and accountability with clearly spelt out roles, duties, functions, powers, etc.

It is a well-balanced legal framework which is easier to read and more flexible.

*M. le président, il est un fait indéniable que le sport mauricien a connu ses moments de gloire. Cependant, force est de reconnaître que des failles dans la législation en vigueur et des dysfonctionnements qui perdurent dans le temps entravent, hélas, son développement et viennent perturber la dynamique d'aller de l'avant. La nouvelle loi, M. le président, vise à donner un nouvel essor au sport mauricien afin d'assurer son rayonnement à tous les niveaux.*

Before I conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to express my appreciation to all stakeholders for their invaluable contribution in further strengthening our legislative framework for sports. My special appreciation also goes to the International Olympic Committee, especially Mr Jerome Poivey, Head of the Institutional Relations and Governance Department of the Indian Ocean Olympic Committee who has already expressed his agreement, in principle, to the new legislation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a defining moment for the sports community at large which will greatly benefit from the historical changes brought about in this new legislative framework.

I am convinced that the new Sports Bill will create wide consensus for its implementation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now commend this Bill to the House.

**Mr Von-Mally rose and seconded.**

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(10.33 p.m.)

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger):** M. le président, je vais bien évidemment commencer par ce qui fait le plus polémique en ce moment, depuis que le nouveau *Sports Bill* a été circulé ; je parle de l'intention déclarée de faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps'.

M. le président, nous avons déjà dit notre opposition fondamentale à cette intention déclarée de faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps'. Malgré ce qu'a dit le gouvernement et malgré ce que j'ai entendu le ministre dire aujourd'hui, le danger communal est là.

Aujourd'hui, le ministre a ajouté à ce qui a été dit jusqu'à présent concernant ce sujet. Le ministre a donné la garantie que l'intention de faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps' ne débouchera pas sur un réveil du communalisme. Il nous a donné la garantie que cette résurrection des 'clubs longtemps' se fera dans le cadre du cahier des charges qui évitera tout dérapage - *the words used by the hon. Minister. Our point of view is that*, malgré ce qu'a dit le gouvernement, malgré ce qu'a ajouté aujourd'hui le ministre, le danger communal est là. Et en fait, à part ce que dit le ministre - je ne lui fais pas un procès d'intention - à part ce que dit le gouvernement à ce sujet, malheureusement, certains passéistes, certains rétrogrades souhaitent, en fait, à travers ce qui est proposé, faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps', souhaitent, en fait, réveiller le vieux démon communal.

L'intention déclarée du ministre, du gouvernement, est une chose. Le potentiel du danger est là, et il y a des gens dans ce pays qui vont *jump onto what is being proposed* pour essayer de réveiller le démon communal. *That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am convinced that whatever is provided for*, le sport communal ne passera pas. La quasi unanimité des voix qui se sont élevées depuis la proposition de faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps', la quasi unanimité s'est prononcée contre, surtout du côté des jeunes, et c'est pourquoi, peu importe ce que nous mettrons dans la loi, peu importe l'intention déclarée du gouvernement, je suis convaincu - et évidemment je le souhaite ardemment - que le sport communal ne passera pas, M. le président. Et je dis d'avance un grand bravo avant tout aux jeunes qui feront rempart contre toute tentative de faire revivre le sport communal à Maurice. En tout cas, chacun assumera ses responsabilités devant l'histoire, surtout les faux rassembleurs, M. le président, et c'est bien l'histoire - vous me permettrez de

*travel down memory lane* - de notre pays qui nous interpelle ici, au moment où on nous demande de voter cette loi avec l'intention déclarée de faire revivre les 'clubs longtemps'.

M. le président, de part l'histoire même de notre pays et de son peuplement, nous savons tous c'était une île déserte, sans êtres humains, après que les Hollandais aient quitté le pays, et tous nos ancêtres, tout le monde est venu de l'extérieur. De part notre histoire, de part le peuplement de notre pays, il était inévitable que des communautés se forment, s'expriment, et revendiquent au fil des siècles et des années passées, M. le président. Mais, au-delà de cela, au-delà de ce fait qu'il était inévitable que des communautés se forment, s'expriment et revendiquent, une unité fondamentale du peuple mauricien s'est exprimée, surtout de 1936 à 1959 ; 1959, date des premières élections au suffrage universel.

Je parle du démon communal, M. le président, parce que, malheureusement, de 1959 à 1963, le démon communal s'est emparé de notre pays, et cela, l'histoire l'aura retenu, à cause des agissements de certains politiciens d'alors. Mais quel fut le résultat ? Et quel pourrait être le résultat d'essayer de faire revivre 'les clubs longtemps' ? Le résultat, M. le président, fut l'explosion communale de 1965, quand des communautés s'entretuèrent, au point que le régime colonial d'alors appliqua l'état d'urgence et fit venir des troupes coloniales, des troupes britanniques de l'étranger. Puis ce fut l'explosion communale de début 1968, suivie une fois encore par l'état d'urgence et par la venue des troupes coloniales britanniques, M. le président. C'est à cause de tout cela que l'histoire a déjà retenu que c'est sous la 'protection' des baïonnettes anglaises que notre pays est devenu indépendant le 12 mars 1968.

M. le président, le parti que je dirige, le MMM, prit naissance en 1969, avant tout pour barrer la route au démon communal et pour refaire l'unité du peuple mauricien telle qu'elle avait été réalisée en 1936 par le Parti travailliste d'alors. Après ces explosions communales, M. le président, plus près de nous, il y eut, à cause de l'existence du sport communal, des heurts répétés après les matchs. Dans certaines régions de l'île, quand il y avait un match de football, les gens se terraient chez eux dans la terreur. La liste est longue d'affrontement à caractère communal qui accompagna le développement du sport communal dans ces années-là. Les choses se détériorèrent, à tel point, M. le président, que l'histoire aura retenu que l'île Maurice - je ne me trompe pas ; la CFA, football Africain - n'a même pas pu affronter une équipe étrangère, tellement la situation communale était pourrie. Nous n'avons même pas pu - l'équipe

mauricienne - affronter une équipe étrangère africaine sur notre sol national. Nous avons été nous cacher à l'île de La Réunion. Sans précédent ! Nous avons dû nous cacher à cause de la situation communale à La Réunion. Ça c'est l'île Maurice d'avant hier et hier. Si je parle avec émotion, c'est qu'il faut se rappeler de tout cela.

Il faut faire revivre tout cela dans nos têtes pour que cela ne se produise pas encore dans notre pays, M. le président. Tout cela, nous l'avons vécu. Et cela a débouché sur quoi, M. le président ? Sur 1999 ! Nous sommes passés à deux doigts de la troisième explosion communale dans ce pays. Il y a eu 1965. Il y a eu malheureusement 1968 et 1999. Nous sommes passés près d'une troisième explosion communale, et 1999 c'est derrière la porte, M. le président ! Ceux qui veulent en savoir plus sur ce qui s'est passé en 1999 - parce que je suis sûr que beaucoup de jeunes ne savent même pas -, ceux qui veulent savoir ce qui s'est vraiment passé en 1999, je leur conseille d'aller relire les journaux de l'époque. Il faut se souvenir de cela. Surtout je leur conseille de lire ou de relire, mais de lire le rapport de la commission d'enquête présidée par le juge Matadeen sur les événements de 1999, le contexte dans lequel ces événements eurent lieu en 1999, et qui, avec courage et lucidité, situa les responsabilités de tout un chacun. Cela aussi c'est déjà du domaine de l'histoire. C'est passé dans l'histoire, M. le président.

Ainsi, c'est au nom de l'histoire de notre pays, de ce que nous avons souffert, de ce que nous avons connu dans le passé, c'est au nom de l'histoire de notre pays et de l'unité de notre peuple que nous disons non, aujourd'hui, M. le président, à cette tentative de faire revivre 'les clubs longtemps'. Le danger est là, le risque est beaucoup trop grand. Le passé aussi est là pour nous montrer le chemin de l'avenir, et pour nous montrer les dangers que contient cette intention déclarée de faire revivre 'les clubs longtemps', M. le président.

C'est donc, au nom de l'histoire, la vraie histoire, malheureusement, et au nom de l'unité de notre peuple que nous disons non à cela, M. le président. Permettez-moi de citer ce que l'honorable Premier ministre d'aujourd'hui avait dit en 1999 au moment où était présenté le *Sports Bill* de 1999, M. le président. Je cite le Hansard. L'honorable Premier ministre d'alors et l'honorable Premier ministre d'aujourd'hui. I quote -

"This legislation bears testimony to our unflinching commitment to shake off, once and for all, the communalist mindset in the practice of sports and in supporting sports teams.

For too long, the scourge of communalism in sports has been gnawing at the fabric of our society.”

1999, *l'année de tous les malheurs!* Je continue -

“Regionalisation will create a new feeling of appurtenance. We are convinced that over the years, this feeling would evolve and sustain a new fervour for sports where teams would be supported by Mauritians and not by communities. I have said it on several occasions; we have built a country, we now need to build our nation. For regionalisation of sports, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not only about de-communalising sports, it is also about building our nation.”

This is what the present hon. Prime Minister said in 1999 in the debate on the then 1999 Sports Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir. *C'est pourquoi*, having said what I have said, having travelled down memory lane and come back and look to the future, *je laisse chacun à sa conscience; et l'histoire jugera, M. le président.*

*Quant au reste de la loi, nous sommes contre d'une façon générale. Nous sommes contre une mainmise du ministère et du ministre*, because in many places where it should read ‘Ministry’, it reads ‘Minister’; wrongly. It means the same thing, in fact, but at least, *pour la forme*, leave the Minister alone, put Ministry even if we know that Ministry means Minister. We are against, generally speaking; *nous sommes contre une mainmise du ministère sur le sport en général, en particulier en ce qui concerne l’Ombudsperson for sports*. I will propose an amendment which, if there is *la moindre bonne foi du gouvernement*, they should approve, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I reach Ombudsperson for Sports.

Mr Speaker, Sir, commenting on other aspects of the Bill, apart from the provisons to try and *faire revivre ‘les clubs longtemps’*, we had been told *que le Comité international olympique a donné son feu vert*. The expression used by the Government side; either the hon. Minister himself or civil servants concerned. Today, we heard there have been consultations. I don’t hear the words ‘feu vert’ having been given by le *Comité international olympique*, but we are told that there have been consultations and that - I didn’t catch the exact words – either the regional or the *Comité international olympique* has given its approval in principle to the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir.

But let me make it clear. There is a letter which has been circulated, either officially or unofficially, which I can lay a copy, which has been sent to the different federations and so on. But the letter that has been circulated, signed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, does not say that the International Olympic Committee has given its *feu vert*; its green light. It only says, and I quote -

“The Sports Bill 2013, which has been finalised after extensive consultation - in the singular - with all stakeholders and the CIO - the *Comité olympique international* - has obtained Government’s approval (...)"

The only thing that is on paper is that there have been consultations, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't think, personally, that the *Comité olympique international* has given its *feu vert au texte de loi, dans sa forme, qui est devant cette Assemblée*. I don't think so. I think there are too many aspects in this Bill that are contrary à *l'esprit olympique*. To add to my conviction, if I can say so, I have to listen to what *le président du Comité olympique local* has had to say recently. I am quoting the president of the *Comité olympique mauricien* in ‘Week-End’ of last Sunday, and this is what he says -

« *Nous avons au contraire droit à une loi que je qualiferais de répressive, pour ne pas dire dictatoriale.* »

And more to the point, what does he add, Mr Speaker, Sir? He says -

« *Le ministre n'a respecté ni la feuille de route, ni les recommandations du Comité olympique international sur le Sports Act.* »

So, I can't be *plus royaliste que le roi*.

That is why I think, to clear the air once and for all, let us have copies of the exchange of correspondence on the Sports Bill between the *Comité olympique international* and the Ministry, the Minister – on this issue. There is no use coming to tell me, maybe later on, ‘no le *Comité olympique international* would not agree, and this and that.’ No! There is no harm if we talk of *transparence!* There is absolutely no harm, if there is nothing to hide, of course, in making public the exchange of correspondence on this issue between Mauritius, the Ministry, the Minister, and the *Comité olympique international*, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think this would be in the interest of one and all. We would know exactly what the *Comité olympique international* can

live with, has given its green light to, what it has objected to, what does not pass the test, *le test de l'esprit olympique*, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think that would be in the interest of everybody concerned.

I would like to move on to a very delicate issue; the issue of recognition of sports federations and sports clubs. *Je ne vais pas en parler à la légère*, Mr Speaker, Sir, because there were provisions in the law of 2001. There are now new provisions, and there is also confusion. I am talking about the recognition of sports federations and sports clubs. Under the 2001 legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir, provision was in the law for the Minister to give provisional recognition to sports federations which could, on the basis of that provisional recognition by the Ministry, apply for registration at the Registrar of Associations, and then join this or that sports federation. That was as far as the sports federations were concerned.

As far as sports clubs were concerned, there was no recognition by the Ministry. They had to register with the Registrar of Associations. There was no recognition in the case of sports clubs. They would register with the Registrar of Associations, and then join respective sports committees, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I am particularly interested to know, if anything, what the the *Comité olympique international* has had to say on that matter, because now we are changing the law, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, existing federations will be automatically recognised by the Ministry. As the law stands under clause 48, existing federations will be automatically recognised by the Ministry, but, rightly so, they will have six months to put their rules in compliance with the new law. Six months; they have ample time to do the necessary. They will have automatic recognition if they put their rules in compliance with the new law. I don't have much of a quarrel with that, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, we have changed things, as far as sports clubs are concerned.

Sports federations have recognition. Existing ones, of course, will keep their recognition, but will have to comply within six months. Fair enough! But, in the case of the sports clubs, they do not have recognition. They are already registered with the Registrar of Associations. Now, they will have to seek recognition from the Minister, again under clause 48. I would be very interested to know whether the *Comité olympique international* is aware of that, and what is their comment thereon. If they have in truth given their green light, I can't be *plus olympique que les olympiques, plus royaliste que le roi* ! But I doubt it. I doubt it whether *le Comité*

*olympique international* will give its green light to a provision that, for the first time, sports clubs will have to seek recognition from the Ministry, from the Minister. So, I think that is an important point. There was what was in the law in 2001; there has been experience. If there is need to correct, we correct. But, I would wish to know exactly what *le Comité olympique international* has said on that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On this issue of recognition, I would like to know whether Government, the Minister has really thought through. We are against this issue of semi-professional football clubs. We are against that for the reasons that I have given. But, in fact, they already exist! If we look at the definition of semi-professional club provided under the new law, it is said -

“Semi-professional club means a sports organisation which derives its major part of its income from sponsorship.”

So, this is already in existence, especially as far as football is concerned. There are a number of football clubs which already fit into this definition of semi-professional clubs.

My concern is the following: there is this definition of a semi-professional club, and then there is a proviso. I quote section 11 – Certificate of recognition – subsection (1) (c) (i) –

“All semi-professional clubs which have obtained recognition from the Minister shall form an association (...).”

Is that really the intention? All semi-professional clubs - we not talking only about formal clubs, you can have semi-professional clubs: volleyball or basketball or whatever. Is that what is meant? That all semi-professional clubs - whatever be the sport which is practiced: football, volleyball, basketball or what you have - shall form an association, that is, one association. It cannot be the purpose of Government, but this is what the law says. If there is need to amend, to correct, let us do it, but this cannot work.

We are against the whole idea of semi-professional football clubs with reference to ‘*club longtemps*’, but this cannot work. It cannot work that all semi-professional clubs of whatever sport, which have recognition from the Minister, shall form an association. If there has been bad drafting, if that paragraph does not translate into legislation the intention, it is not too late to amend that part.

The next issue that I will take up, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Tribunal and the Ombudsperson for Sports. Whereas some people, even on our side, might disagree, I am for it; I am for it if we really have an independent Ombudsperson. The Tribunal will be independent. I have no quarrel with the composition and the duties. It will be chaired by a Magistrate of the Intermediate Court designated by the Chief Justice. There will be one person who is experienced in sports designated by the Minister...

*(Interruptions)*

Listen! *Ou pe galouper, ou pas conne saute hurdle !*

And the third one is somebody appointed by the Olympic Committee. That is why I have no quarrel with the Tribunal. Fair enough, it is independent! I go along with that, but not at all as far as the Ombudsperson is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir. It cannot be perceived - and it cannot be, in fact - as independent. The hon. Minister when I listened to him added the words "independent Ombudsperson". He is designated by the Minister. He will be perceived as non-independent.

*(Interruptions)*

He does not even know what I am talking about!

*(Interruptions)*

Listen, at least!

**Mr Speaker:** Address the Chair!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** There is reason. Mr Speaker, Sir, we introduced the first Ombudsperson – apart from the Ombudsman '*le temps longtemps*', if I can say person. We introduced the one and only Ombudsperson for Children, and everybody agreed, on both sides of the House, that the Ombudsperson for Children, to be perceived as really independent, should be appointed by the President of the Republic, after consultation with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister responsible for children's affairs and any other persons as the President considers appropriate. This formula was the one proposed by our good friend from South Africa, Albie Sachs. This is the formula which he proposed, and which we have adopted all over the

place. There can be nothing nicer than that. Somebody, therefore, as Ombudsperson for Children yesterday - and I say it should be the same for sports today - is appointed by the President, after the President has consulted the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister responsible for sport, the National Olympic Committee, and any other persons as the President considers appropriate. Honestly, I cannot see who can be against that, and for what reasons, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Of course, the President does not have *des oreilles à géometrie variable*, but, in fact, he does. In practice, when he listens to the Prime Minister, he tends to have a bigger ear than when he is listening to the Leader of the Opposition. And I am sure, when he will be listening to the Minister concerned - the President is no fool, the President knows who has experience, who is in charge of that - he will listen carefully when he consults the Minister, he will listen carefully to what the Minister has to say, but he will consult also the National Olympic Committee and anybody else. If he feels that he should consult a former Minister of Sports, a former Chairperson of the National Olympic Committee, he will do it. We leave it to the President, as Albie Sachs had recommended.

We are going to propose three amendments. I will get to that later on. I think that any reasonable person will go along with that proposal. Then, it will work, we will have really independent Ombudsman who is perceived as being independent, who will try to mediate, to conciliate, and when he really cannot, then it goes to the Tribunal. I think this filtering is good, because, after all, it is a Magistrate of the Intermediate Court who will preside the Tribunal. The Tribunal cannot sit every day; he has his Court to deal with. Therefore, I think it will be very good for sports in Mauritius if we have a really independent Ombudsperson for Sports, appointed by the President, as I have said, as is the case with the Ombudsperson for Children and a really independent Tribunal as the law already provides. I think it will be very good for sports, in general, in Mauritius.

The last point which I will make, Mr Speaker, Sir, is why did the president of the *Comité olympique mauricien* described the present Bill as –

*“une loi que je qualiferais de répressive pour ne pas dire dictatoriale.”*

I have not used such words. But, the fact is that sports is voluntary; those organising sports, those practising sports, it is voluntary. That is why I am sure under the previous legislation there was

no penalty, there were no offences. There was no penalty, *parce que c'est l'esprit du sport; tout cela est volontaire.*

But, now, indeed, as the Chairperson of the *Comité olympique national* says, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we look at sections 44 and 45, there are not only offences, and the penalty is -

“Any person who commits an offence shall, on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs100,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.”

We are talking about sports. We are talking about people who organise it on a voluntary basis, who take part on a voluntary basis. They should not bend the rules; they should not go against the provision of the Act. Granted! But there should be no prison. We can put fines. If we want to put fines, we can put fines. I do not find it nice when we are talking about it. But not prison!

Therefore, there also we are going to move for an amendment at Committee Stage, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, we are going to move three amendments. One pertaining to the ‘clubs longtemps’. We are going to move for deletion of section 14 subsection 2. That is, section 14 is “Sports Clubs” and subsection 2 is “a national sports club or a semi-professional club” where it makes the difference and prepares the ground for *la renaissance des clubs longtemps*. So, we are going to move for an amendment at Committee Stage to delete that subsection 2 of section 14. We are going to move a second amendment, as I said, as far as the Ombudsperson is concerned. We are going to move that he be appointed by the President of the Republic, after consultation with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister in charge of sports, the National Olympic Committee, and any other person that the President deems fit to consult. Thirdly, we are going to propose an amendment to do away with prison sentences for anybody who goes against the provisions of the Sports Act.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(11.13 p.m.)

**The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I would like to start out immediately by congratulating the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports for the Bill that he has brought to this Assembly.

I must also say that I have listened to both him, the hon. Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition with much interest. I am just now deciding, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether I would like to,

first and foremost, answer the issues raised *en premier lieu* by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, or should I first answer the issues that he raised last. So, I will keep the good part for last, and I will deal with the issues that he has raised last in his speech. One of the issues that I would like to address right away, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the following.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has talked about section 42 of the Bill referring to the Ombudsperson for Sports. He has tried to make a comparison with what is provided for on another piece of statute when we talk here about the Ombudsperson for Children. The functions of the Ombudsperson for Sports, as provided for under this Bill, as opposed to the functions of the Ombudsperson for Children, cannot in any way be compared. It is because it cannot in any way be compared that I beg to differ with the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he attempts a comparison.

The most important element here to say and to underline that it cannot be compared and where we cannot but look at it again is clause 42(4). Clause 42(4) of the Bill talks about this new institution in the person called an Ombudsperson. He will not be there to adjudicate as opposed to a Tribunal. He will not be there to rule upon who is right and who is wrong. Anyone going before the Ombudsperson will not be leaving the Ombudsperson with a finding of you being guilty or not guilty. It is not a question of losing or winning. The purpose of the Ombudsperson for Sports would be only to help the parties before it reached an amicable settlement. That being a fact, as provided for in the Bill, that being of utmost importance in the definition of the role of the Ombudsperson, I am of the humble view that the point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition should, like any reasonable person, this time accept that the amendment that he will be moving for later on is not called for, because of the nature of the Ombudsperson and the role of the Ombudsperson as provided for under clause 42(4) of the Bill.

There is another issue also which I would like to talk about. There it is talking about *clubs d'antan, danger communal*. He talked about the *cahier des charges*, the conditions and the self-regulation by clubs. But, as I said, later on, I would talk about this issue of the many times that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has talked about *danger communal*, the fear that he has expressed. He even himself said he was talking with emotion. I am not here in any way to say that he is not emotionally concerned about this whole matter. But I will deal with this later on because it is a very important issue.

There are six new institutions being created by this Bill. That is why I am of the view that when the hon. Leader of the Opposition talks about *la mainmise du ministre*, I was also quite amused when the hon. Leader of the Opposition advised the hon. Minister here that he should have, at least, at drafting stage, left the word ‘Ministry’ there and not ‘Minister’, because according to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when we leave ‘Ministry’ there, we all know, according to him, that it means ‘Minister’. That is a very interesting insight about how the Opposition rules the country when they are in power, because for them “Ministry” means “Minister”. That is not the case on this side of the House!

*(Interruptions)*

As far as the six new institutions are concerned, I fail to understand how is there a *mainmise* of the Minister when he is creating six new institutions! And, he has also said that there are too many aspects of the Bill that are contrary to the Olympic Charter. I have tried to listen very carefully to what exactly are those aspects of the Bill that are contrary to the Olympic Charter. At no time has the hon. Leader of the Opposition even mentioned one instance with reference to any specific part of the Olympic Charter that I have gone through. Never has he referred to which particular clause of the Bill or which particular section of the Olympic Charter is there a conflict! So, it is well and easy, Mr Speaker, Sir, to come here, in an Assembly, for the purposes of posterity and the record, the Hansard, and say that this Bill goes against the very fundamental provisions of the Olympic Charter, but not come and substantiate one’s argument! So, I am still here thirsty to learn and find out from the experience of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, because I will have to bow before experience. But that experience, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has, up to now, not mentioned a single instance where there is any such conflict, or where it is contrary to the Olympic Charter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we were listening to the hon. Leader of the Opposition talking about the green light or agreement of the *Comité international olympique*, this reminds me of a judgment which I have come across, which is a Supreme Court Judgment SN 318/13 in the matter of *Fédération Mauricienne de Triathlon & Others* as applicants v/s Mr Chow Yin Voon Ah Shun and Mauritius National Olympic Committee & Others as respondents in the presence of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

When I read the judgement dated 03 April 2013, that judgement delivered by Justice Domah, there is a part of that judgement that I find very interesting. We may not be happy with the name of a Judge, but we must have the utmost respect for judgements of the Supreme Court. There are observations there that really one has to stop and read, and try to understand, because it goes to the very essence of whether we are a sovereign State or not. It goes to the very essence of whether we are going to be subservient without due cause, without any reason to be *Comité international olympique*. And here, I quote -

“True it is that the Olympic charter creates legal obligations on Mauritius, which obligations are incorporated in the Sports Act. However, that does not give a right to the Mauritian National Olympic Committee to override our Constitution and transcend our nation, State, to give higher allegiance to an organisation outside our country without the proper procedure to our system of law, which is a dualist system.”

In other words, when I hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition - not only him -, when I hear Mr Hao Thyn Voon Ha Shun, the President of the Mauritius National Olympic Committee talk about the green light that must be obtained from the International Olympic Committee, it is as though we, as a sovereign State, need the go ahead from the International Olympic Committee for us to come to this august Assembly, of a sovereign State, the Republic of Mauritius, and take that permission of theirs in order to present a Bill within this august Assembly. I do not believe that this is what exactly we believe is an independent sovereign State. And when I heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition take us down memory lane, I must say I was impressed. I was impressed by his ability to tell us, explain to us how history has shaped this nation. But history has not taught us to be subservient to any international organisation, and there is nothing in the Olympic charter that says that we should get their green light.

However, what we should also be doing - according to the Olympic Charter - is to have consultations. I have tried to find out, and I tried to knock at the door of the hon. Minister to find out whether there have been consultations, because I am also concerned, as Minister responsible for the Registrar of Associations, whether the Registrar will register sports clubs or federations, and how we are going about it. I wanted to find out when this Bill was presented to this Assembly, what is the situation. Have there been consultations? And when I went to find out, the answer came. There have been consultations, and those consultations, I have found out, have

been quite in-depth consultations. And there was also not only the issue of consultations. I came across another document dated 10 April 2013 that talks about *la feuille de route du CIO*, *la feuille de route* that talked about the responsibility of the Government in the process. One of the responsibilities precisely being to come up with a piece of statute that talks about the independence being given to federations in a new piece of legislation. And this is precisely what Government has done.

I have found out that those consultations, Mr Speaker, Sir, have gone through every single element that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made reference to. At no time have they objected to any of the proposals made by the hon. Minister and his officers, at no time have they objected against any of the Government's proposals in terms of the document that was transmitted to them. But, then again, being a sovereign State, I think it would be totally acceptable and reasonable for us to say, if anyone believes there is anything contrary in the opinion of the International Olympic Committee with regard to what is being proposed in the statute, that they should come forward with that proof. It is not up to Government to come forward, as though subservient to an international organisation, as though needing their permission to come to here, as though we, in this sovereign State, cannot read the Olympic Charter, as though in this sovereign State, we do not know exactly what is independence and what is not. And we do not, as intelligent people - which we are not according to certain people - the whole country, the whole Republic, we do not have people, men and women who can draft a piece of legislation in line with the Olympic Charter; we need their permission. That is something which I find unacceptable.

What I also find unacceptable, and I will say it - maybe the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports will not say it, but I will say it - is what was in the third paragraph of that letter. They condemned *fermement l'action en justice introduite par une fédération, membre du COM, à propos de la composition même de l'Assemblée générale du COM*. In other words, this is a letter from *le Comité international olympique* dated 10 April 2013, signed by a representative thereof, Père Miro, Directeur, et l'intendant général, Lassana Palento.

Now, when I read that letter, they condemn the fact that a federation in Mauritius had the courage - not courage; *ont eu le toupet, d'après eux*. For them, it is unacceptable that any federation had the right to go and knock at the door of our Supreme Court. This is how the

*Comité international olympique*, maybe not them, but some people within that organisation view a subservient State that should be acting as an adult State - which we shall not bow - to *les dictats*, but we are intelligent enough, as I have explained, to draft our own piece of legislation.

Now, the rest of the paragraph goes on to say -

« *Cette question relève en effet de la stricte compétence de l'Assemblée générale conformément au statut du COM et à la Charte olympique, en demandant à la justice de se substituer, qui plus est par anticipation, au pouvoir décisionnel de l'Assemblée générale qui devait précisément traiter de ce point à l'ordre du jour de l'Assemblée générale. Cette fédération n'a pas respecté le processus statuaire et les organes décisionnels du COM dont elle est membre, et a agi contre les principes et les règles qui régissent le mouvement olympique.»*

And, this is precisely what Justice Domah talked about us being a sovereign State, us having a Constitution, us having a Supreme Court, whereby this type of argument does not hold water.

Now, there is another issue, recognition for clubs. In 2001, the law did not provide for recognition for clubs. That, in fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, did have a consequence. The consequence was that it opened the door for fictitious clubs. And one reads as the objects of the precise Bill is what? It's we have to ensure, as a responsible sovereign State, that there is no registration of fictitious clubs. Because when we have registration of fictitious clubs, we also have registration of fictitious federations. And those very federations - and this is something which I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition would like to know - a lot of them don't even come and try to knock at the door of the hon. Minister or the Ministry of Youth and Sports before coming to the Registrar of Associations.

They go first to the *Comité international olympique* to obtain recognition, and when they get their registration there, here in Mauritius, we are before a *fait accompli*. In other words, we end up having to say 'let us bow to *le dictat* of an international organisation and forget about the necessity to have laws and discipline within the field of sports'. This is something which is being corrected by this Bill. I am also informed that the *Comité international olympique* has no qualms whatsoever with regard to the problems of recognition of clubs.

I have, as I said earlier on, come across many of the arguments raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I have understood how emotional he is about this whole subject of removing racism from sports. *Décommuniser les sports* ! I have no grounds here to come and in anyway say that I do not believe the goodwill and good faith of the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I am sure, when I look at his *parcours*, how the MMM was born, how in 1982, when the MMM came to power, the MMM fought for, one of the first things, decommunalisation of sports. So, there is in the whole point of view of the hon. Leader of the Opposition *un tracé, une ligne directrice*. The hon. Leader of the Opposition honestly believes what he says. I am not saying he is right. I am not saying I agree with him, but what I have to recognise, and what we all have to recognise is that the hon. Leader of the Opposition honestly believes that he is right. He believes in it! But what I have to draw the attention of the House to is the following.

At one point, during a recent intervention in this august Assembly, the hon. Minister for Youth and Sports spoke about an observation made in a book. A book that was launched on the life of Mamade Elahee, “*Droit au But*”. I was there at that presentation. It was launched while Mamade Elahee was still walking this earth, he was alive. The late Mamade Elahee, when this book was launched, I came across that interview of Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and in that book it is very clear and not in any way ambiguous. So, in an unambiguous term, he did clearly say the following: *que la régionalisation a détruit le football*. That is what he said. One can try to give this all types of interpretation in order to run away from what is written black on white. One can try to run away from the truth. One can try to say whatever one wants to, try to save face, but the fact is, as opposed to one straight line that the hon. Leader of the Opposition adopts ever since 1982, we have on the other side of the Opposition, another team altogether. That one, they are experts and trying to dodge reality and truth, because the leader in actual fact of that party, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, says – the real leader – “*la régionalisation killed football*”. How does one reconcile that point of view to the point of view of the hon. Leader of the Opposition? How does one reconcile the two? Because they are diametrically opposed to one another. The hon. Leader of the Opposition stands up, convinced in what he says, and I bow to him, believing in what he says, because one has to, at least, recognise that he believes in something and he doesn't change his mind left, right and centre, as opposed to the other side, in order to satisfy an alliance, in order to satisfy the need to stick to that alliance. One forgets what one says. Look at the sincerity of his partner. The sincerity of his partner has meant that the hon. Leader of the

Opposition a dû venir à la rescouasse de Sir Anerood Jugnauth pour essayer d'expliquer the blunder, because history is there in that book. Sir Anerood Jugnauth said « *la régionalisation a tué le foot* ». In those days, when he gave that interview...

(*Interruptions*)

**Mr Speaker:** No interruption!

**Mr Mohamed:** I mean, whenever there is noise, I have the impression that my message is hurting. If the message is hurting, I am succeeding. If I am succeeding, I am happy. So, let me go on, and if anyone wants to make noise, I am sure, Mr Speaker, Sir, you are there to look into the matter. The fact is the truth hurts. How does one try to get away from that fact that he said “*la régionalisation a tué le foot*”? How does that reconcile the diametrically opposed opinion of one opposition as opposed to the other opposition which is, at least, consistent? But you cannot say that of the MSM; there is inconsistency left, right and centre. When one talks about the many times that the hon. Leader of the Opposition talks *about le réveil du démon communal*, the number of times that he talks about his fear, the number of times that he talks about the danger lurking, there is one thing in common between - let us say - Government and that part of the Opposition. We may not agree, but we all want football to succeed. That is where we should really shed the light upon. We may not agree on the way there, but we all agree and deeply have this desire, this wish, this dream that our football will succeed.

Let me also go back down memory lane: 1999. I came across that just earlier in the National Assembly Library, and I thought that it was important in order to respond to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said. When I went to the Library earlier today, while looking for newspaper cuttings of those days to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition had said, to what Sir Anerood Jugnauth had said, to what the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports, hon. Mrs Arouff-Parfait, in those days, had said, I came across, funily enough, 17 February 1999 in ‘*l’Express*’ – “*du gandia fumé ouvertement lors de la manifestation MR.*” On 23 April 1999, in the same ‘*l’Express*’ - and I know that hon. Bhagwan, Mr Speaker, Sir, has this at heart, the rank of our Mauritian football team *sur le classement FIFA*. In those days, we still had Scouts, Cadets, Fire, Racing - what did I see here? Maurice *gagne 20 places en trois mois*. That was in 1999, still playing under the umbrella of those football teams: Scouts, Racing and other teams, Cadets, Sunrise, and we go on. Roche Bois Boys Scouts was there. In those days, and I read here –

*« Profitant de sa série de matchs sans défaite, la sélection nationale a bondi de la 148<sup>ème</sup> place à la 130ème place au classement mondial établi le mois dernier. »*

Those were the great days, and sometimes we say the nice golden days that we all talk about when our football was still doing well. Those were the good days where never in history have we gone up 20 places in three months. 20 places in three months! That has never existed, and we are talking about where that football was supposedly communal in those days. There is the danger when you have politicians trying to give another colour to what set of facts were.

Let me clearly say it right here, right now, that, in 1982, the names pertaining to religious groups were removed by the MMM Government in those days, and ever since then, I used to personally go to football matches in the stadiums, be it in Anjalay stadium - on those days it was Sir Anerood Jugnauth Stadium by the way - and George V stadium. When I used to go to those stadiums and watched football, Scouts had a team. There were no Muslim Scouts; it didn't exist anymore. They did not have any communal connotation. Let me talk about Scouts again, because some people hesitate to talk about it. In 1999, Scouts were playing with Barbe, Brabant, Edward, Rioux, Bachs, Edmond, La Boiteuse, Badal, Jeannot. In one match, Scouts beat Roche Bois Boys Scouts - I am sorry I have to say it - by 72. Jeannot scored twice, Jonas, Dooha, Badal; those are the people there. And what has this got to do with anyone who is Muslim? Let's call a spade a spade! Let not try to run away from the truth! What has this got to do with any one community? None! But, then, they are going to say 'Well, behind that team, they have supporters of only one community.' That is what they are going to say. But, then, again, when I come across such facts, it undoubtedly brings me to other issues; in 1999, what Mrs Arouff-Parfait did. Some people are going to be surprised. Some people may not be happy, but I will say what has to be said, because this is what I believe in. Let me add that point. It is only someone who is not really courageous enough to change what has existed for many years, even though he believed in it; it is not working, he must have the courage to change it! Let me talk about what happened in Mauritius.

In 1999, we were a country that had a knee-jerk reaction, because we are emotional. What happened was unacceptable. What happened, with people dying in a fire, criminal acts unacceptable, but we reacted immediately. And when you look at the press cuttings of those days, every single group were meeting up and reacting. 'Six dead!', in one of the first papers of

24 May. The Minister, in those days said ‘*ne prenons pas le football comme bouc-émissaire.*’ Scouts Club came forward and said ‘We have nothing to do with what has happened. This is not linked to football.’ Even the former Prime Minister Jugnauth, *de la fédération MSM/MMM, évoque l’existence d’un commando formé à l’étranger.* The then Member of the Opposition, hon. Bérenger, stated in another paper, on 29 May 1999 ‘*ce enn attaque pou touye sa 100, 200 dimounes ki ti dan l’Amicale la.*’

So, when you go through everything that was said, immediately after the event, knee-jerk reaction, you have the Minister who finally said ‘*ne prenons pas le football comme bouc-émissaire.*’ That same Minister, on 26 May, two days later on, says ‘*décomunalisation; d’autres amendements si nécessaire.*’ And she comes up on 19 November of that same year, with a Sports Bill, in order to go for regionalisation and *décomunalisation.* If this is not a knee-jerk reaction, that was done because the political community in those days had to find guilty parties. Guilty people had to be found! When one looks at the trend in other countries, haven’t there been problems in other countries, problems have not existed in other countries? I will say what has happened. Other countries, ever since 1974, 1978 and 1988, all through the years, once upon a time, at the time of the Second World War. Just after the Second World War in the United Kingdom, 40 million people were in stadiums all around, every weekend, watching football. Then, there were problems, violence. People were being killed. People were dying, fire, arson. All of a sudden, it dropped by more than half. But did they just come and change the whole system in the United Kingdom? Did they just change it all of a sudden? Did they have a knee-jerk reaction? No! They didn’t do that! But, what they did instead was to have a Commission of Enquiry. What they did instead was to have reports written. They wanted to analyse the situation; why is it that there have been problems of this sort, why is it that there have been problems in the United Kingdom.

Finally, I have come across another document that talks about measures taken to prevent football violence in the United Kingdom; a document which is available on the Internet, published by the Football Association, June 2012. Did Mauritius do that? Politicians were so busy to try to find out who were the responsible parties. The easy target to blame was to blame it on the sports! But, I say for a fact, that the authority is well responsible. I say for a fact that each and every time in this country that there have been violence, scuffles, problems between supporters of any team, authorities have been responsible. Whatever be the regime that was in

power in those days, authorities were the ones responsible, because I say that basing myself on reports. I read the reports in the United Kingdom from the Football Association. What did they not do to ensure that there was no more violence on and off the pitch? They made sure that there was national legislation brought to Parliament. Entering a stadium when drunk or in possession of alcohol, possession of alcohol on trains and coaches, throwing of an object downwards the pitch, entering the pitch without lawful excuse, indecent or races chanting; all these were made criminal offences.

The Police organised a UK Football Policing Unit, specifically and especially for problems at high risk matches and at normal football matches. Did they do that in Mauritius in 1999? Did they do that in 2001? Did they do that in 1982? At no time has any Government accepted that somehow, some place, while they were in power, they may have been responsible for not having ensured that the authorities then should have taken responsibility, the Police should have acted, the security services should have acted, the Secret Services should have acted. This is how we ensure, like in other countries, that things are done to avoid problems. What are the measures?

We had the 1990 Taylor Report on football safety stadium, where they provided measures with regard to stadiums, how to separate the people going to those matches; the liaison between football and the local Police. Have we had that in Mauritius? A liaison between local Police and the football supporters? Why is it we don't have that in Mauritius? How is it that, in the United Kingdom, we still have Liverpool playing? There has been the Hillsborough disaster; there has been the Heysel disaster. Why is it that we still have matches like Liverpool and Manchester United?

Had Mrs Arouff-Parfait been Minister in the United Kingdom, we would no longer see Liverpool; we would no longer see Manchester United. Instead of going to the core of the problem, having a national committee, analyse what is the real problem, we have had a knee-jerk reaction; find a responsible person, blame it on someone, and let us kill the sport in the process. So, yes, at that point, I agree with Sir Anerood Jugnauth: *la régionalisation, dès 1999, a tué le sport*. Hon. Mrs Arouff-Parfait could have, in those days, put the football in a coma, but hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo in 2001, with his Bill, pulled the plug. That is a fact!

I am talking from experience of having gone to football matches. I am not going to be a commentator that sat at home, or maybe was even not in Mauritius in those days or was too young to go to stadiums. I was there and I saw. I know by firsthand experience what the situation was. I did not sit in VIP sections of the stadium. I did not have the reverence of treatment of sitting only where VIPs went. I went in the stadium with the public, watching the matches, and I know for a fact that, at no time, has there been an effort that can be recognised, that can be saluted to bring the Police, the authorities, together with the football teams and the supporters. That has never happened.

So, what happens now, we have to basically blame it on the people, blame it on the supporters, blame it on racism, blame it on communalism. But when one looks at the list of the players having played those games, has there been any communalism? Has anyone of those teams had a problem with regard to the players or otherwise? No! Things would have gone on with the help of Government, with the help of authorities; things would have had to take a direction, we should have given it parameters, we should have given it a direction for no violence, but we did not do that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is so easy to criticise sports people or to criticise those teams in those days. It is so easy to do it, because for me it is a way of not analysing the truth. Politicians nowadays, on both sides of the House, what are they going to say? The supporters were to blame? Because of communalism? I have already explained, very clearly, that we have done nothing in order to analyse it, an assize to find out what the real cause was. We had a knee-jerk reaction. But what do we do, as politicians, every day? Let us talk about the truth! Let us call a spade a spade!

We are so good enough to criticise those teams of those days, we are so good enough; when we hear hon. Uteem talk about the 116<sup>th</sup>, we did well at *Jeux des Iles*. But what he forgets, if he is trying to make us believe that he got to the 116<sup>th</sup> place in Mauritius, just in a few years of *régionalisation*, then he really got no knowledge that it takes years and years for the player to come up to the ladder and to be a good player and to play for his country. Obviously, it was not *régionalisation*. Those were the fruits of the football of Scouts Club, Racing, Fire, and all those teams before they were destroyed in 1999.

What we want to do, therefore, is to ensure that those days come back, but ensure that they are within parameters. Let us talk about politicians. We are blaming the people out there *du communalisme*? We are talking about history? We talk about history of this country, we talk about 1959, and we talk about 1963. We are very good about talking about history. Are we going to be imprisoned in the way things were done in the 50s, 60s and 70s? Is this a way forward, Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to instill fear in the hearts of the people? Are we going to be prisoners of our own failings in the past? Are we going to be prisoners of our own lack of courageous decisions by old regimes in the past? Is this what we are going to do? It is so easy to come and tell the youth of this country you are going to bring again *le démon communal!* It is so easy to tell the youth of this country that we are going to fall into an abyss where there is going to be bloodshed in this country, because of the *démon communal*, install fear in them. It is so easy to do that. But if we are really honest about it, let us start changing ourselves, us, politicians! In every single constituency, ever since independence, haven't candidates been chosen based on their communal belonging, or their ethnic group or caste? Isn't this the truth? The MMM has had a very great history.

The MMM has done the right thing in 1982, to come *et décommunale* the sport. The MMM has done exactly what should have been done in 1982 and remove 'Muslim' from the words 'Muslim Scouts', remove 'Hindu Cadets', and let it be known as 'Cadets'. Remove 'Tamil Cadets', make it become 'Sunrise'! This was good, this was great work. But, what we fail to do is to call a spade a spade! We are still trapped in our ways, that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has so ably described, ever since 1959, practising the same politics that we should spit at and remove from our DNA. This is what we should do. We should not use as easy targets the sport people and the fans of the 1990s, because we are somewhere responsible for what has happened, and I say we, even though I was not in politics, because *l'Etat continue*; Governments are responsible. And if, we, as politicians, continue to choose candidates based on religious belonging, not on their ability, but, at least, sports people when they chose Mr Badal in Scouts, they chose him because he can score goals. When they were choosing Désiré L'Enclume in the football net, it was because he could stop goals getting in! When they were choosing football coaches, they chose them as Ashok Chundunsing, Sarjoo Gureesunkur, even Désiré L'Enclume eventually. And Lallmohamed! When they chose people like that, it was not based on their

colour, their caste, their creed. They chose those people on their ability to bring something to football.

But when we choose candidates, we choose them based on their caste, based on their community, not on their ability. That is the truth! And that is the truth that the MMM also has to accept, because you cannot bring progress to a country, you cannot contribute positively to a Sports Bill, you cannot bring this country further in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if we are going to be prisoners of the bad manners, and the bad bedside manners of those of the 50s, 60s and 70s. Because they were better than us in those days, because, at least, they faced up the music and they called a spade a spade. Now, we have politicians living an age of hypocrisy. We blame it on the sportsmen, but we have a lot to learn from the sports people of this country. We, as politicians, have to learn and bow to the ability to choose on the capacity of a man to make sports proud. This is the country I want to live in. I do not want to live in a country that has hypocrisy at the helm everywhere. It is impossible, things have to stop! Either we have a change of mindset, because we have no moral right - the race of politicians, Mr Speaker, Sir - to come and talk about lessons, or give lessons to sports people and what directions the sports team should take, because we have encouraged, through our hypocrisy, some pseudo groups that even bear prefixes of 'Voice'. We have encouraged such groups to come up; all regimes have. Every single regime has! People have received them in their houses. Today, they are in the Opposition! People have welcomed them! Today, they are in the Opposition. And today, when they see people receiving them here, they criticised. We are becoming champions of hypocrisy.

If there is one thing good that we have to accept and bow to, it is that we have a lot of shortcomings as politicians, and I put me as well in it. We have so many shortcomings, and I am fed up of hypocrisy, at least, with regard to the sports people of this country. When they played football, they have not done it on the base of community or religion, or caste, or creed, or colour. They have done it in order to score goals. And, as far as I am concerned, I have spoken the truth today in this august Assembly. And let the Members of the Opposition now come and defend what I have just said. I want them to tell us: are we hypocrites, or are we not hypocrites? Because every single five years, we choose people, I say it again, based on community, caste, creed and nothing else! And that is the truth and the sadness about this country!

Thank you very much.

(11.59 p.m)

**Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militiare & Moka):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sports Bill before the House today, far from being a legislative framework for sports in our country, is like a dagger being stabbed in the heart of the Mauritian nation. Government's agenda is, to say the least, demoniac.

The scene is being set for crime to be committed against national unity, and ministerial, not to say political interference and upper hand on sports will become yet another instrument of tyranny in the hands of this Government, and I will prove what I am saying.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the intent behind the Bill, as I said, is demoniac. Once again, we are having the proof that this Government does exactly the contrary to what they preach. The hon. Prime Minister has been repeatedly saying, day in and day out, when he presents himself as a *rassembleur*, that he is determined to fight communalism. More recently, speaking on Electoral Reform, he said it is unacceptable that 45 years after Independence, we still have to declare our ethnic identity when standing as candidate for the General Elections. He has, on numerous occasions, said that we must do away with the Best Loser System. He afterwards changed his mind twice, in fact, under pressure, and now, from what I can conclude, he is finding pretexts to do away with the Electoral Reform altogether.

But, in public speeches, he never loses an opportunity to lay emphasis on national unity! Yet, in this Bill, Government proposes to reintroduce communalism in football with the comeback of traditional clubs! Probably we could have a doubt listening to the Minister of Sports. But, listening to hon. Mohamed, I think there should not be any doubt at all.

*(Interruptions)*

Why I am saying this is because I heard the hon. Minister of Sports saying that there will be a *cahier des charges*, he will see to it - because that is in the law - that there is no *dérapage*. I will just mention one example. During election time, we had a candidate by the name of Mr Yeung Sik Yuen who declared, according to our law, his community to be General Population. He was elected. I will not comment further on that but I will only ask the Minister - he will decide, because I do not see any mechanism that is being put in place - to see to it that teams are not organised in a communal manner. He will decide. How? On what criteria? What is going to be

his opinion with regard to a person who proclaims himself to be of a community and all the others? We do not know! It is such a complex matter, such a difficult thing to try to prevent. That is why I say, this Government, in fact - and again I refer to the speech of hon. Mohamed - they want to revive communal hatred amongst football fans and again put this country at the peril of communal exacerbations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said the intent is demoniac because I am convinced that there is a deliberate attempt to exacerbate communal tension for a calculated political motive. The hon. Prime Minister himself admitted that the proposed formula whereby traditional clubs change their names to exclude any communal reference did not work as expected. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has quoted what he said when he intervened previously during the Sports Bill. Let me quote another part of his intervention during the Sports (Amendment) Bill of 2000 on 14 November 2000. He was then the Leader of the Opposition. He said, I quote –

“When we (...)"

That is, his Government at that time.

“(...) brought the Sports Bill in 1999, there were three objectives.”

He mentions decommunalisation of sports and added, and I quote again –

“We know in spite of the good intentions, names had been changed, but the supporters were still behaving as if names have not been changed.”

13 years afterwards, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government, the hon. Prime Minister is telling the nation, through this Bill, let us adopt a formula that proved to be still dangerous to national unity and which he himself condemned in the past!

The Prime Minister cannot come and say that things have changed thereafter. Again, I will quote an instance where he gave a speech at the Hindu House on 25 October this year, on the occasion of Diwali. He said that since 1955, and I am saying this again with reference to what hon. Mohamed has said replying to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He said, and I noted just one line “Are we going to be prisoners of the 1950s, 1960s and so on? We should not be hypocritical,” and so on. But he should have been here to listen to what the hon. Prime Minister has said at the Hindu House on 25 October on the occasion of Diwali. He said that since 1955 nothing has changed in Mauritius as far as communal reflexes are concerned. He was referring to

correspondences between the British Foreign Secretary and Roberts Scott in 1955, whereby the latter made reference to the opinion expressed by Governor McKenzie Kennedy who stated that the population thinks in terms of races and religion and not in terms of Mauritians. And the Prime Minister espoused that opinion in his speech at the Hindu House and said: "Nothing had changed since 1955!" If this is what the Prime Minister thinks, why is he going in a direction that will expose the country to communal and racial animosity in football? That is why I say, Mr Speaker, Sir, clearly, there is a deliberate attempt to put again oil on the communal ember.

After what we had witnessed in 1999, after the Sunrise v/s Zamalec Football Club, subsequently after Fire Brigade against Scouts Club that led to the criminal fire outbreak at *l'Amicale* that, in fact, took the lives of seven innocent people, how can a Government propose again the same lethal recipe to the nation? I will partly agree and partly disagree with one comment that was made by hon. Mohamed, because he said that it is the authorities that should be blamed.

I will agree with that part where he says: "with regard to what happened in 1999, the authorities were to be blamed", because again, he is saying that what Judge Matadeen has said in his report is, in fact, the truth. And I won't go into that because we all know, we have read the report, how a Government, *le gouvernement était resté immobile, les décisions n'avaient pas été prises*, and the role of the Prime Minister. I won't go at length into that. That's why I say what a shame, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Et je dis cela ne me surprend guère car le fonds de commerce du Parti travailliste demeure le communalisme et la division calculée. Les événements prouvent que ce gouvernement, et surtout le Premier ministre, est un faux rassembleur. En fait, le gouvernement est en train de jouer au pyromane, prêt à mettre le feu au pays et mettre le pays à feu et à sang, au fait. Et l'avenir nous dira jusqu'où il peut aller pour essayer de se maintenir au pouvoir. En tout cas, les émeutes de février 1999 sont encore fraîches dans nos mémoires, et la population en est avertie.

I again seize this opportunity here to condemn what hon. Mohamed and the Minister of Youth and Sports had said in the past. In fact, they have cast doubts on the opinion of Sir Anerood Jugnauth as regards regionalisation of sports. I must reply to this. They - both of them - chose one sentence out of its context from the biography of late Mamade Elahee to make us

believe that Sir Anerood Jugnauth attributed the death of football to regionalisation. I would request them to read the whole of the interview. Don't remove, don't cite, and don't quote only one sentence. When you read that interview, you will see that Sir Anerood Jugnauth had condemned communalism in sports, and has always denounced the fact that the Labour Government had not given the means to local authorities and football clubs to ensure the success of regionalisation. That is the truth which they have chosen not to say.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, true regionalisation of sports was introduced in 2001 with the New Sports Act at the very beginning of the mandate of the MSM/MMM in 2005. At that time, Mauritius - and I am proud to say - had the youngest Minister of Sports of all times in the person of Ravi Yerrigadoo. It has to be highlighted that the main thrust of the Sports Act of 1999 was to decommunalise football, but the objective was not attained, as the hon. Prime Minister himself told us in his speech on 14 November 2001. The concept of regionalisation that was proposed in the Sports Act of 1999 was never even considered by the Sports Federations, as a majority of them had not organised their AGM accordingly.

The bedrock of true regionalisation in the Sports Act of 2001 was, in fact, the involvement of local authorities. And for us, regionalisation had to grow through local authorisations. *Les Regional Sports Coordinating Committees étaient les fers de lance de la régionalisation.* Their role was precisely to supervise and to assist both technically and financially all sports clubs of respective sports federations in any one region. They have the mission to enable a greater involvement of local authorities to assist in promoting regional sports activities and, as an impetus, we had provided, that time, Rs1 m. to each of the 13 sports regions. We increased the allocation of Local Authorities in the Budget for sports, and in parallel Government was funding a lot of sports facilities throughout the island, especially in the rural areas. And, the results started showing, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mauritius performed very well in the *jeux des îles* of 2003 and, in fact, we won gold medals in various sports disciplines, including football. More importantly, never before had we witnessed so much patriotic vibes, as the whole nation was proud of the achievements of its athletes and team players.

Nous avions connu des moments forts en termes d'unité et de fierté nationale. Hélas, M. le président, le Parti travailliste allait gagner les élections de 2005 sur la base d'une campagne

outrancièrement communale, et le gouvernement 2005 à 2010 a tué la régionalisation, car les autorités locales ont été privées des moyens nécessaires pour poursuivre le travail commencé. C'est cela qui a tué la régionalisation, y compris le football régional. C'est cela que Sir Anerood Jugnauth n'a cessé de dénoncer. Et, aujourd'hui, à travers ce projet de loi, le gouvernement donne le coup de grâce à la régionalisation. Et quand je regarde la loi, dès les premières lignes on constate que les *Regional Sports Coordinating Committees* sont abolis. C'est la première, *first object of this Bill*.

Le cordon ombilical de la régionalisation est ainsi coupé. Mais il y a plus grave, M. le président. Le ministre et le gouvernement veulent imposer leur dictats sur les clubs sportifs et les fédérations sportives. La section 11 du projet de loi impose aux fédérations et aux clubs sportifs de faire une demande de reconnaissance auprès du ministre, sans laquelle ils ne peuvent pas se faire enregistrés au *Registrar of Associations*. Un délai de six mois est accordé aux clubs sportifs existants pour faire une demande de reconnaissance auprès du ministre. Et je dis que cela touche à un droit fondamental qui est garanti par la constitution du pays. Le *Registrar of Associations* est relégué au second plan. Maurice étant un Etat de droit, notre constitution protège le *freedom of association*. Et je me pose la question comment réconcilier le *Registrar of Associations Act* dans sa forme actuelle et les provisions de ce projet de loi en ce qu'il s'agit des clubs. Il y a donc, là, peut être, une entorse à la constitution. Mais comment peut-on accepter une telle ingérence gouvernementale au niveau du droit même d'exister des clubs sportifs ?

Ce gouvernement veut prendre en otage le sport, et par ricochet, la jeunesse de notre pays. Il y aussi une attaque frontale pour que le ministre puisse contrôler les fédérations, et les pouvoirs d'ingérences du ministre vont également à l'encontre de la philosophie olympique. Pourquoi je dis cela, M. le président, parce que - c'est tellement clair, c'est tellement simple aussi - pour que les clubs puissent être reconnus, il faut aller vers le ministre, avoir la reconnaissance du ministre. Donc, c'est lui qui décide. Et pour que les fédérations puissent être reconnues, là aussi il faut que ce soit ces mêmes clubs qui forment, qui sont membres et qui deviennent une fédération, et que cette fédération doit avoir l'aval du ministre.

Donc, la politique va s'immiscer à tous les niveaux dans les structures sportives du pays, et je prévois une levée de boucliers, et, comme attendu, on a déjà noté la réaction du Comité national olympique mauricien. Ils ont exprimé de sérieuses réserves. J'étais en train de regarder

le ministre écouter le discours du leader de l'opposition. J'ai entendu quelque chose qui m'a vraiment surpris. Peut-être que le ministre va le dire dans *son summing-up*, parce qu'il avait dit cela dans une position assise concernant le président du Comité national olympique. Je sais qu'il a son opinion, mais il est quand même le président! Peu importe, il est le président! C'est lui qui représente ce comité, et il a la responsabilité d'émettre l'opinion du Comité international olympique. Donc, ils ont déjà exprimé leurs réserves, d'autant plus que, d'après mes renseignements, les contre-propositions qui ont été faites n'ont pas été prises en considération après les consultations qui ont eu lieu en juillet dernier.

L'honorable ministre avait fait un exposé à l'époque, un *powerpoint*, d'après ce que je comprends, avec les différents *stakeholders*. Il y a eu pas mal de contre-propositions, mais *nothing has been taken on board*. Des sanctions du Comité international olympique ne sont pas exclues dans un contexte où un ultimatum de cette instance internationale pèse déjà sur Maurice en ce qui concerne le respect de la Charte olympique. J'entends le ministre Mohamed dire que Maurice est un *sovereign State*. Pas besoin de le dire ; nous savons que nous sommes un *sovereign State!* Mais, d'après ce que je comprends, nous pouvons faire n'importe quoi, et il a cité le jugement. Je ne vais pas entrer dans le jugement qu'il a cité, mais est-ce que le ministre peut venir dire qu'il ne va pas tenir en ligne de compte le Comité international olympique, que nous sommes un *sovereign State*, et que nous pouvons passer n'importe quelle loi concernant le sport ici ? Attendons voir!

Mais, peut-être que le ministre pourra nous éclairer. Il a été à Londres pour les Jeux Olympiques en juillet 2012. Il a passé, je dirai, un quart d'heure avec les responsables qui ont exprimé – *to say it mildly* – leurs frustrations concernant la situation au niveau des fédérations et le sport ici à Maurice, parce que six mois après les Jeux Olympiques, les fédérations sont tenues de faire les élections, de faire leur AGM...

*(Interruptions)*

Quatre mois! Encore plus! Quatre mois le ministre est en train de dire. Alors, je me demande pourquoi pendant tout ce temps rien n'a été fait. Ce n'est que, *at the last minute*, quand le CIO a donné son ultimatum ; c'est la raison pour laquelle il faut voter cette loi tout de suite, fin décembre, parce qu'on a ce délai. On ne peut pas aller plus loin que ça. On est en train de parler de souveraineté! Si on était *sovereign*, on aurait dit au CIO qu'on a notre propre agenda. On va

prendre notre temps, et on va circuler le *Sports Bill*. On va avoir un débat public, et puis l'année prochaine on va venir à la Chambre et on va voter. Donc, parler de *sovereign*, il faut savoir de quoi on parle. Je pose la question : entorse constitutionnelle? On verra! Entorse aux règlements internationaux, ça aussi on verra, mais aussi des provisions complètement irréalistes en ce qui concerne les sanctions en cas de non-respect du dictat politique du ministre et de ce gouvernement sur le sport mauricien.

Je ne suis pas d'accord du tout avec la section 44 du projet de loi. Je suis sur la même longueur d'onde que le leader de l'opposition. Qu'on puisse mettre une amende pour non-respect des provisions de la loi, je le concède, mais venir imposer deux ans d'emprisonnement pour toute infraction à cette législation n'est pas logique du tout. Et cela s'applique même à celui ou celle qui refuserait de produire un document réclamé par le ministère. On aurait cru à une nouvelle provision du code pénal, comme je le dis ; du jamais vu dans un texte de loi pour promouvoir la pratique du sport. C'est pour cela que je suis d'accord avec le président du CNOM, qui a dit que c'est de la répression. Par ailleurs, le projet de loi propose la perte de reconnaissance directe d'une fédération qui ne respecte plus les provisions de la loi sans au préalable pouvoir instituer un *Caretaker Committee*. Peut-être c'est la raison pour laquelle le ministre vient avec l'*Ombudsperson for Sports*, pour qu'il puisse essayer de voir si on peut arriver à un règlement ou trouver une solution. J'espère que cet *Ombudsperson* pourra travailler en toute indépendance, et qu'il pourra agir comme un conciliateur.

As regards the objective of the Bill to prevent the proliferation of fictitious sports clubs and federations, the proposed provisions are to my mind not explicit in comparison with respective detailed provisions that were contained in the Sports Act of 2001, where criteria for elections and representativeness were clearly spelt out in the legislation.

I refer to section 9(4), and I won't go into the details of it. The Sports Act of 2001 also imposes an obligation for those regional sports committees to be registered with the Registrar of Associations, thus minimising the risks of there being fictitious regional sports committees just to - as we know, *comme toujours il y a des brebis galeuses* - benefit from assistance, be it financial or otherwise, from the regional sports coordinating committee. Therefore, the possibility of having fictitious sports clubs and federations is, in fact, increased with the Bill, and not reduced. Can you imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, again, the Minister is giving himself the

power to decide whether sports club or federation is fictitious or not? And to add insult to injury, it is stated in section 14(3) (b) of the Bill -

«In case a sports club whose application for enrolment is rejected by its National Sports Federation may appeal to the Minister within 21 days of the decision, and the Minister may, where he is of the opinion that the application was unjustly rejected, request the federation to review its decision. »

I say this is again arbitrary and goes against all good governance principles, and is contrary to the Olympic Charter because the Minister is, in fact, presenting himself as the sole authority to take decisions with regard to sports clubs and sports federations. I must say, a very sinister agenda, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, le projet de loi devant cette Chambre est l'œuvre d'un gouvernement qui veut avoir une mainmise totale sur le sport dans notre pays. C'est un projet de loi qui ne fera pas avancer la cause du sport. Bien au contraire, puisque l'endurance politique va semer le trouble et occasionner des décisions subjectives, l'existence, la reconnaissance d'une instance sportive dépendra désormais du bon vouloir du ministre, avec un agenda calculé. Qui plus est, le danger, comme je l'ai dit auparavant, d'une exacerbation des réflexes à caractère bassement communal est à craindre. Notre pays est à la merci des pyromanes qui n'hésitent pas à utiliser le sport pour imposer leur dictat sur la jeunesse, dans le but d'essayer de la manipuler politiquement, afin de s'agripper au pouvoir coûte que coûte. Voilà l'agenda démoniaque dont je parlais, M. le président.

La population, la jeunesse et le pays ne peuvent pas laisser un gouvernement en fin de règne jouer avec le feu communal, et s'ingérer, de manière suspecte et condamnable, dans les affaires des clubs sportifs et des fédérations sportives. Avec les desseins de ce gouvernement, nous vivons aujourd'hui un moment bien, bien grave, et très dangereux pour l'unité nationale et l'harmonie intercommunautaire. *Cry my beloved country!*

*Thank you.*

(00.34 a.m.)

*At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

**Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to intervene on the new Sports Bill presented by my colleague, hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo, Minister of Youth and Sports.

If I am intervening tonight, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is mostly because of my passion for sports, the love I have for my country, and also because I know the aspirations of the youth. I know the dream of a united nation, *car les jeunes de ce pays, M. le président, sont des sportifs dans l'âme, et ils transcendent toutes les barrières ethniques. Leur sang est quadricolore.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened to the speech of hon. Pravind Jugnauth, and he has spoken of the speech of the hon. Prime Minister at the Hindu House. He has spoken of 1955, he has tried to associate the fire at *l'Amicale* with sports, he has tried to connect *les émeutes de 1999* with sports. But I must say that the youth of 2013 will find him and the speech he made completely out of date and out of tune for what we are here tonight, debating about this present Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *j'interviens aussi, parce que* I have been the Chairman of the Mauritius Sports Council for five good years. *As such, j'ai tâté le pouls du sport mauricien.* J'avais constaté que notre sport méritait un lifting majeur, un besoin d'être revigoré, qu'il souffre de certaines insuffisances et carences, et qu'il faut lui insuffler une nouvelle âme. Je suis pleinement satisfait aujourd'hui du projet de loi que je tiens entre mes mains, parce qu'il remettra d'aplomb notre sport, avec ses mesures correctives et sa philosophie unificatrice. Au fait, M. le président, c'est un projet de loi clinique et historique qui nous repositionnera sur le planisphère sportif.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a new legal framework for the sports community was long overdue, and the new Bill is in perfect line with the Government policy to promote sports in Mauritius. The new Sports Bill tackles various challenges facing the sports movement such as neutralising or eradicating fictitious clubs, good governance and transparency in daily management, a mechanism to resolve perpetual conflicts through the setting of a tribunal at national level, and an Arbitration Committee at the level of the Olympic Committee.

The new Sports Bill also makes provision for the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion by all sports organisations. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this provision is of utmost

importance in a country like Mauritius, where people of diverse social, economic, cultural, religious background live together, and compete in sports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new Sports Bill creates the proper environment for the development of sports in Mauritius. The setting up of a Sports Development Council, National Institute of Sports, National Women's Sports Commission and an Ombudsperson for Sports will definitely help in that respect. The new Sports Bill also strengthens the autonomy of National Sports Federations, but demands more responsibility on their part.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Sports Bill 2013 is in compliance with the Government Programme 2012-2015, page 19, paragraph 124, which stipulates, I quote -

“To give further impetus to Sports as a discipline for self - and collective - development, Government will prepare an Integrated Strategic Plan for Sports in collaboration with the sports federations and the National Olympic Committee.”

Therefore, Deputy Speaker, Sir, *la raison d'être* of this Sports Bill is that there are serious inadequacies and flaws in the Sports Act 2001, which do not meet the needs and requirements of the sports community of 2013 and onwards. This legislative framework announces the timely demise of this Sports Act 2001.

Furthermore, it creates a new vista for sports to regain its lost splendour and glory. *C'est à dire, M. le président, redonner ses lettres de noblesse au sport mauricien.*

May I remind the House that the Sports Act 2001 was proclaimed in 2002 to tackle the challenges of that time. The life span of the same legislation has lasted for more than a decade. It has reached its expiry date since long. This Government is now coming up with a new and healthy product.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's go retrospectively and see what were the challenges of a decade ago –

- (1) the spirit of the legislation was to fight and undermine all the nefarious side effects that communalism can bring about in a multi-ethnic society like Mauritius;
- (2) the solution of the day was to regionalise and promote sports in all nooks and corners of the country, and

(3) the legislation was to provide substantial fertile ground to those sports clubs and organisations in every region to get empowered.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having said this, I am tempted to ask a question: has the Sports Act 2001 served the purpose for which it was voted in this august Assembly? The answer is obviously well-known to each and every Mauritian. It is a big 'NO!'. This Sports Act 2001, which, I must say, was given a fair chance to evolve with time and also to prove its *raison d'être*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was not given one year, two, three, four, five years, but a good dozen of years, and we have travelled a long way. And what was the outcome, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Firstly, Mauritius has taken a roller coaster ride downwards in terms of the FIFA ranking, from 116<sup>th</sup> at one time to now 198<sup>th</sup> on 202 countries. What a dismal failure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, do we need to continue with the system, as the Opposition is saying tonight?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was the responsibility of the respective federations to plan, implement and monitor the process of regionalisation. Was it effected by sports federations?

My third point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there should have been a symbiosis between sports federations and local authorities to promote and enforce sports culture in regions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, have all sports federations taken initiatives to take part in this process of establishing the respective federation in the region? Obviously, no, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Only a few were serious in that respect and have respected the Sports Act 2001 of that time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, training is an integral part to develop the human resource skills, that is, coaches, officials like referees, managerial skills at regional committee level. So, again, the question arises whether respective federations were able to identify their training needs to uplift their quality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to summarise the four points I just mentioned, it gives an indication that the regionalisation process, which was one of the essential pillars of the Sports Act 2001, has been a total failure in spite of giving it a lifespan of 12 years to prove itself.

Avec la régionalisation, l'opposition d'aujourd'hui, qui était le gouvernement d'alors, avait placé le sport sur une civière et l'a amené directement dans une ambulance jusqu'à l'hôpital et l'a admis dans l'*ICU Ward*. Nous ne voulons pas maintenant voir notre sport dans un corbillard, avec comme destination le cimetière, M. le président. L'implantation du *Sports Act* 2001 s'est soldée par un échec total. Ceci a débouché sur la mort lente de notre sport roi, qui est le football, et qui agonisait devant trois spectateurs et cinq marchands de pistaches. Le niveau de notre football a atteint le niveau le plus bas de son histoire. Le *Sports Act* 2001 n'a jamais su mettre en place les structures appropriées, d'où les nombreux problèmes et manquements. En un mot, M. le président, la régionalisation préconisée d'alors a échoué, et je répète, par manque de vision et de planification.

This is more so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason why this Government is coming with a fresh legislation that can give a boost to our ailing Mauritian sports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the main objectives of this Bill as mentioned at clause 2(b) is to –

“make provision to prevent the proliferation of fictitious federations and sports clubs;”

Obviously, it has got a very good rationale. Let me explain how things are operational since the inception of the Sports Act 2001. When the concept of regionalisation started, any Tom, Dick and Harry registered sports clubs with the Registrar of Associations. Overnight, they became self-appointed sports leaders in respective regions. Whether the sports clubs were active or inactive was immaterial, provided that they were administratively correct. These people, in spite of their clubs being non-existent, be it physical or otherwise, were representing their respective clubs at regional level. Some of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moved up the ladder from regional level to federation level. Worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some of them even became president of federations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, maybe you are wondering: ‘so what if they become president?’ Once they attain the federation level, benefits and privileges become more accessible. The bottom line, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that someone having a fictitious non-existent club became a prolific member of the federation looking after his own interest rather than that of the federation. In doing so, the particular federations suffer, together with their licensees and

spectators of that game. This was one part of the Sports Act 2001; this is what has happened really on the field.

Therefore, this Bill is rightly making provision for the Ministry to do a professional gate-keeping before they are registered with the Registrar of Associations. All necessary parameters will have to be followed by any prospective club, and then they will be allowed to go to the Registrar of Associations. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has got nothing to do with the autonomy of a sports federation. The Ministry is here only to make sure that genuine clubs get registered and represented at the respective federation. In a way, the Ministry is putting effective measures to control and regulate, as at the end of the day it is the Ministry which is the fund provider for all sports federations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it logical for the one providing the funds not to have his say in the use of those same funds. *L'argent des contribuables, M. le président, doit être judicieusement dépensé, et le ministère doit veiller à cela et prévenir tout abus et acte d'illégalité, aussi bien qu'immoral.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having said this, does the population know that the Budget of the Ministry is more than Rs500 m., that the Ministry provides grants to all sports federations, be it small or big federations, that the Ministry pays all administrative costs incurred by federations, that Mauritius is one of the rare countries where transport is provided to athletes to go to training and back home, that the Ministry, through the Mauritius Sports Council, provides office equipment like computers, laptops, photocopy machines and other peripherals, that the Ministry pays for the salary of administrative secretaries of sports federations? The Mauritius Sports Council even pays for the respective federations' international affiliation fees, even telephone bills and stationery costs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth noting that all infrastructures are maintained by the Ministry through the Sports Council which cost the taxpayers more than Rs25 m. per year. The Ministry, through the high-level Sports Unit, gives the stipend to all high-level athletes in Mauritius. Cash prize is given to all athletes who perform very well at national or international level. *Formation des cadres*, all abroad travel expenses for athletes, coaches and officials are all borne by the Ministry. The list is long, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Therefore, without interfering into the internal affairs of the federation, it is legitimate for the Government to have a *droit de regard* in relation with public funds. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry has never controlled any federation. But it must control over public money put at the disposal of the federations. At no point the Ministry has ever violated the autonomy of any federation; neither was it ever done in the past.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the essence of the 2013 Sports Bill is to do away with such obnoxious activities on behalf of the so-called self-appointed *dirigeants*. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister has to be congratulated for taking measures that will stop the mushrooming of fictitious clubs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards clause 2 (c), which makes provision for the setting up of semi-professional clubs and association of the semi-professional clubs, this is a novelty on its own, and this great idea has already been well received in different quarters. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the current situation has gone from bad to worse, and we are all fully aware of this. We have seen over years that the level of games, especially in collective sports, has significantly gone a downward spiral. This has led to disinterest and demotivation among the public, where games are being played in empty stadiums and gymnasiums.

At international level, it is not a secret that our ranking has gone a record low. This alarming situation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, cannot go on. Something has to be done. With this legislation, the game, at first, will gain in quantity in terms of supporters and influx of gate money. Then, at a later stage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once people start visiting stadiums, the quality of the game will eventually improve. We still remember the golden days, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Each club had their own club house, which was acquired through gate money and sponsors. So, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development was totally right the other day when he mentioned that we need a critical mass for our football.

Il nous faut avoir des clubs de niveau national. Si on n'a pas ces clubs de niveau national jamais il n'y aura de spectateurs dans les stades. Mais je peux comprendre les craintes au cas où on va réveiller le démon communal. Il n'est certainement pas dans l'intérêt du gouvernement d'avoir recours à un système rétrograde en jouant au pyromane. Bien au contraire, le gouvernement veut consolider l'unité nationale, réunir la population autour du drapeau national, et voir flotter dans le ciel ce parfum qui fait la beauté et la fierté de notre nation.

Le sport le plus populaire au monde est le football qui, à Maurice, a perdu son éclat à cause d'une régionalisation mal inspirée. Si nous changeons d'orientation c'est pour insuffler une nouvelle âme à notre football. Nous nous considérons comme un peuple admirable. Le ministre Ritoo aussi nous considère comme un peuple admirable. Le projet qu'on a présenté ce soir est accompagné de garde-fous contre tout dérapage qui nuirait au football, et surtout à l'harmonie de ce peuple.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I highlighted in my speech on the Budget 2014, the *garde-fous* will be there. There are ways and means to prevent violence in our stadiums –

- a good football organisation system to be put in place;
- security measures to be thoroughly investigated, tested and implemented;
- a system of home and away matches where supporters to be channelled in such a way that they do not interact with supporters of the adverse team;
- the concept of fan club to be introduced for the sales and control of tickets, and
- provisions for the right infrastructural set-up to acceptable norms and standards.

Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have got talented footballers in Mauritius and Rodrigues. So, let us give our football another chance, and we are sure the semi-professional league of some ten clubs with a responsible and accountable management and dedicated players will put our football on the right track again like in the good old days, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to a very important issue, that is, the anti-doping, which figures in the Sports Bill 2013. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill makes provision for the creation of a very important structure, namely the National Commission for Drug-Free Sports. The issue of anti-doping has taken a worldwide dimension whereby athletes have been caught cheating by consuming prohibited substances. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, doping is defined as a violation of the anti-doping rule, whereby the presence of prohibited substance is detected. Use of prohibited substance, refusing sample collection, tampering possession of prohibited substance trafficking and administered to an athlete is a crime.

The World Anti-Doping Agency to which Mauritius is a member and signatory of the World Anti-Doping Code is the international independent organisation created in 1999 to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against doping in sports in all its forms. Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir, the rules that all countries over the world abide to is the WADA Code. The Code was developed through an extensive process among all stakeholders, including athletes, sports organisations, laboratories, governments and many others. The Code which came into effect in January 2004 has been recently amended, and will come into effect in January 2015.

Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Mauritius, we have caught the ball at the right moment by introducing a legal framework in the fight against doping in this Sports Bill 2013. It is a fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that provisions made in the Bill for the fight against doping in sports will surely safeguard our athletes' health, coaches and even parents and close relatives of our athletes. As a caring Government, we do not want to leave any stone unturned. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the only anti-doping set up by the then Government, which was implemented, was an Anti-Doping Unit at Vacoas in 2003; that too, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, without any legal framework.

M. le président, voilà la différence entre nous et l'opposition. Nous nous alignons avec WADA, et nous démontrons notre vision de l'avenir, et en mettant sur pied un *National Commission for Drug-Free Sports*, nous affirmons notre sérieux et notre détermination dans notre combat contre les substances prohibées dans notre sport.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not recall any campaign and education programme in favour of our youth and elite athletes during the years 2001 and 2005 in respect of anti-doping! It is only in 2007 that things have been taken up seriously regarding anti-doping in Mauritian sports, and again, I congratulate the Minister Ritoo for such a laudable initiative in this piece of legislation.

M. le président, une clause dans ce projet de loi préconise la mise sur pied du *National Institute of Sports*. Ce n'est pas seulement une évolution de notre système, c'est une révolution dans le sport mauricien, car trop souvent nous avons ignoré ou négligé l'aspect formation par rapport à nos clubs et nos sportifs. Quelle est cette clause ?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me quote section 2, paragraph (g), clause 1 -

- (i) act as the main centre for the consolidation and development of the sports community through education and training, and for the exchange of information in the fields of sports;

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards training in the fields of sports, we actually have only the best programme as training programme. Le sport prend des dimensions qui dépassent la compétition. Aujourd’hui, tout le monde se soucie non seulement de sa santé, mais aussi de son corps qui se développe, qui se préserve à travers les gymnases, les spas, la danse, le yoga, le taïchi et tant d’autres activités.

M. le président, aujourd’hui on a des gymnases modernes qui prolifèrent partout ; que ce soit dans les villes et les villages, du nord au sud, de l'est à l'ouest, ainsi qu'au centre, dans les morcellements IRS, ERS, et dans les hôtels. Il nous faut donc des hommes et des femmes qualifiés pour maintenir...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No interruption, please!

**Mr Khamajeet:**...ces différentes disciplines et institutions sportives. Nous avons besoin de gens qualifiés pour exercer dans ces différents centres sportifs modernes. Donc, cet institut du sport est une réponse à la professionnalisation du sport, et cet institut va former ces professionnels de demain.

M. le président, pendant les cinq années que j'ai passées au *Sports Council*, j'ai vu tant de talents s'arrêter ou mourir faute de formation ou de diplôme. Parmi, nombreux sont ceux qui n'ont pas été gâtés par le destin, et faute de moyens n'ont pas pu poursuivre leurs études ni leurs rêves. Après une brillante carrière en tant qu'athlètes de haut niveau, ils ont sombrés dans l'anonymat, oubliés, effacés, disparus à jamais. Cet institut du sport vient donc rendre justice à ces sportifs qui ont fait honneur au pays, car ils pourront se recycler dans un programme de formation et obtenir, par exemple, un diplôme d'entraîneur, de kinothérapeute de haut niveau, encadreur, et tant d'autres, M. le président. Encore une fois, je félicite le ministre et le gouvernement pour ces louables initiatives salutaires pour le sport, ainsi que pour les sportifs. L'institut du sport sera lui-même de haut niveau, donc de qualité. Il dispensera des cours, et viendra de l'avant avec un programme ambitieux de formation.

M. le président, *to conclude, we have listened to different orators here, and we have seen that* l'opposition essaie toujours de nous donner des leçons. Ils croient qu'ils sont les vrais connaisseurs en matière sportive. Ils ne proposent rien de concret et n'ont rien fait de concret

dans le domaine que j'ai mentionné. Ils trouvent toujours à nous critiquer et de taper en-dessous de la ceinture.

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, laissez-moi dire à cette opposition que c'est sous le règne du Parti travailliste que l'île Maurice a eu la première médaille au *Commonwealth*, en la personne du boxeur, Monsieur Richard Sunee, en Malaisie. C'est encore lorsque le Parti travailliste était au pouvoir, avec son allié de toujours le PMSD, que la première médaille olympique fut discernée en 2008, en Chine, à Bruno Julie, et à toute l'île Maurice. La liste est longue, M. le président, et je suis sûr qu'avec le *New Sports Bill 2013*, on va entrer dans une nouvelle sphère de notre sport.

Merci, M. le président.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No interruption, hon. Bhagwan! Yes, hon. Quirin!

(1.05 a.m.)

**Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière):** M. le président, étatiser, centraliser et bureaucratiser le sport à Maurice, telle est, en effet, la démarche de ce gouvernement, en particulier celle du ministre de la jeunesse et des sports avec la présentation de cette nouvelle loi. M. le président, depuis 2010, ici même dans cette Chambre, je n'ai jamais cessé de réclamer que des amendements soient apportés au *Sports Act*. Et, à chaque fois, l'honorable ministre avait répondu laconiquement aux questions parlementaires par 'very soon'. Mais au final, il a pris cinq années pour venir, non pas avec des amendements, mais avec une nouvelle loi; *the Sports Bill 2013*. Il était grand temps, pourrait-on dire, car le sport sur le plan international a beaucoup évolué ces dernières années, et Maurice avait le devoir de se mettre en harmonie avec ces évolutions.

M. le président, dois-je rappeler à cette Assemblée que si cette loi est présentée hâtivement aujourd'hui, c'est surtout en raison d'une menace du Comité international olympique qui, en avril dernier, avait donné six mois au gouvernement d'amender la loi, sous peine de se voir sanctionné sur la scène internationale.

*(Interruptions)*

Un premier délai du 10 novembre de cette année, bien sûr n'ayant pu être respecté par l'honorable ministre des Sports, un nouveau *deadline* avait donc été recherché, et le 10 novembre dernier, le Comité international olympique avait accordé à Maurice un délai supplémentaire jusqu'au 31 décembre de cette année, sous peine aussi, M. le président, qu'une suspension soit appliquée en cas de non respect.

M. le président, si nous sommes en train de débattre cette nouvelle loi aujourd'hui, ce n'est sûrement pas en raison du fait que le ministre des Sports a longuement travaillé sur une nouvelle loi pour le sport, mais bien plus en raison du fait qu'il est forcé de respecter la feuille de route du Comité international olympique. Ce qui explique sans doute pourquoi, aujourd'hui, le mouvement sportif mauricien a droit à une loi bâclée, des fois incompréhensible, et souvent hors-la-loi vis-à-vis des règles des fédérations internationales et de la Charte olympique.

M. le président, la question qu'on doit se poser est: est-ce que le *Sports Bill* de 2013 vient répondre aux besoins et aux attentes du mouvement sportif mauricien? Le *New Sports Bill*, M. le président, comme indiqué dans son *Explanatory Memorandum*, a pour objectif de promouvoir *a better management and organisation of sports in Mauritius, in line with the Olympic Charter*. Et nous avons aussi entendu l'honorable ministre des Sports dans son intervention venir dire que cette loi vise à donner plus d'autonomie aux fédérations et associations sportives à Maurice. Mais permettez-moi, M. le président, d'en douter sérieusement.

Cinq longues années, et je fais l'impasse sur les trois autres années de Sylvio Tang, où la même promesse avait été faite, durant laquelle les fédérations et le Comité olympique mauricien ont dû s'armer de patience pour avoir une loi qui devait remettre le sport mauricien dans de meilleures conditions. Mais que voyons nous, M. le président, depuis le samedi 24 novembre 2013, lorsque le *new Sports Bill* a été rendu public? Un concert de commentaires négatifs, et certains n'ont pas hésité à qualifier cette loi - comme l'a précisé l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avant moi - de répressive et dictatoriale. En effet, le président du Comité olympique mauricien est allé encore plus loin en affirmant que le *new Sports Bill* n'est pas conforme à la Charte olympique, et je me permets, M. le président - avec votre permission - de citer le président du COM -

« Le mouvement sportif mauricien a eu droit à une nouvelle loi qui est dangereuse et contraire à l'esprit de la Charte olympique. »

Et pourtant, M. le président, cette nouvelle loi devait se faire en stricte conformité avec la Charte olympique, tout en prenant en considération les règlements des fédérations internationales auxquelles nos fédérations nationales sont affiliées. Pour preuve, les deux feuilles de route du Comité international olympique en date du 10 avril et du 10 octobre 2013 respectivement, selon lesquelles l'honorable ministre des Sports avait été invité à amender le *Sports Act* de manière à le rendre pleinement compatible avec les principes et les règles qui gouvernent le mouvement olympique, et notamment le principe fondamental de l'autonomie des organisations sportives nationales.

M. le président, le ministre fut aussi invité dans cette même foulée à amender la loi, afin que nos fédérations nationales puissent respecter les règles de base des instances sportives internationales avec lesquelles elles sont affiliées pour avoir le droit de participer dans des compétitions internationales. Et, au lieu d'aller dans cette direction, M. le président, le ministre vient, au contraire, avec sa nouvelle loi, bafouer toutes ces règles de base.

M. le président, cette nouvelle loi n'est pas digne d'une République de Maurice moderne et qui veut se faire respecter par les instances internationales. Avec le new *Sports Bill*, le ministre des Sports s'arroge de tous les droits, y compris celui de décider à la place des fédérations, et d'imposer son dictat sur ces mêmes fédérations.

M. le président, qu'est-ce qu'une loi sportive? Elle doit être, avant tout, une loi cadre qui permet aux fédérations d'évoluer en toute autonomie et en toute sérénité. Une loi sur le sport, M. le président, doit aussi être un outil qui permet aux fédérations, au Comité olympique mauricien et le ministère des Sports de collaborer pleinement afin d'assurer la réussite de nos sportifs sur le plan national aussi bien qu'international. Mais, avant toute chose, M. le président, une loi sur le sport ne doit pas être répressive à l'égard des dirigeants qui sont des bénévoles, même si nous savons que tout n'est pas parfait à ce niveau.

M. le président, comment le ministre des Sports peut-il venir parler d'autonomie quand ses pouvoirs selon cette nouvelle loi sont infinis ? Plus d'une soixantaine de fois, dans la nouvelle loi, on note que '*the Minister may, shall, approve, appoint or suspend.*' Comment peut-on parler d'autonomie, M. le président, quand c'est le ministre qui décide de tout selon cette nouvelle loi ? En fait, le ministre, M. le président, a trouvé une parade pour avoir un contrôle

total sur la vie sportive à Maurice. Et cette parade, M. le président, c'est sa lutte contre la prolifération *of fictitious federations and sports clubs*.

Selon la section 11 sous le chapitre de *Recognition of Sports Organisations*, le ministre s'octroie un pouvoir absolu sur la base même du mouvement sportif mauricien. Je me permets, M. le président, de citer un paragraphe de la lettre du Comité international olympique en date du 10 octobre 2013, adressée au ministre des Sports et au président du Comité olympique mauricien. Et cela, l'honorable Shakeel Mohamed a - je suppose ; je ne dirais pas volontairement - omis de faire référence. Je cite un paragraphe de la lettre.

'Nous comprenons qu'un processus administratif d'enregistrement des associations tel qu'il existe actuellement au niveau du *Registrar of Associations* est nécessaire pour donner notamment une existence juridique à une association. Ceci n'est évidemment pas contraire au principe d'autonomie. Cependant, ce processus ne nous semble pas devoir faire l'objet d'une approbation préalable du ministère, car ceci reviendrait finalement à donner au ministère une sorte de droit de veto préalable. C'est ce que veut faire l'honorable ministre des Sports avec le *new Sports Bill*'.

Effectivement, M. le président, avec la nouvelle philosophie du *new Sports Bill* en ce qui concerne la reconnaissance des clubs, c'est le ministre qui décide de la vie et de la mort d'un club. En fait, M. le président, le ministre aura aussi le pouvoir de décider quel sport peut être pratiqué de manière compétitive à Maurice, et je dois dire que la volonté du ministre de tout contrôler ne s'arrête pas aux nouveaux clubs, puisqu'il est dit que même les clubs existants vont être contrôlés par le ministre, car eux aussi auront besoin d'un certificat de reconnaissance.

M. le président, pourquoi le ministre veut-il contrôler l'enregistrement des clubs, alors que ce travail qui est avant tout technique aurait été mieux fait par les fédérations qui savent plus que tout le monde si un club fait du *real and ongoing activity*? Et, d'autre part, le *Registrar of Associations* confère son entité juridique et officielle aux clubs avant même qu'ils adhèrent à leurs fédérations respectives.

Pourquoi vouloir changer les procédures en les rendant plus compliquées? Comme les fédérations sont composées de clubs, le ministre aurait eu la possibilité de vérifier - si besoin est - quels sont les clubs qui en font partie au moment où les fédérations le solliciteront, en vue d'obtenir la reconnaissance de son ministère. Ce n'était pas nécessaire d'imposer aux clubs la

reconnaissance du ministère avant d'aller au *Registrar*. Cela peut être vérifié quand les fédérations vont vers le ministère pour obtenir leur reconnaissance, qui est correct, à mon avis, et je partage ce point.

Je propose donc, M. le président, qu'un amendement soit apporté. Je demande à l'honorable ministre de bien vouloir apporter un amendement à la section 11 (1)(b), afin qu'un club fasse sa demande d'enregistrement au *Registrar of Associations* avant d'aller demander son affiliation auprès de la fédération concernée, sans passer par lui et sans passer par le ministère.

M. le président, dans une administration saine du sport, un ministre ne peut pas s'arroger le droit de décider à la place d'une fédération, et de surcroît venir choisir les clubs qui devraient en faire partie. Le principe d'une séparation de pouvoirs entre l'Etat et les associations sportives est un droit acquis à Maurice. De ce fait, le ministre ne peut venir biffer d'un trait de plume ce droit, qui est aussi un droit fondamental dans la Charte olympique.

M. le président, on pourrait qualifier la démarche de l'honorable ministre des Sports de dangereuse. Sans doute, c'est un mauvais précédent pour le monde sportif, d'autant plus que la loi ne fait aucune provision sur les critères qui seront pris en considération pour donner ce précieux sésame, qui est le certificat de reconnaissance, aux clubs aussi bien qu'aux fédérations. Je propose à nouveau à ce que le ministre des Sports enlève la clause 11 (1) (c) (i) et (ii), ayant trait au *certificate of recognition*, de la loi.

M. le président, la reconnaissance d'un club, qu'il soit semi-professionnel ou amateur, doit être l'affaire des fédérations respectives et du *Registrar of Associations*. En conséquent, je propose aussi que la clause 11 (2), ayant trait toujours au *certificate of recognition*, soit aussi amendée.

M. le président, il est clair aussi que le ministre veut se servir de cette nouvelle loi pour régler ses comptes avec certains dirigeants sportifs. Cette démarche a un nom. Une dictature ! Ou si voulez, une étatisation du sport à Maurice. Et nous avons vu cela venir ces dernières années, principalement avec l'affaire de la Fédération mauricienne de natation. M. le président, je suis obligé de le dire, par la faute et l'entêtement de l'honorable ministre, cette fédération a été bloquée et immobilisée pendant de longues années. En juillet 2011, après des résultats qualifiés d'extraordinaires et remplis d'espoir, ramenés par nos nageurs aux Jeux des îles aux Seychelles, la Fédération mauricienne de natation passa par une crise, avec la démission de six membres de

son exécutif. De 2011 à 2013, M. le président, les nageurs mauriciens ont été pénalisés, puisque la fédération avait perdu sa reconnaissance du ministère des Sports. Pourquoi ? Parce que l'honorable ministre voulait à tout prix mettre en place un *caretaker committee* que la Fédération internationale de natation refusait sur la base du respect de l'autonomie d'une fédération, sous peine d'une suspension.

M. le président, l'affaire de la Fédération mauricienne de natation est l'exemple type du refus des fédérations internationales à ce que l'Etat intervienne dans les affaires internes d'une fédération nationale. Or, M. le président, le nombre de fois que le ministre décide à la place des fédérations, dans le *new Sports Bill*, est une indication claire que l'Etat Mauricien va vers un clash certain avec les instances sportives locales et internationales. N'oublions pas, M. le président, que, dans cette affaire qui a secoué le monde sportif durant ces deux ans, et qui provoque encore, je dois le dire, une situation conflictuelle entre le Comité olympique mauricien et le ministère des Sports, c'est que le ministre, à l'époque, voulait imposer deux nageuses dans la sélection pour les Jeux des îles de l'Océan Indien aux Seychelles, contre l'avis de la présidente d'alors, voire même celui du Directeur technique national. Question d'ingérence dans les affaires des fédérations, nous avons eu droit à toute une série depuis l'arrivée de l'honorable ministre des Sports, en dépit du fait qu'il n'a pas ce droit sous l'actuel *Sports Act*.

Maintenant, M. le président, avec les pouvoirs absolus qu'il se donne dans le *new Sports Bill*, ce n'est pas sans raison que les fédérations sont inquiètes. Certaines sont même en consultation avec leurs fédérations internationales pour savoir la marche à suivre, car tout laisse croire que le ministre est en train d'utiliser ce certificat de reconnaissance comme une arme contre les clubs et les fédérations. J'irai même un peu plus loin en disant que ce certificat de reconnaissance dans le *new Sports Bill* est l'arme que le ministre aura entre ses mains pour contrôler de A à Z le mouvement sportif.

M. le président, combien de fois, à travers mes questions parlementaires, nous avons démontré à quel point le ministère des Sports fonctionne au ralenti, les dossiers qui sont oubliés dans un tiroir, ou des décisions qui sont prises à la dernière minute sont légion au ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports ! Et le dernier exemple en date est bien cette loi que nous sommes en train de débattre aujourd'hui. Si le ministre des Sports a pris cinq ans pour venir de l'avant avec cette nouvelle loi, le Premier ministre, lui, en a pris huit pour donner son aval à une loi pour le sport.

Alors, comment ce même ministère, M. le président, va procéder pour allouer des certificats de reconnaissance aux clubs et fédérations qui sont déjà *genuine* et affiliés à leurs fédérations internationales ?

Au bas mot, cette clause concerne plus de 2,500 clubs ! Certains disent 3,000 ou plus. Sans doute, nous sommes partis pour un nouveau cafouillage au sein de ce ministère. A cet effet, M. le président, je propose, à nouveau, que la clause 11 (5) (c) soit enlevée de la loi, et, dans la foulée, je propose aussi que la clause 48 (2) (a) soit aussi enlevée.

M. le président, il est malheureux de le dire - mais il faut quand même le dire - que c'est bien vers une dictature que se dirige le mouvement sportif mauricien, avec en plus une démarche pour prendre, de façon déguisée, le contrôle d'une fédération.

M. le président, dans la clause 11 du *new Sports Bill*, il est indiqué que sera mise en place une nouvelle structure pour gérer le sport semi-professionnel. De plus, sous cette même clause, il est clairement mentionné que c'est aussi le ministre qui décide si un club peut être considéré comme semi-professionnel ou pas, car ce dernier a l'obligation, toujours, d'avoir un certificat de reconnaissance du ministre avant d'aller vers une reconnaissance de sa fédération, ce qui constitue, M. le président, vous en conviendrez, une première à Maurice, et sans doute dans le monde, puisque le ministre disposera des pleins pouvoirs pour décider quel club qui devrait être admis ou pas au sein de cette structure semi-professionnelle. Et, une fois de plus, personne ne connaît les critères qui seront pris en compte dans le choix de ces clubs semi-professionnels. En d'autres mots, M. le président, cette structure semi-professionnelle peut être considérée comme une fédération parallèle. Aujourd'hui, on parle du football, mais le ministre pourrait aussi bien mettre en place des structures similaires pour d'autres disciplines collectives.

M. le président, cette clause vient confirmer notre crainte : que le gouvernement veut mettre fin à tout prix à la régionalisation du sport à Maurice. Alors qu'il était primordial de définir dans la nouvelle loi le rôle des Collectivités locales dans le développement et la promotion du sport, rien, absolument rien n'est stipulé dans le *Bill* allant dans ce sens. Et pourtant, je dois le rappeler, M. le président, en réponse à une question parlementaire en date du 21 mars 2000, la ministre des Sports d'alors, Madame Arouff-Parfait, travailliste de surcroît, avait affirmé, et je cite –

*“Nobody can deny the fact that regionalisation will affect positively the development and promotion of any sports, as it has been proved that it’s only through the process of regionalisation that sports can be made accessible to every citizen, without any discrimination on account of age, creed, colour, sex or religion.”*

Le fait est que les clubs, M. le président, semi-professionnels n’auront pas le droit de porter le nom de leur localité. La section 14 2(a), en est la preuve concrète de ce j’avance.

M. le président, cette démarche laisse sans aucun doute une porte ouverte pour le retour des clubs de football que certains appellent traditionnels - ‘clubs longtemps’, et que moi, je pourrais aussi appeler à caractère communal - car il faut aussi prendre en considération que dans la section 14, on peut déduire que les *sports clubs* portant le nom de leur localité ne pourront faire partie d’aucune structure semi-professionnelle, même s’ils en ont les moyens, vu du fait qu’ils portent le nom de leur localité. C’est de la pire discrimination, M. le président, alors que le ministre ose parler dans sa loi de respecter les sections 22 et 24 de l’*Equal Opportunities Act*! M. le président, la première personne qui devrait, donc, être sanctionnée sous la section 44(1) (a) de cette nouvelle loi – si cette clause est maintenue – n’est autre que l’honorable ministre des Sports, lui-même, car il permet la création de deux catégories de clubs, donc deux catégories de citoyens. Ce qui va à l’encontre même du principe d’équité.

De ce fait, M. le président, je propose que la section 14(1) soit amendée de façon à insérer les mots “*semi-professional club*” après les mots “*every sports club*”, et que les sections 14(2) et 14(3) soient enlevées de la loi. Ceci de façon à ce que tous clubs soient égaux en droit et en responsabilité.

M. le président, dans la rédaction de la nouvelle loi, il est à constater que le ministre a confondu vitesse et précipitation. Il semble avoir oublié que le mouvement sportif mondial évolue sur la base de la Charte olympique, à savoir un mandat de quatre ans à tout bureau qui est en place. Or, à la section 13(4) (a), la loi stipule que l’exécutif des comités régionaux doit être renouvelé chaque année. C’est une aberration, vous en conviendrez, M. le président, quand on sait que les comités régionaux sont élus pour un mandat de quatre ans !

Je propose à nouveau - et j’espère que l’honorable ministre m’entend - que la section 13(4) (a) soit amendée, afin que l’exécutif des comités régionaux soit aussi élu pour une durée de quatre ans.

M. le président, je constate que dans le *new Sports Bill*, le ministre vient aussi avec la mise en place, entre autres, de deux nouvelles structures. Il s'agit, donc, du *National Institute of Sports*, et d'autre part, le *Sports Development Council*. S'il est vrai de dire que l'arrivée du *National Institute of Sports* peut être une bonne chose pour le sport mauricien, je dois aussi rappeler à la Chambre, M. le président, que c'est un projet annoncé en grande pompe, depuis 2010, dans le discours-programme. Et voilà que, cette fois-ci, dans la nouvelle loi, nous retrouvons à nouveau le projet du *National Institute of Sports* ! Et je ne peux cependant que souhaiter, M. le président, que cette structure ne connaisse pas le même sort que le Tribunal d'Arbitrage ou encore le *Mauritius Institute for Drug-Free* qui sont des instances inscrites dans l'actuel *Sports Act* depuis belle lurette, mais qui n'ont jamais vu le jour. Par contre, M. le président, en ce qu'il s'agit du *Sports Development Council*, je dirai que c'est une structure de trop.

M. le président, le *Mauritius Sports Council* pourrait devenir, sous la nouvelle, le *Mauritius Sports and Development Bill*. Vu que les locaux du *MSC* dispose déjà d'infrastructure, d'un personnel, d'un conseil, il serait à mon avis plus judicieux de combiner les deux structures de façon à être plus *cost-effective*, à dépenser moins, à faire des économies, au lieu d'avoir deux structures similaires si on peut dire, à moins, bien sûr, que la volonté du ministre est de faire de la place aux éternels petits copains ; je n'en sais rien.

M. le président, je propose de ce fait, au ministre, d'amender la section 17 pour que le *Mauritius Sports Council* soit désormais connu comme le *Mauritius Sports and Development Council*. Et, dans la même foulée, je propose aussi que la section 43 soit enlevée de la loi. M. le président, lorsque le ministre était venu avec ses propositions, dans un passé récent, devant les fédérations, dans le cadre justement de l'élaboration de cette nouvelle loi, il y avait une opposition à une proposition concernant la possibilité, en cas de conflit, de faire appel au ministre à travers la clause *Appeal to Minister*. Et le *CIO*, je dois le rappeler, M. le président, dans une lettre en date du 10 octobre 2013 - que j'ai citée précédemment - avait laissé clairement comprendre que, premièrement, il est contre-productif de multiplier les instances d'arbitrage. Et secundo, que ministère des Sports n'est pas un tribunal. Je cite, entre autres, le directeur du département des relations publiques avec les comités nationaux olympiques du *CIO* et le président de l'ACNOA. Il fit, M. le président – ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, c'est le directeur du département des relations publiques –

“Le ministère n'est pas un tribunal, et par conséquent, n'a pas vocation à être saisi de tel cas en se substituant aux instances établies. Ce serait contraire aux principes d'autonomie.”

On pourrait déduire qu'effectivement le Comité international olympique est contre le fait qu'il y ait une instance d'arbitrage entre celle d'une fédération nationale et le tribunal d'arbitrage.

M. le président, sans aucun doute, si cette loi est adoptée telle qu'elle nous est proposée, nous entrerons dans une période de turbulence. Nous sommes témoins quotidiennement à quel point l'arsenal des lois criminels à Maurice peut sanctionner ceux qui ont fauté. Ce qui veut dire que nous disposons d'assez de lois à Maurice pour punir ceux qui les enfreignent. Dans une loi sur le sport, des sanctions comme des amendes allant jusqu'à R 100,000 ou des peines d'emprisonnement n'ont pas leur place, M. le président. C'est une section qui, à mon avis, devrait aussi être enlevée de la loi.

M. le président, je le redis, une loi sur le sport n'a pas comme vocation d'imposer des règles internes aux fédérations, ni de contrôler l'avis des clubs. Ce *Sports Bill*, tel qu'il est libellé, est en contradiction avec tout ce qui a été dit par le Comité international olympique et qui réclame, depuis avril dernier, plus d'autonomie pour les fédérations nationales. M. le président, cela ne veut pas dire, bien sûr, que les fédérations ne devraient rendre des comptes en ce qu'il s'agit du financement reçu des fonds publics et privés. Bien au contraire, une bonne tenue des comptes ne peut que rendre plus crédible toute fédération.

M. le président, en fait, on pourrait dire *the Minister has taken everybody for a ride*, car, malgré les consultations qu'il a eues, il n'a pas pris en considération les recommandations et propositions du Comité international olympique, ni du COM, encore moins des fédérations sportives. Et pourtant, le Comité international olympique, M. le président, avait prévenu le ministre, depuis avril dernier, qu'une loi sur le sport ne peut se substituer au statut d'une fédération nationale, et que, pour assurer le développement du sport de haut niveau, il est primordial qu'une loi respecte le principe d'autonomie d'une fédération et de la non-ingérence des autorités gouvernementales. Or, malheureusement, M. le président, le *Sports Bill 2013* vient faire tout le contraire.

Je vous remercie.

(1.40 a.m.)

**Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):** M. le président, je voudrais tout d'abord vous remercier pour l'opportunité qui m'est accordée de débattre sur ce projet de loi qu'est le *Sports Bill 2013*. Je voudrais tout d'abord féliciter mon collègue, le ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports, lui-même qui a été un footballeur de haut niveau, quelqu'un qui a côtoyé le sport de haut niveau pendant de longues années au niveau d'un club qui a fait la gloire du football mauricien, mais aussi l'honorable Devanand Ritoo a brillé en tant que footballeur sur le plan africain et sur le plan international. Ceci pour vous dire que la proposition qui est à l'étude à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui émane de quelqu'un qui, non seulement a le charisme, mais aussi la compétence, et surtout l'expérience dans le domaine sportif qui nous concerne aujourd'hui.

J'ai écouté avec beaucoup d'attention, M. le président, mon ami l'honorable Quirin. Il a, en maintes occasions, mentionné un élément un peu choquant. Il a, en maintes occasions, mentionné le fait que cette proposition de loi est une loi répressive et dictatoriale. En maintes occasions! Cependant, il m'a un peu déçu, M. le président, du fait qu'à aucun moment il n'a cité un seul exemple de ce projet de loi pour venir justifier ce qu'il a qualifié de loi répressive et dictatoriale.

Je me permets, cependant, M. le président, de rectifier cela, et je voudrais citer la section 11 sous-section 5 (a) du projet de loi qui se lit ainsi –

*“The Minister shall, after consultation with the Mauritius Olympic Committee, the Mauritius Paralympic Committee, the appropriate International Sports Federation or such other body as he may determine, and on being satisfied that the sports organisation, sports club or association of semi-professional clubs has been registered with the Registrar of Associations, issue a certificate of recognition to it.”*

Consultation, M. le président, à tous les niveaux avant que ne soit octroyé le *certificate of recognition*. Il est du devoir de tout gouvernement responsable, M. le président, de veiller sur *the proper management of public funds*. C'est un fait que de tout temps le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports - c'est le cas à Maurice comme à travers le monde - accorde des *grants* aux *sports federations*. Il vient financer le déplacement pour la participation des différentes équipes aux niveaux des différentes disciplines dans des compétitions régionales ou internationales.

Cependant, tout gouvernement responsable, tout ministère responsable, tout ministre responsable, M. le président, est redevable; redevable vis-à-vis de la nation, redevable vis-à-vis de cette Chambre et de la population, comme le dit si bien l'honorable Bhagwan, en ce qui concerne la bonne gestion des finances publiques. C'est une notion et un principe de *good governance* de base. Personne, que ce soit une fédération ou une association sportive internationale ou locale, n'échappe pas à cette règle, M. le président.

A maintes reprises, mon ami et collègue, l'honorable Quirin, a mentionné l'ingérence du ministère. Il a mentionné le fait que le ministère, à travers ce projet de loi, vient étouffer la liberté et l'autonomie des différentes associations sportives ou fédérations. Je me permets, M. le président, en toute modestie et humilité, de rappeler à mon ami et collègue, l'honorable Quirin, la teneur des questions parlementaires qu'il a lui-même adressées à M. le ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports. Dans la question B/657, l'honorable Quirin demande au ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports -

*“(...) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether in regard to football he will state how he proposes to achieve the proposed objective of the reorganisation thereof with a view to reviving public interest and fostering cohesion through the introduction of a new Sports Bill.”*

Dans une autre question parlementaire en date du 16 avril 2013 portant la référence B/136, toujours de l'honorable Quirin –

*“(...) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the situation prevailing at the Mauritius Weightlifting Federation he will state the remedial actions taken, if any, by his Ministry as at to date.”*

En réponse à cette question, l'honorable Quirin vient faire la remarque suivante, et je cite –

« Je vais rappeler à la Chambre que cette fédération d'haltérophilie ne fonctionne pas depuis plus de 20 mois. L'honorable ministre, dans sa réponse, vient nous dire qu'il a, depuis le 21 février dernier, écrit au COM pour la tenue d'une réunion avec toutes les parties concernées. »

Et il continue -

« Puis-je demander à l'honorable ministre, M. le président, s'il peut nous dire qu'est-ce qui se passera si, d'ici six mois, il n'a toujours aucune réponse du Comité olympique mauricien? »

M. le président, ce sont les commentaires faits par l'honorable Quirin dans cette auguste Assemblée, et il ne s'arrête pas là.

*(Interruptions)*

La question B/189, toujours de mon ami, l'honorable Quirin, adressée à M. le ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports se lit ainsi –

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, il demande au ministre –

*“(...) in regard to the Mauritius Judo Ju-Jitsu Federation and associated disciplines, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of a complaint emanating from the former General Secretary thereof, and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.”*

Donc, lui-même vient faire ressortir les disfonctionnements qui existent au niveau des différentes fédérations sportives, et il demande l'intervention, M. le président, de notre cher ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports. Et, aujourd'hui, il vient affirmer qu'il y a ingérence ! *Which is which*, M. l'honorable Quirin? Comprene qui pourra!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Kindly address the Chair! Hon. Hossen, kindly address the Chair!

**Mr Hossen:** M. le président, je m'adresse à vous.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin, no interruption!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Hossen:** Donc, pour vous dire, M. le président, que ce qu'avance l'honorable Quirin, porte-parole de l'opposition en matière de sports et de jeunesse ; mais on ne comprend plus son raisonnement. Pendant les sessions de questions parlementaires, il tient des propos, où il vient interroger M. le ministre pour que M. le ministre à son tour intervienne lorsqu'il y a

disfonctionnement des fédérations sportives, et pendant son discours - on a été témoin - il vient accuser le ministre d'ingérence. Donc, tout cela est un peu malhonnête, malheureusement !

M. le président, tout à l'heure je reviendrai sur les propos de mon ami, l'honorable Quirin. Je pense que ce projet de loi à l'étude intéresse 22 parlementaires qui vont intervenir dans ce débat. Pour vous dire l'importance, l'intérêt et la raison-d'être d'un tel projet de loi, M. le président ! D'ailleurs, l'objectif officiel dans l'*Explanatory Memorandum* qui nous a été circulé - l'honorable Quirin l'a cité -

*"The main object of this Bill is to promote better management and organisation of sports in Mauritius, in line with the Olympic Charter."*

Tout à l'heure, il y a eu une déclaration de l'honorable Quirin dans le sens qu'il y aurait eu un ultimatum de la fédération olympique internationale concernant l'avènement du *New Sports Bill*. C'est malheureux de noter que ce que l'honorable Quirin a omis de mentionner c'est que le Comité olympique international est intervenu suite à un jugement, M. le président, de la Cour suprême au sujet qu'il y aurait eu *five fictitious federations which did not have voting rights in the Mauritius National Olympic Committee election*, et que la Cour suprême a trouvé cela inacceptable. C'est suite à ce jugement de la Cour suprême que le Comité olympique international a délégué deux représentants à Maurice, et c'est suite aux différentes consultations qu'il y a eu entre ces deux représentants du Comité olympique international et les autorités locales qu'il a été décidé de venir avec ce projet de loi. Donc, ça c'est la vérité. Cela peut être vérifié, M. le président.

(*Interruptions*)

Je pense qu'il a omis. Je souhaite de tout cœur qu'il aurait omis, M. le président, de mentionner cela. Mais c'est bon quand même que *we set the records right*. Donc, l'objectif principal c'est la promotion de la bonne gouvernance au niveau des différentes gestions qui se font, des différentes associations, des différentes fédérations sportives sur le plan local, M. le président. L'objectif c'est de veiller qu'il y ait un droit de regard sur la bonne gestion des finances des différents *grants* accordés à ces différentes associations et fédérations, tenant en compte les réalités locales du monde sportif mauricien. C'est important de mentionner cela, puisque de nos jours, par rapport à ce qui se passait en 1999, notre jeunesse, la jeunesse de l'île Maurice, aujourd'hui tous ceux qui sont concernés par le sport, les différentes disciplines

sportives, qu'ils soient participants ou organisateurs, sont exposés, grâce à la télévision satellitaire, M. le président, à tout ce qui se passe au niveau des différentes organisations sportives, au niveau des différentes tenues de rassemblement sportif, au niveau de l'organisation du sport à travers le monde ; cela, dans toutes les disciplines. Donc, il était important et impératif pour l'intérêt de cette auguste Assemblée et l'intérêt en général dans le pays, sur tout ce qui se passe au niveau des débats au sein de cette Assemblée au niveau du *Sports Bill* qui est en circulation. On a eu, à travers la presse parlée, à travers la presse écrite, et on remercie les membres de la presse pour l'intérêt qu'ils portent, autant que le gouvernement avec l'avènement de ce nouveau projet de loi.

Nous avons, comme je vous ai démontré, M. le président, une situation inacceptable au niveau de certaines fédérations sportives. Je vous ai mentionné tout à l'heure les différentes questions parlementaires qui ont été posées à ce sujet. M. le président, l'affluence qu'a connue notre sport roi, le football, auparavant, n'est plus la même de nos jours. Je dénonce cependant que lorsque nous avons un projet de loi qui concerne le monde sportif, qui concerne toutes les disciplines sportives, on a eu tendance, au sein des différents débats, à mettre l'emphase non seulement uniquement sur la pratique du football à Maurice, mais sur des événements qui se sont passés de nombreuses années de cela. On a eu tendance, M. le président, à insister sur le communalisme dans le sport quand ce projet de loi, M. le président, ne concerne nullement le communalisme.

M. le président, ce projet de loi ne concerne nullement l'hooliganisme. M. le président. Ce projet de loi concerne la jeunesse de l'île Maurice. Cette jeunesse qui est idéaliste, cette jeunesse qui est généreuse dans sa démarche, cette jeunesse qui est solidaire dans sa démarche, cette jeunesse d'aujourd'hui qui n'a jamais connu les événements de 1999, M. le président, cette jeunesse qui demande aujourd'hui à obtenir un droit fondamental à chaque individu d'avoir la possibilité de pratiquer un sport, d'exercer une discipline, d'avoir une activité de loisir, et cela en communion avec tous ses amis de son quartier, avec tous ces adeptes de cette même discipline sportive à travers le pays. C'est un projet de loi qu'attend cette jeunesse mauricienne. C'est un projet de loi, M. le président, qui ne vient pas éliminer ; il faut préciser, mettre l'emphase sur cet aspect.

On a tendance à faire croire que ce projet de loi, le *Sports Bill* de 2013, vient éliminer la régionalisation. Un orateur précédent a même mentionné qu'on est en train de couper un cordon ombilical. Mais, non, M. le président. Ce projet de loi vient, au contraire, améliorer, consolider la régionalisation. Je viendrai vous expliquer pourquoi j'affirme cela tout à l'heure.

Non seulement ce projet de loi vient consolider la régionalisation, mais ce projet de loi vient innover, à travers l'institution du *National Sports Clubs*, à travers le semi-professionnalisme au niveau du sport à Maurice, non seulement du football mais au niveau de toutes les disciplines sportives à Maurice. En écoutant certains membres de l'opposition, on a l'impression que depuis 1999, le Scouts Club, le Cadets Club, la Fire Brigade ou le Sunrise ne pratiquent plus le football à Maurice. C'est faux! Le Cadets Club, le Scouts Club, le Sunrise, la Fire Brigade jouent au football chaque week-end à l'île Maurice, dans toutes les régions de l'île Maurice. Et l'affluence, l'animation, l'amitié, la solidarité, la communion entre les spectateurs de ces différentes équipes se manifestent, M. le président, au niveau de ces différentes régions. La régionalisation, M. le président, a été une démarche sincère.

La régionalisation à travers le *Sports Bill*, le *Sports Act* de 2001 a été une démarche sincère. Et je prends à témoin mon ami, l'honorable Quirin, au temps où j'étais moi-même maire de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, il était le président de ma Commission des Sports, M. le président. Et on a tout fait. On n'a nullement lésiné sur les moyens, et je sais qu'en toute franchise il ne viendra pas me démentir. J'ai accordé tous les moyens à l'Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill en tant que maire, pour que cette équipe de l'Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, non seulement à Maurice, mais à travers toutes les disciplines sportives, puisse quand même s'épanouir et être un modèle. Mais on a failli, M. le président. On a failli sous un aspect ; celui de pouvoir attirer l'intérêt, l'affluence dans nos stades pendant les compétitions. On a failli sous cet aspect. On a failli à travers la régionalisation. Et, au contraire, pendant ce moment, M. le président, toutes les conditions favorables étaient réunies pour faire de la régionalisation un succès.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

Il y avait un gouvernement central, M. le président, qui était du même bord politique que toutes les collectivités locales. Il y avait cinq municipalités à ce moment-là, et le gouvernement

central accordait un financement adéquat, M. le président, en faveur de la régionalisation. On accordait, en ce temps, R 1 million de financement à toute équipe de première division, M. le président - à cette époque. Et non seulement cela! A cette époque, on avait veillé à ce qu'on trouve des sponsors pour chaque équipe de première division.

Donc, toutes les conditions favorables étaient réunies. Non seulement une assistance financière, M. le président, mais ces équipes régionales, l'Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/RoseHill avait la préséance des facilités, des infrastructures sportives de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill au détriment des clubs régionaux qui protestaient contre cela. C'est un fait qu'on ne peut pas nier aujourd'hui. Je n'invente pas. Je prends à témoin des procès verbaux dans ce sens. On a eu de nombreuses doléances pour ce privilège qui avait été accordé à l'Union Sportive de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill. C'est pour cela, M. le président, dans cette auguste Assemblée, j'assume pleinement mes responsabilités. On parle d'une chose très sérieuse. On a accordé toutes les chances à la régionalisation, afin qu'elle réussisse. Mes collègues avant moi, de ce côté de la Chambre, M. le président ...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** No interruption!

**Mr Hossen:** ...ont, à maintes reprises, démontré les failles de la régionalisation. On est aujourd'hui à un carrefour, M. le président. *We are at a turning point.* Est-ce qu'on doit, comme le demande l'opposition, tourner notre regard vers le passé? C'est ça qui va faire progresser le sport à Maurice! C'est ça qui va faire grimper nos différentes disciplines sportives au niveau de l'échelle régionale, africaine et internationale! Nous, en tant que gouvernement, M. le président, on doit assumer nos responsabilités. La régionalisation a fait son temps. Elle est aujourd'hui malheureusement dépassée. On n'élimine pas la régionalisation. On vient proposer une autre formule. On vient accorder une nouvelle motivation, M. le président. On vient accorder un nouvel encouragement à cette jeunesse qui est dans l'attente, M. le président ; celui d'avoir un *sponsorship* indispensable pour l'investissement au niveau de ces différentes structures, pour permettre à chaque équipe de première division, à chaque équipe d'élite d'avoir une *junior team*, à chaque équipe d'élite d'avoir une académie de football propre à elle, une pépinière, M. le président. C'est notre devoir en tant que gouvernement responsable. Et je vais vous étonner, M.

le président. Depuis 2005, ce gouvernement a veillé à l'amélioration ou à la construction, - retenez-vous bien - de 300 stades de football dans ce pays. C'est incroyable!

Les infrastructures de loisirs, les infrastructures sportives vont dans chaque coin de ce pays. Au niveau de ma circonscription, on a procédé à la construction des terrains de foot régionaux. On a construit un terrain de foot dans le quartier de Ward IV, M. le président. On construit, en ce moment, un deuxième terrain de foot dans le quartier de Tranquebar ; Tranquebar qui a été dans l'attente pendant plus de 30 années, M. le président, pour un terrain de foot. Cela est en construction à Tranquebar. On construit en ce moment au Champ de Mars une mini soccer synthétique. Il y a eu, la semaine dernière, à la route Militaire, du côté de la Plaine Verte, l'inauguration d'une autre piste synthétique mini soccer, et *we are contemplating, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir*, de construire une autre mini soccer synthétique dans le quartier de Ward IV, du côté de la rue Beaugeard. Je vous parle uniquement de ma circonscription, mais je vous ai mentionné le nombre de 300, M. le président. Ce n'est pas uniquement la construction, le *upgrading*, la rénovation des infrastructures sportives qui va faire progresser le sport à Maurice. Non! Il faut venir avec une nouvelle vision. Il faut innover, apporter une nouvelle motivation, M. le président. Permettre à chaque club l'autonomie. L'autonomie c'est quoi? L'autonomie c'est pouvoir bénéficier du *gate money*, M. le président. C'est cela qui a fait le succès de toutes les disciplines sportives à travers le monde. Le *sponsorship*, le financement des athlètes, la publicité autour de chaque équipe, M. le président. On ne peut pas se permettre, puisque le niveau n'évolue pas, ne progresse pas malgré tous nos efforts financiers. Il faut trouver autre chose. On vient assumer nos responsabilités. On vient proposer, à travers le *Sports Bill 2013, a new avenue*, M. le président. Permettre à chaque discipline sportive de s'épanouir, et donner des moyens financiers, le support technique, l'encadrement à la formation à chaque discipline sportive pour que cette discipline puisse progresser, M. le président. On assume nos responsabilités.

*(Interruptions)*

Vous avez assumé vos responsabilités lorsque vous étiez au gouvernement. Vous avez initié un projet pour l'épanouissement du sport, M. le président. Aujourd'hui, c'est triste de le dire, mais c'est une faillite totale. C'est à nous maintenant d'assumer nos responsabilités.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

**Mr Hossen:** On a étudié la question de fond en comble.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Quirin!

*(Interruptions)*

I want some order in the House! Hon Quirin!

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Patrick Assirvaden! Hon. Quirin, you made your intervention without...

*(Interruptions)*

...any interruption. In a spirit of fairness, you should allow hon. Hossen to intervene without any interruption. So, I don't want any interruption from you, hon. Quirin! Hon. Hossen, please proceed!

*(Interruptions)*

I want some order now!

**Mr Hossen:** M. le président, j'ai fait un constat des faits. Ce n'est pas dans notre intention, et cela n'a jamais été. Ce n'est nullement dans nos intentions de faire de ce projet de loi une question de politique partisane. J'ai mentionné, tout à l'heure, la jeunesse. C'est le temps de l'idéalisme, M. le président. La jeunesse c'est le temps de la générosité. Soyons généreux dans nos démarches. Reconnaissions lorsque nous avons fauté et que cela n'a pas marché. Accordons la possibilité, aujourd'hui, au décideur du jour de venir avec sa proposition.

J'ai dit, M. le président.

(2.08 a.m)

**Mr J. F. François (Third Member of Rodrigues):** M. le président, l'adrénaline du sport, la beauté du sport, la fierté nationale, la fraternité et le sens du patriotisme, c'est là l'importance d'inculquer une vraie culture du sport pour toute la population mauricienne.

M. le président, après avoir écouté les différents orateurs des deux cotés de la Chambre, je dois dire que le sport est un élément unificateur. Le sport est beaucoup plus puissant que la politique, que les comportements, les pensées raciales et communales qui divisent tout un peuple.

Le sport n'a pas de couleur politique. Le sport c'est la santé de la population. Le sport permet de forger l'état d'esprit des hommes et des femmes et tout un peuple face à ces valeurs. Le sport c'est la liberté de l'esprit en face des défis personnels et collectifs. Le sport c'est l'éducation pour tous nos enfants et nos parents. Le sport c'est un symbole d'identité nationale - et la liste continue - étant moi-même un sportif, un sprinter pour avoir été le meilleur athlète en *track and field* les Deuxièmes Jeux de Rodrigues dans les années 90.

Je suis un passionné du sport. Je connais l'amour du sport. Je comprends, aujourd'hui, l'enjeu majeur de ce projet de loi sur le sport, peu importe les différentes argumentations. C'est avec un cœur et un esprit sportif que je soutiens ce projet de loi, avec quelques réserves pour certaines sections -

- (i) donner et assurer une nouvelle dimension au sport au sein de notre République dans la transparence et bonne gouvernance, et
- (ii) donner la possibilité d'amender ladite loi, pour inclure les propositions que je vais faire ici, au nom de Rodrigues, pour l'avancement du sport, après des discussions avec l'autorité Rodriguaise. Rodrigues qui est une pépinière des athlètes pour la République.

M. le président, nous ne sommes pas encore une grande nation sportive à 100%, mais le sport est important pour le pays, et pour nous tous. Nous devons, petit à petit, construire ce chemin dans cette direction. Cette nouvelle loi est un outil à atteindre cette fin.

M. le président, j'ai été témoin des débats quotidiens, ici même, avec les différentes réponses de l'honorable Ritoo aux questions de l'honorable Quirin, pour l'avancement du sport. J'ai entendu résonner l'hymne national ; nos sportifs sur le podium, notre quadricolore hissé et qui flotte, la joie et la satisfaction que procure le sport. C'est une fierté.

Dans cette même foulée, je voudrais féliciter nos sportifs qui font la fierté de notre pays, nos champions du monde, les médaillés James Agathe, Facson Perrine, Bruno Julie, Joyce Milazar, Christianne Legentil, Sunny entre autres. Je voudrais aussi féliciter les entraîneurs, M. le président, comme Judex Jeannot, Jean Claude Spéville, Alex Albert, Baptiste, Daniel André, qui œuvrent pour le progrès du sport, aussi bien que le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*, avec Michael Glover à la tête.

M. le président, notre sport doit viser le haut niveau. Notre sport doit viser l'excellence à travers le travail dur de nos athlètes, et le soutien inconditionnel de l'Etat. Il nous faut davantage inculquer dans chaque citoyen que le sport est aussi un grand moyen de servir son pays ; notre pays, la République de Maurice. En même temps, je souhaite que l'Etat assume directement auprès de la *National Pension Fund* et la Sécurité sociale les cotisations nécessaires pour nos athlètes pendant qu'ils sont des sélectionnés nationaux. Nos sportifs servent notre pays, et c'est à juste titre que le pays doit les remercier pour leur engagement. L'Etat est appelé à investir davantage dans nos sportifs, nos entraîneurs et nos encadreurs. Je souligne l'effort des récompenses pour nos athlètes qui ont brillé dans les compétitions internationales.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I will comment on some specific provisions of this present Sports Bill 2013. At the outset, allow me to quote what the formal US Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, said in a speech during his conference in Dubai, in April 2010. I quote –

“The unifying force of sport is also critical for his vision of Dubai as a place where people, cultures and ideas meet and flourish. It is this unifying potential that harness sports' ability to be an agent of social change, to shape our societies and world for good”.

What Mr Kofi Annan wants to say is that he wants to force us to use the power of sport as an agent of social change. And this is what we shall achieve here in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my sport vision is to see a Mauritius Republic Sports System, where the right to get access to play, to practice any sport is supported widely by availability of sports facilities and opportunities. These sports opportunities should build individual character, values, and a vibrant society. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sport teaches us a lot of lessons; leadership, teamwork, team spirit and discipline. This is where I welcome the establishment of a National Institute of Sports, which shall be more objective and to the same standard as exist in big countries such as France, Canada and Australia, which have great sports culture.

The Mauritius Institute of Sports must educate and train our sportsmen and women to become role models for our society and our youth. I am myself still inspired by great athletes such as King Carl Lewis, and our first Mauritian Olympian, Mr Daniel André, who greatly influence my life as role models on many fronts, and this is what sports shall bring to our youth in this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I note that the Chairman of the Mauritius Institute of Sports is appointed by the hon. Minister. I shall question this. To be frank, is it a good decision? I rather see all sports institutions in our Republic to be completely non-political. Shall the Chairman's nomination be carried out by the PSC? I question again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nowadays, sport is also called upon to play an important role – this is new – in environmental protection, in line with the climate change. One might ask 'why?' Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the new trend. I believe that the *Maurice Ile Durable* project should also, *inter alia*, relate its action through sport as well. The recent Beijing, Vancouver and London Olympic Games shall inspire us here, as a small developing State, to associate sports and environmental responsibility. This is where I propose that a representative of the *Maurice Ile Durable* Institution forms part of a National Institute of Sports and Sports Development Council, to relate this environmental and sports development as well.

Mention is also made in the Sports Bill about social cohesion. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sport shall also allow us to consolidate not only social cohesion, as specified in the explanatory note, but also to consider social integration. Sport has the opportunity to become a modern tool to combat and tackle the fight against poverty, non-communicable diseases, and the many social ills of our society such as alcoholism and drugs. We know the physical activity and how sports relate to that mental and physical aspect, and this where, in Rodrigues, the Chief Commissioner decided that the Commissioner responsible for Sports is also attributed the responsibility of Health.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall now come to a very important word: multiculturalism; a very big word. The Bill, as per its Explanatory Memorandum, provides for the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion by all sports organisations. This 'multiculturalism' term, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been used and introduced widely in many countries with diverse migrant groups, to maintain their culture and promote the survival of their languages and heritage. In our context, I think we have to be very careful of how we use and treat this multiculturalism in our sports. Sports should not foster – I have listened well from both sides of the House – divisiveness, but should be a driving force of integration and harmony. Multiculturalism should not ignite the feelings of ordinary persons' perceptions and sensitivities in whatever angle they will see it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to mention that the world multiculturalism is always a problem, and has always been largely a contested term. Wherever you go in the world, it has been a largely contested term.

One fundamental thing for us is that sports shall not tolerate any perverse multiculturalism objectives. Many have related various incidences that have arose in the past in relation to sports in Mauritius. I do not want to be cynical here, but the reality of things in our Republic remains what it is in the head and the heart of each of us.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that the aspect of multiculturalism in sports shall be allowed to occur naturally and become self-evident rather than introducing it into the national consciousness for greater goods for sports. Sport is naturally already a diverse matter in our Republic and requires no light for visibility, but rather getting more people to practise either sport professionally or for fun. Shall we insert a national code of ethics for our sports or a national slogan, for example, as we always hear it, '*Nou pays nou sports ou nou fierté*', which shall bind around the neck of each of us for the respect of sport.

Sport does promote great social cohesion and a healthy nation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I remember the 400-metre race gold medal won by the Australian aboriginal woman athlete, Cathy Freeman, at the Sydney Olympics, that brought Australia together. Cathy Freeman's victory created what politicians, Government and taskforce wanted and failed to do in trying to unite the multiculturalism aspect of Australia. It was just so natural, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Every Australian was proud of her as an Australian and not as an aborigine. I continue on the same line. When for the first time the Rugby Union, in 1995, and the Soccer World Cup were held in South Africa, everyone was simply South African, despite the apartheid episode.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us also be inspired from these two examples to create a National Family Culture for our sport through a new social, cultural and economic model. As we refer to it here in Mauritius, I say it like that: *ki to ene hindou, ki to ene kreol, ki to ene musulman ou autre* shall not give anyone a sense of superiority or inferiority in sport organisation. I hear the words 'racism' and 'communalism' mentioned on both sides of the House, and in sports these two words must be at all cost never be allowed to grow up, and should be buried and uprooted. And I sincerely hope that the *garde-fou* set up in this Bill works, hon. Minister of Youth and Sports.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also appeal that our national teams for any sport discipline should never be selected with reference to balance ethnic or race. No! It should be on merits and performances, as also put forward by hon. Minister Mohamed.

I come now to doping and drugs in sports, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Sport is a powerful force for good. However, sport is always vulnerable, and we all have shared responsibility for its protection. Clearly, doping and drugs remain the single biggest threat to the integrity of sports around the world and in Mauritius as well. This reminds me of the 1988 Olympic Race, when Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis run a super human race in history, which, unfortunately, after a few days, the world found out that Ben Johnson was tested positive for using steroid. This should not be the case here, in our Republic, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

This Bill provides for a national commission for a drug-free sport, which I believe shall be an independent organisation to arouse confidence in sport organisation and in the public at large. However, in this Bill, some of the provisions of the power of the Minister are subject to some questioning.

As a matter of good governance and transparency, I sincerely believe that too much power in the hands of a Minister may be perceived as no good to sports. This is my feeling. I might not be correct. I refer here hon. Assirvaden to section 22 (6) (a), where it is said, I quote –

“The Minister may give such written directions of a general character to the Commission, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers necessary in the public interest, and the Commission shall supply with those directions.”

Why? Being given the highly sensitive nature of doping in sports, it is wise that the hon. Minister should not appoint the Chairman of the Commission.

Women in sports - Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill provides pour *une Commission nationale du sport féminin*. This is good. Gender in sport has always been of utmost importance. Its object, amongst others, is to encourage and promote practice of sports in women. I would rather say that not only school women or school girls, but rather women from all walks of life. It always amazes me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I see the Rodrigues elderly champion; she is 72 years old. When I see her running in the field and when she participates in what we call in Rodrigues, *le sport des femmes, c'est extraordinaire, M. le président. C'est pour*

*cela qu'à Rodrigues, we are contemplating to organise what we call les Jeux des femmes de l'océan Indien.* We would reckon it. It would be the first in the Indian Ocean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *les Jeux des îles* is the game that binds us together. What is needed actually is that more efforts are required in terms of investments and preparation for our athletes. As I voiced out in my intervention on the 2014 Budget Speech two weeks ago, I reiterate the wish of the sport community and the Rodrigues political authority, for Rodrigues to participate as an island in the IOJ Games, which is a new shift of the autonomous status for Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I will briefly comment on some specific provisions of the present Bill in relation to Rodrigues. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to restate that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 empowers the Regional Assembly to formulate and implement policies on a wide range of responsibilities, as specified in section 26, which includes sports. In this Bill, Rodrigues is only mentioned as a region, but not on the same footing as those in Mauritius, as per the Second Schedule and the definition of sport regions in section 2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the provision of new structures of this Bill, the functionality of sports in Rodrigues intertwines with national structures, and is subject to some ambiguity. This Bill does not provide any structure in line with the autonomous status of Rodrigues to the disappointment, I will say, of the sports community in Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in that connection, I will make certain proposals as per the wish of the Rodrigues authority, the athletes and the many volunteers for the good running of sports in Rodrigues. I have been made aware that meetings were held there, but the proposal, what is being contemplated is for consideration of the recognition of the specificity of Rodrigues in the field of sport. I believe that the hon. Minister will certainly look into that differently with the Commissioner of Sports for further discussion.

Some of the recommendations are as follows –

- the Rodrigues Regional Coordinating Committee as per section 3 of the Repeal Act must be maintained, and

- some powers of the National Federation shall be delegated to the Rodrigues Coordinating Committee for a more efficient and efficacy in the decision making for the progress of sports in Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to say also that there are conflicting relations between the actual regional committees and mother federations, here, in Mauritius, which I will come to with some more details. It is proposed that the Rodrigues Regional Committees be given this derogation to register themselves as full-fledged sports associations. This will go in line with the autonomous status of Rodrigues, and will empower the Regional Sports Committees to enjoy a more increased *marge de manœuvre* with regard to implementation of the activities, including fund raising and others. It is also proposed that a representative from Rodrigues be nominated on the different managing Boards of the different sports institutions as per the Bill, for example, the National Institute of Sport, the Sport Development Council and others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having said so, a new working strategy structure shall be put in place between the Ministry of Sports of Rodrigues and the various national sport structures as proposed in the Bill. The Regional Assembly shall and must have control of sports in Rodrigues, and assure properly to the national institutions without prejudice to their proper functioning. Let me be clearer. For example, all sports competitions at local level or participation in national competitions are catered for by the Regional Assembly from a meagre local budget provision, and in certain cases very little or even no fund being provided from the National Sports Federations.

By the way, I shall also reiterate our appreciation for Rodrigues for the financing of the Rs24 m. by the Central Government for the reconstruction of Camp du Roi Stadium. *Le berceau de nos athlètes et nos champions.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there shall be the establishment of a Rodrigues Sports Coordinating Committee under this Act. These two new structures shall allow sports organisations affiliated to any national federation and registered to the Registrar of Associations to be recognised by the Regional Assembly. Further, it is provided in the Bill, in Part III – Olympic Committees, Sub-Part (A), section 15 ‘the establishment of Mauritius Olympic Committee’. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the information that I have gathered, in Rodrigues, both the Regional Government and all sports organisations are unanimous for the setting up of a

decentralised Rodrigues Olympic Committee. This substantiates the autonomous status of Rodrigues within the Republic of Mauritius, and I do, myself, support this endeavour for the greater good of our sports. The Rodrigues Olympic Committee will be the representative of a National Mauritius Olympic Committee in Rodrigues. The Rodrigues Olympic Committee shall also, on the same line, as stipulated in section 15, sub-section (4) of the Bill –

“(...) strive to achieve a harmonious relationship with the Ministry (...).”

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Rodrigues Regional Coordinating Committee.

“(...) and share information on important decisions in relation to any sport (...).”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposed Olympic Committee in Rodrigues shall simply contribute to the development and promotion of sports in the interest of one and all. This proposal is based on the same principle as applied in Guadeloupe, Haïti and Reunion Island which have set up a *Comité régional olympique et sportif (CROS)*, and is acting as a representative of the National Olympic of France. Haïti, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does not even have an athletic synthetic track, and in 2012, they had, at least, participated in the London Olympic Games. The modality of how the procedure shall be, I leave it, in a democratic way, to the Commission responsible for Sports in Rodrigues and the Rodrigues various sports associations themselves, after thorough discussions and necessary clearances with the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Ms Anquetil, I will finish, in a few minutes.

M. le président, comme référence, il est bon de noter que le Comité national olympique et sportif français peut déléguer une partie de ses missions aux organes déconcentrés qu'il constitue sous la forme de comités régionaux et comités départementaux olympiques et sportifs. Cette instance décentralisée de la France représente le sport régional pour toutes les questions d'intérêt général.

This is the model that Rodrigues and Mauritius should benchmark on. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would humbly request the hon. Minister of Sports to continue further discussions with all stakeholders in Rodrigues in that direction to support them achieving their objectives, which is a *plus-value* for our Republic in terms of sports development.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, do not interrupt the hon. Member!

**Mr François:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a serious matter. Just to continue on the same line, an application from a sport club in Rodrigues was rejected by the National Sports Federation. According to this present Bill, my question is: to whom the club shall make its appeal? Will it be to the Minister without the concurrence of the Commission of Sports in Rodrigues? We have recently witnessed the unwarranted decision of the National Wrestling Federation on the suspension of the Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee in an unfair and unjust manner. Today, it is a fact that mostly all wrestling medalists of our Republic are from Rodrigues, and the hon. Minister will agree with me, under the great leadership of Alex and Clement Albert. Can you imagine that a wrestling ...

*(Interruptions)*

Sure, we do appreciate your intervention on that, hon. Minister.

Can you imagine that a wrestling champion African medalist like Joyce Milazar is today being deprived of national and international competitions because of the malicious whims and caprices of the National Wrestling Federation? This is a matter of concern, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rodrigues will never accept such behaviour towards our sport icons, and we will not tolerate anyone or any *clique* to kill sport in Rodrigues. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a shame that, today, the Regional Assembly has decided that it will seek recourse from the Supreme Court, if need be, to contest the illegal suspension by the National Wrestling Federation against the Rodrigues Wrestling Regional Sports Committee.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is perceived as if the National Wrestling Federation has a hidden agenda to eliminate all wrestlers from Rodrigues, and we will not allow them to achieve this goal.

*(Interruptions)*

I do agree with you, hon. Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so many damaging letters were sent to our wrestlers and coaches. Unbelievable! In addition, today, a wrestling champion like Michael Guillaume, recently bronze medalist in Madrid competition, is struggling to maintain his scholarship for Dakar. This is unfair! Even for our meetings and training for wrestlers here in Mauritius, not a single wrestler from Rodrigues was invited, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. May I ask those who took the decision from the Federation why such discrimination, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, certainly, I am asking them. This is why I am saying it here and loudly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while awaiting the Sports Bill to be enacted, I have been informed that the Rodrigues Wrestling Committee may seek recourse for justice even from the *Fédération internationale des luttes associées*, if the situation remains unchanged. This should not have happened, as the main objective of the Rodriguan Sports Authority is for the sport coaches to simply boost our sportsmen towards excellence and always secure place on the podium for our Republic, and not to fight for the survival of petty things from sports. This is why I believe that the Independent Sports Arbitration Tribunal is very important.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the proposition of the two structures that I have just mentioned above, namely the Rodrigues Sports Coordinating Committee and the Rodrigues Olympic Committee will charter a new direction for sports in Rodrigues, in accordance with the new Sports Bill 2013.

I will conclude by reiterating my support to the Sports Bill 2013, especially with the many comments and suggestions that I have made with regard to Rodrigues, in order to bring innovative solutions and support towards our sports within the Republic and position ourselves as a great sport nation through a new sport culture. *Allez Maurice! Allez Rodrigues! Vive le sport!*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have done, and I thank you for your attention.

**Mr Assirvaden:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**Mr Henry rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

**Mrs Bappoo rose and seconded.**

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House Stands adjourned.

(2.39 a.m.)

## **MATTER RAISED**

### **PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS - SUPPLY TEACHERS**

**Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal):** M. le président, tout le monde est fatigué, moi aussi d'ailleurs, mais le sens du devoir me pousse à prendre le temps de la Chambre pour parler du sort des *Supply Teachers* dans le secteur prévocationnel.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the past eight years, other colleagues and myself have, on several occasions, drawn the attention of the House, particularly that of the hon. Minister of Education, on the fate of the Supply Teachers in the Prevoc. I will, very briefly, remind the House of the fate of those teachers who work in the most difficult sector of our education system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, - I am trying to be very brief - these teachers have been working for nearly ten years in the Prevoc sector, and they do not receive salaries for the months of November and December because they are being employed on a month-to-month basis. Their end-of-year bonus is being paid in January, but I think last year, they were paid in December. They are not entitled to any sick leave or casual leave. Up to now, they are not even being provided with a payslip. Is it legal not to give someone a payslip? They are being paid, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, and in some cases, even after the 15<sup>th</sup>. For example, this happened in Zone 2.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2009, the PSC has, on two occasions, advertised vacancies for the post of Teacher and Education Officer in the Prevoc sector. On 01 September, vacancy for the post of teacher was advertised, but PSC was, at some point in time, instructed to withhold

the process. I must add that even the Ombudsperson has initiated an enquiry in October 2010, and the Ministry stated that actions will soon be initiated to fill the vacancies. In May this year, it is the post of Educator (Secondary) Prevoc which has been advertised, but up to now applicants have not been called for interviews.

When we look at the Budget estimates, we see that the number of funded positions has decreased. Because of the late hours I am not giving the figures, but I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware that we have decreased the number of funded positions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this year, on 26 March, this House has voted the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, and the amendments that were brought were to create the regime for the operation of fixed-term contracts of employment, to prevent employers from having recourse to such contracts abusively. I am just wondering whether the Ministry of Education is not among these employers who are having recourse to contracts abusively.

Here too, I am not giving all the details. More so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill, voted, made provision for sick leave and casual leave for those who have been in employment for a period of six months. Though these teachers are working for 10 months, even up to now, when they absent themselves for a sick leave, they are not being paid. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the law was voted, and I fear that the Ministry is not respecting the law that this very House has voted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will conclude by saying that I hope that, this time, the Ministry of Education will not hold the process of recruitment, and will abide by the law that has been voted in this House and grant to the Supply Teachers their dues. They are people who have been giving ten years of experience; some of them have followed courses, and they now have the Teacher Diploma Prevoc. I think that we have, at least, to finalise the situation, and give the teachers the recognition they deserve.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me, first of all, thank the hon. Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal for raising this point at this time of the night, and not for the first time, of course.

Further to this specific matter where hon. Mrs Labelle is talking of the fate of the Supply Teachers of Prevocational Sector, I wish to inform the House of the following actions having been initiated already to regularise the situation of the Supply Teachers concerned. An issue which, in fact, dates back to the year 2004, and this could have been settled since long, but if it has not been, it means that there are some difficulties somewhere. But we are on the right track.

In January 2004, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, around 125 Supply Teachers were recruited by the Ministry from among candidates possessing the Cambridge Higher School Certificate or GCE Advance Level, to palliate shortage in the prevocational stream. The Supply Teachers Prevocational were offered employment on the conditions that -

- (i) their employment would be on a purely temporary basis, as and when required, and
- (ii) their employment will not give them any claim for permanent employment.

These were the conditions since 2004.

Today, we have in employment some 31 of the Supply Teachers initially recruited. Their employment had been renewed successively at the beginning of each year on the same terms and conditions. These Supply Teachers, although, they possess the HSC or GCE 'A' Level requirements, do not, all of them, satisfy the full School Certificate requirements of the scheme of service for the post.

In accordance with the existing scheme of service, the requirements for the post are: the Cambridge School Certificate with five credits, including English Language, French Language and Mathematics, obtained at not more than two sittings, together with the Higher School Certificate, or passes in, at least, two subjects at the GCE Advance Level.

It is proposed to regularise the situation inasmuch as they have worked for nearly ten years in the prevocational stream, and have gathered competencies and skills in the sector over the years. In this context, to facilitate the employment of the 31 Supply Teachers Prevocational as Teachers Secondary Prevocational, the scheme of service for the post of Teachers Secondary Prevocational is being amended to include a first intake note providing for the appointment to the grade to be made by persons serving as Supply Teachers in the Prevocational stream and who

reckon, at least, five years of continuous satisfactory service in the teaching of Prevocational education at secondary level.

The amended scheme of service has already been submitted to the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms since 26 June 2013 for consideration, and the process is on. It will take some time. Once the scheme of service would have been amended, recommendations will certainly be made to the PSC for the appointment of these Supply Teachers Prevocational.

I wish to assure the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry has recently regularised the following cases –

- (i) Supply Teachers, oriental languages, who had been in continuous employment since the last 15 years have been absorbed on the permanent and pensionable establishment as teaching assistants in line with a Government decision taken on 09 April 2010, and
- (ii) the ICT teachers employed on contracts since 2002 have been absorbed on a permanent and pensionable establishment as ICT Support Officers as from January.

I am confident, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and wish to reassure the hon. Member and the House that after following the necessary procedures, the situation of these 31 Supply Teachers will be resolved soon by my Ministry.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

*At 2.51 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 11.30 a.m.*