



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 11 JUNE 2013

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 11 of 2013

Sitting of 11 June 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 –

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Financial Services (Special Purpose Fund) Rules 2013 (Government Notice No. 116 of 2013).

B. Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping –

- (a) The Motorways and Main Roads (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 113 of 2013).
- (b) The Rural Road (End of Public Use Road) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 114 of 2013).
- (c) The Annual Report and Accounts of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund for the period 01 July 2009 – 31 December 2010 and for the year ended 31 December 2011.

C. Ministry of Education and Human Resources –

The Financial Statements of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority for the years ended 30 June 2007, 30 June 2008, 30 June 2009 and for the 18-months period ended 31 December 2010.

D. Attorney General's Office –

The Supreme Court (International Arbitration Claims) Rules 2013 (Government Notice No. 115 of 2013).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

AIR MAURITIUS – FLIGHTS - SAFETY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to air safety on Air Mauritius flights, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Civil Aviation Department, for the past three years, information as to the number of reported –
 - (i) safety incidents, indicating if any investigation has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof; and
 - (ii) near miss cases, indicating if any investigation has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (b) state if the post of director of the Civil Aviation Department is vacant and, if so, when it will be filled?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that safety of Air Mauritius operations is the highest priority of the Company. Management has the authority and responsibility to manage safety risks in the Company. This is achieved by the establishment of systematic methods for identifying hazards, assessing risks, assigning priorities to these risks and then by reducing or eliminating those hazards which pose the greatest potential threats.

The safety reporting norms followed by Air Mauritius meet the full requirements of the international safety rules and recommended practices laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This comprehensive reporting scheme ensures that the highest level of safety is maintained at all times. This is acknowledged internationally and accounts for the high reputation that Air Mauritius enjoys. The last security audit of Air Mauritius through the Department of Civil Aviation carried by ICAO was in July 2012. Also, Air Mauritius as an airline was last audited by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in September 2012 and was awarded the IATA Operation Safety Audit Certificate.

Mr Speaker, Sir, pilots are assessed every six months as per international and local licensing regulatory requirements and undergo mandatory recurrent stringent training. Air Mauritius technical personnel are licensed to international standards and goes on refresher courses every 18 to 24 months to maintain the highest level of competency.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it must also be pointed out that Air Mauritius caused a review of flight operations to be carried out by Lufthansa Consulting last year as part of the airline's endeavour to

ensure the continuous improvement of safety. It reported that Air Mauritius had very high safety standards that make the airline a reference in the industry. There has not been any single instance where Air Mauritius has not been authorized to fly to any destination on the ground of the airworthiness or safety of its aircraft.

Last year Air Mauritius introduced a Safety Management System which has redefined in numerous ways the management of safety in the company.

I have also received confirmation from Air Mauritius that any part installed on Air Mauritius aircraft holds a certificate of conformity from the European Aviation Safety Agency and the Federal Aviation Agency of the US. This should dispel any apprehension about the safety of Air Mauritius planes.

In regard to part (a) (i) of the question, I am informed that all airlines are bound to submit mandatory occurrence reports.

All these reports are scrutinised by the Department of Civil Aviation and are audited by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. These reports contain a range of occurrences such as unruly passengers in the cabin, technical defects, grease leak, crack and loose rivets and so on.

I am informed that the ICAO has never, on the basis of these reports, recommended the grounding of Air Mauritius aircraft for safety reasons.

In regard to paragraph (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Director of Civil Aviation that on 15 June 2010, there was a near miss case which occurred between two Air Mauritius aircrafts one A340 and an ATR 72. The pilot of the Airbus sighted the other aircraft on his radar and took appropriate corrective action to divert.

A full investigation was carried out by the Department of Civil Aviation and all personnel concerned including the Air Traffic Controllers and the pilots were questioned.

The report of the investigation carried out by the Director of Civil Aviation on the incident did not reveal any cause for disciplinary action to be taken against any Traffic Controller or Pilot. Subsequently, I requested personally that the UK Civil Aviation Authority reviews the report of the Director of Civil Aviation. The UK Civil Aviation Authority concluded that the report prepared by the Director of Civil Aviation was comprehensive and that a further independent analysis would not be productive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there were three incidents involving Air Mauritius aircrafts on 08 November 2012 in Johannesburg and two ATR 72 flights from Rodrigues. A full investigation has been carried out on these incidents by Air Mauritius; one report has been submitted to the Director of Civil Aviation and the two other reports will be submitted once it is finished.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the post of Director of Civil Aviation will become vacant as from 12 July 2013 as the present holder of the post is on pre-retirement leave since 02 February 2013. The senior most Deputy Director of Civil Aviation has been appointed by the Public Service Commission to act as Director of Civil Aviation pending the filling of the post in a substantive capacity when the pre-retirement leave of the former Director is ended.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has mentioned in his answer that there had been, in fact, three incidents; one at Johannesburg and the two others concerned an ATR flight. The Prime Minister has also stated that after a flight, according to the Air Mauritius Operations Manual, a report is made and analysed by the Department of the Civil Aviation and audited by the ICAO. Can I come to the first incident that the hon. Prime Minister has referred to regarding the flight of Johannesburg? Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, in the course of this flight, in fact, when reaching Johannesburg, there was a severe thunderstorm and the pilot flew into the thunderstorm when other aircrafts ahead of him diverted to other airports for obvious security reason and to make things worse, this plane had, at that time, fuel which was below the minimum amount legally required? In fact, the plane had to make two holds before proceeding to land through this thunderstorm causing immense damage to the plane which cost Rs60 m. to Air Mauritius. I do not have to comment about the trauma that took place inside the airplane at that time. My question to the hon. Prime Minister - because I am going to submit a few documents for his own perusal after my questions – is he aware that this particular incident, therefore, which caused heavy damage to the plane, was, in fact, enquired into by the Department of Civil Aviation and audited by the ICAO?

The Prime Minister: The incident was reported, first of all, to the Civil Aviation Department of the South African authorities, and a report was submitted to the Director of Civil Aviation here. From what I understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, the plane, prior to that, diverted, but the captain has a discretion whether he wants to land or he does not want to land. He got clearance from the Civil Aviation Department, from the Tower, to go ahead and land the aircraft. So, he went ahead and he landed. But, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly said, he decided the approach was not right, he tried to land again. He did not, I must say, see any hailstorm nor was he made aware that there was any hailstorm that he should not try to land the aircraft. So, he went and landed the aircraft, but he went through the hailstorm. Now the question might be: why is it that the plane that was ahead of it, diverted and not him? I am told that he was given clearance because the weather was changing and there were other planes which landed after him. So, he has the discretion, he landed. There was some damage because he went through the hailstorm and this has been repaired. But the company is insured, they do not have actually to go and pay, they have insurance for this. But this has been investigated and the report has been filed to the Department of Civil Aviation and also to the South African Civil Aviation Department.

Mr Ganoo: This plane had to be grounded for six weeks and the costs of repairs amounted Rs60 m. The Prime Minister is saying that the bill was passed to the insurance firm! But is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, in this particular case, in the context of repairs to be carried out to this plane, second-hand spare parts were sought and companies involved in dismantling of aircrafts were contacted for finding the spare parts which were required in this case? As the hon. Prime Minister should know, the problem with second-hand spare parts for use on planes is very dangerous, especially with the flooding of counterfeit parts today all around the world?

The Prime Minister: Let me assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition and, through him, the population at large, that Air Mauritius only uses certified parts which are certified by the European Aviation Safety Agency and also by the Federal Aviation Agency. It is misleading to say as if they are taking parts from other places. These parts are certified, they do not use any other parts, except parts which are certified; that is the case.

Mr Ganoo: Can I, therefore, ask the hon. Prime Minister why in the official documents that I have in my possession, the possibility of looking around for spare parts in dismantled aircrafts was sought? I will table the document for the enlightenment of the hon. Prime Minister because he might not be fed with the right information!

The Prime Minister: I hope I am being fed with the right information, Mr Speaker, Sir. But my understanding is that this is the normal procedure in all aircrafts. I think I saw an article recently that even for the plane of the President of the United States of America, the Air Force One, they do the same procedure. There was an article in some newspaper, but I cannot remember whether it is 'Newsweek' or 'Times'. This is the procedure that is followed, but as long as they are certified parts by the European Aviation Safety Agency and by the US Federal Aviation Agency, only then does Air Mauritius use those parts; that is the procedure they follow.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will later table the documents for the hon. Prime Minister, but let me come to the other two incidents which he mentioned: the cases of the ATR flight. On 22 January of this year, Mr Speaker, Sir, contrary to the Johannesburg flight, this serious incident was never reported to the authorities. That took place on 22 January 2010, where an MK Flight landed on its nose gear and this serious incident put at risk the lives of the passengers and the plane again sustained damages. After this improper landing, it carried out 66 flights and the incident was only discovered through aircraft data analysis. It was subsequently after having carried out the flight and landing on its nose gear that the serious incident was discovered and then the plane went for repairs.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are fully aware and I have to repeat it on several occasions that the purpose of a question is to seek information. You are giving information!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, I have my information, but I want to verify the veracity of that information. This is why I am putting my information to the hon. Prime Minister, for him to confirm or to rebut.

Mr Speaker: I am simply applying the Standing Orders. I hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is fully aware of the Standing Orders on the purpose of putting questions. Proceed hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me answer the two questions separately. I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, that for ATR aircrafts, the pilots cannot know because they are unsophisticated. They are not like the 834 Row or whatever. The pilot cannot know that he has done a heavy landing until afterwards – as the hon. Leader of Opposition has just mentioned – when they do the post- data monitoring, then they can find out. After landing this was checked and it was found out. There were no incidents as such. The aircraft could fly and, therefore, was allowed to fly. In fact, it did not fly for 66 flights as was reported. In fact, I checked and it was only 27 flights. But, after that - because any parts have a lifetime - they decided that this has to be replaced and it was replaced.

As for the two incidents, there was a nose gear landing, this also happened, but there were no exceedencies of specifications, and therefore, there was no reason to change anything and the aircraft is still flying.

Mr Ganoo: I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that in the first case of 22 January 2012, the representative of ATR informed Air Mauritius and I quote -

“We maintain our recommendations to put under quarantine the complete involved NLG and shipset; meaning the NLG leg, the Drag Base and the shock absorber until all relevant data are recovered and analysed by ATR.”

Meaning, therefore, that this plane has sustained damages and ATR was insisting that the plane be quarantined. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of this?

The Prime Minister: I must say that there is also a Separate Safety Office with Air Mauritius, which investigates separately. It is an additional fallback position and it checks on everything that is set. It is true what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said that the ATR recommended this. But, I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, that they always do, whatever the smallest thing they would say be replaced straightaway. But, Air Mauritius and the Department of Civil Aviation also looked at it and they felt that there was no need to replace it straightaway. This plane can fly. It is safe and it has flown. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, no incident happened, but they did change whatever had to be changed after 27 flights.

Mr Ganoo: I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that in this case again, in spite of the insistence of the ATR representatives, the aircraft kept flying and the company was not agreeable to ATR's request. The argument was and I quote from a correspondence –

“Please note that we are on the peak season right now and that grounding the aircraft right now without any NLG spare will greatly impact on the operation.”

So, this was the reason advanced by Air Mauritius for not allowing the plane to be quarantined because “we are on peak season” and commercial operations or operations might be jeopardised.

The Prime Minister: No, I must stress again, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I know this and I have talked to them again that safety for Air Mauritius is their absolute priority. But, they must also balance. If they feel that from their investigation that the part needs not to be replaced straightaway, the plane can fly, this is what they have decided in spite of what ATR said. They allowed the plane to fly and the plane has flown without any incident, but once everything was done, the part was coming to an end of its lifetime; they decided that they would replace it after ten or seven flights. This is what has happened.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister that in this case, unlike the Johannesburg case, no report was made by either the captain or the crew as a result of this incident. The hon. Prime Minister was right that the Operations Manual provide that –

“It is the responsibility of the captain to ensure that any Mandatory Occurrence Report (MOR) is filed to the company immediately after the flight.”

In this case it was not done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister: I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, in fact, the captain did not even realise that there was a heavy landing. He did not even realise and it is an unsophisticated plane. Therefore, they only knew it through the post-data monitoring and this is what has happened in this case.

Mr Ganoo: In the other case of the ATR, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister that on 02 February of this year, the aircraft did a hard landing again and was grounded for several days for maintenance. In this case, the plane made a nose gear landing and the aircraft was grounded for maintenance. Although the incident was reported in this case, no investigation was carried out and no sanction was taken. I am referring to the incident of 02 February 2013.

The Prime Minister: It is not true to say that no investigation has been carried out. As I say, they do it from post-data monitoring. The incident was investigated by Air Mauritius first and then the report is sent to the Director of Civil Aviation and whatever the report shows, action will be taken, if that be.

As I have said, there are three reports. One has already been submitted. The two others are being submitted because they are very detailed and technical reports and it takes an amount of time to be able to do it. That is what is happening at the moment.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can inform the House about the number of foreign pilots recruited by Air Mauritius as compared to the number of local pilots employed by the company?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the exact number, but I know Air Mauritius employs foreign as well as local pilots. May be this is known to Air Mauritius that there have been local Mauritian pilots who say they are trained, they want to get a job in Air Mauritius, they go through the interview and they are not taken and they complain. I have had letters from people. I have met people in different functions who tell me this. I have sent this to Air Mauritius. They say that safety has to be the major priority. They want to have pilots who have experience. It is like what comes first whether the egg or the chicken. For them to have experience they must work somewhere. So, they are looking at this.

Mr Ganoo: I want to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that, as regards the foreign pilots who are recruited by Air Mauritius, no psychological test is carried out on these foreign pilots.

The Prime Minister: That is not true. I have checked this. They all have to go to the same rigorous test including the foreign pilots.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, these safety and security issues which have been raised through this PNQ are of paramount importance to the country and everybody and this is why I am tabling all these documents which support my contention today. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, since the law allows him to do so, whether he will set up - especially in the case of Johannesburg Flight and in all the other cases of serious incidents which he has referred himself -urgently for the safety of the passengers using Air Mauritius, a Committee of Enquiry which is provided for in the Civil Aviation Act? The law allows him to probe further into all these serious incidents which I have just mentioned? Will he agree to that proposal?

The Prime Minister: They are being enquired into, Mr Speaker Sir. Let us not be overrun on the other side as if there is a great risk. There is a record of Air Mauritius which speaks for itself. There have been enquiries even as I have mentioned one of the incidents of the near miss even though the Department of Civil Aviation gave its report, I insisted let's have a second independent report. That is why I requested the UK Civil Aviation Authority to review the report of the Department of Civil Aviation.

In the three incidents, the one at Johannesburg has been reported to the Civil Aviation Authority of South Africa and also to the Mauritian one. The investigation has been carried out by Air Mauritius. The report has been sent to the Department of Civil Aviation. They are going to look at the report in detail and decide if any sanctions have to be taken. We will follow it up very closely because as the hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly says, we are all aware that Air Mauritius is our National Airline. We all travel by Air Mauritius from time to time, so we have to ensure that this safety record is there. Air Mauritius record speaks for itself.

As I said, the Lufthansa report says that it stands out on safety records, but we have to ensure that this is maintained. So, let us see what the three reports say eventually, and then I am sure- I will follow it up naturally - if there are sanctions to be taken, they will be taken.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have got a question for the hon. Prime Minister just for the sake of clarification. We understood that the hon. Prime Minister stated in his reply that second hand spare parts are allowed once it is certified. Is it just certified on a piece of paper, that is, a certificate is issued or it is subjected to test, that is, test for wear and tear? Because we know that for spare parts coming directly from the factory, they are factory tested, and a certificate is issued. In the case of second hand spare parts, what is the procedure? Are they tested, or is it just a certificate being issued?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking about airplanes; so safety is a major priority in this case. It is misleading to say second hand. If you go and check, in every airline, whatever airline you want to look at, they all follow the same procedures. I mean the major airlines. I am talking about European airlines or American airlines. They use only certified parts. In this case, for Air Mauritius, these parts are certified by the European Aviation Safety Agency and the Federal Aviation Agency. They have the responsibility. If they certify, they take the responsibility that they have certified that the parts can be used.

Mr Jugnauth: There has been a recommendation, for many years now, from the International Civil Aviation Organisation that the Department of Civil Aviation in Mauritius becomes an autonomous body instead of being under the responsibility of a Ministry. Does Government intend to follow that recommendation?

The Prime Minister: In fact, it's a good question. We intend to follow that recommendation. We have seen it, and I think it is right. Everywhere else, not just here - we are talking about CWA and others - we need to have a separate regulator. That is what we are looking at.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm to the House whether the Captain who was involved in the incident of Johannesburg was at fault and, if so, what action has been taken against him?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I have the report which says that any captain who would be flying in his place, the conduct of the captain - what he has taken - was what any experienced captain could have done. That is, he was given the clearance to land; the hail storm was still there. From what I understand - I am speaking from memory - he saw a greenish patch on his radar. Greenish means that it is not important. If it was important, it should have been red. He saw a greenish patch, and he checked with the tower whether he could land. He was told he could land, and he went on to land, but then the hail storm hit the aircraft. But the aircrafts afterwards have also landed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer to the incident of 22 January 2012, raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. This was the nose gear touchdown with regard to flight MK 121, which went unreported. I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that, subsequent to this incident, the plane flew again on 27 occasions before a full maintenance exercise was done. And he said the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Can I put it to the hon. Prime Minister that this is not the proper attitude of the proof of the pudding being in the eating when...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Obeegadoo: ... we are talking of air safety and that, in fact, as recommended by the ATR representative, this nose landing gear should have been immediately quarantined until a full maintenance verification was done; on the contrary, put at risk the safety of our passengers?

Mr Speaker: That's a very long question! It is taking time!

The Prime Minister: I would have wished the hon. Member would have listened to the question, which was rightly canvassed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He is mixing up the two ATRs. The nose gear landing is a separate incident; it is not the same one. The other one concerns the plane which had 27 flights, and then the part was replaced. Here, in the case of the nose gear landing, again it was done by post-data monitoring because the ATR is a small aircraft, as you know. It is not a sophisticated aircraft. The nose landing gear incident was investigated, and it was found that there were no - what they call - exceedencies of specifications. In other words, this is an incident that can happen, but there was no real danger, except that it landed on the nose. It is not meant to take the full weight of the plane on the nose. The other gear has to follow as well. This is what happened, but there were no exceedencies of specifications. That was fully investigated.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that insurance is going to pay for damage caused to the airplanes. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what was the financial loss to Air Mauritius - loss in terms of earnings - as a result of the grounding of its planes?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in every country, on every aircraft these incidents happen. Recently, there has been a case in France. You have to take safety into action. On the one

hand, you can't say that priority should be safety and, on the other hand, you say fly the aircraft even if it is not safe. That is what they have to do because safety has to be a priority.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that ATR planes fly to Rodrigues, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister - if he has the information - how many times the ATR planes have been cancelled due to technical or other reasons for the last three years on the Rodrigues-Mauritius route?

The Prime Minister: I would not know how many times, but as I have said, safety has to be the priority. It has happened even to me. I had even gone into the aircraft, sat down with my wife, and then we had to come out. If they feel there is something they want to check, if there is a small thing they are not happy with, they have to tell you. So, that is the way it is.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to ensure that Air Mauritius does not become a second hand carrier, and to refrain...

(Interruptions)

because I have documents...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Silence I say!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am raising this issue because of the havoc which is being created in certain airlines today by the purchase of second hand spare parts, which happen at times to be fake spare parts. The question I want also to put to the hon. Prime Minister is why these enquiries concerning the two ATR flights are taking so much time; more than three or four months now. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is prepared, for *la bonne gouverne de la nation* and for Members of this House, to table or to make public our National Civil Aviation Security Programme which, according to the regulations, has to be approved by the National Civil Aviation Security Committee? This sets out the policy in respect of civil aviation within Mauritius and of Mauritian civil aircraft overseas, and the necessary standard and guidelines for security. So, to do away with the apprehensions of the passengers, the nation at large, is the hon. Prime Minister prepared, therefore, to table this National Civil Aviation Security Programme?

The Prime Minister: Let me say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition let us not try to diminish the reputation of Air Mauritius. People would not have been interested to do a strategic partnership with Air Mauritius if it was not a good plane, if it was not a good company. They are interested because it is still a good company, and it is worthwhile. It has got assets; it has got a lot of things. I am following what is happening with the discussions. Some people are saying that they

could even send other aircrafts to be maintained here because the security aspect is good. So, let us not - and especially when we are talking about a strategic partnership – say that the plane is not good.

Secondly, as I say and I repeat, Air Mauritius does not use any parts except parts that have been certified. Now, these two agencies have a high reputation to maintain; one is in Europe and the other one is in the United States. They have never had their reputation sullied and they would not give a certificate if the parts are not the parts to be used. So, that is true.

The third thing, I will consider it. I don't know whether it would be proper or not, but I will certainly consider it, because the safety has to be the priority and, as hon. Pravind Jugnauth said, we are also looking at the regulator separately.

Mr Speaker: Time is up!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I table the documents.

Mr Speaker: Yes!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of personal explanation; it was not my intention to diminish the reputation of Air Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Proceed!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my intention through this PNQ was to ensure that the security of our passengers is rigorously addressed and to ring the alarm bell!

Mr Speaker: Produce your documents!

Mr Ganoo: So, I table the documents.

Mr Speaker: I said time is up! Now, we have to deal with questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. The Table has been advised that the PQ No. B/461 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development. So, in keeping with practice, PQ No. B/461 will be replied at the end of question time, time permitting.

Hon. Mrs Ribot!

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION –

ANNUAL REPORTS & REPORTED CASES

(No. B/455) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues

whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the -

- (a) changes, if any, brought to the organizational structure thereof and, if not, why not;
- (b) reasons for the non submission of the annual reports thereof, since 2008 to 2012, and
- (c) number of reported cases of breach of human rights which -
 - (i) have been heard, since May 2012 to date, indicating the number thereof disposed of, and
 - (ii) are still under investigation.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the Protection of Human Rights Act was passed in December 1998. The National Human Rights Commission was subsequently set up in April 2001.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act which was passed in the National Assembly in July 2012 had as main objective to change the organisational structure of the Commission to enable it to operate more efficiently. Its mandate has been broadened to be in line with international conventions. Thus, the Commission will operate with three Divisions, a Human Rights Division, a Police Complaints Division and a National Preventive Mechanism Division.

This restructuring will enhance the existing role of the Commission as a key institution in the protection of human rights, ensuring the rule of law and preventing violations of human rights.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Commission submitted an Annual Report in 2008 and the Chairperson of the Commission has submitted a preliminary Report for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 and up to November 2012.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commission that -

- (i) from May to December 2012, out of 150 complaints received, 130 have been dealt with and investigations are still proceeding in the remaining 20 cases, and
- (ii) from January to 06 June 2013, out of 83 complaints received, 38 have already been dealt with and investigations are proceeding in the other cases.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Commission has been hearing hundreds of cases since 2009, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that since there was no quorum in that Commission, those hearing exercises have been simply illegal?

The Prime Minister: Whatever it is, there was no Human Rights Commission before the Bill was passed; but why there has not been, there is a reason behind. We wanted to restructure - as the

hon. Member's question properly asks - the whole Human Rights and the National Preventive Mechanism. Since this has been done, the Bill has been passed, the President has assented to the Bill. This Bill is about to be proclaimed if I may add, but the reason why the delay in the proclamation is that we cannot just find people who are prepared to do the job for that position. We can find, but we want to have the best possible.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister explain to us why, since 2009, it has not been possible to find suitable people for the Human Rights Commission?

The Prime Minister: We certainly have suitable people in this country, but it depends what they are doing, whether they are prepared to leave their posts and come there. But we have actually, as I said; this is why the law is being proclaimed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the situation on the ground, with a Police Complaints Investigation Bureau that knows that it is going to disappear since a year now and that is therefore not functioning and, on the other hand, a Human Rights Commission that is understaffed, that has not been restructured as yet and, therefore, not fully operational?

The Prime Minister: But, I explained the reason, Mr Speaker, Sir. We wanted to restructure precisely, this is why we have brought the amendment to the law and the law has been assented, but not proclaimed yet. It is about to be proclaimed.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, as from now on, there is no institution enquiring on human rights? The Police Complaints Bureau is not functioning and the Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission, himself, has gone on record as saying in the case of a lady recently that they could not enquire because they don't have staff. So, breach of human rights today in Mauritius is not being enquired into.

The Prime Minister: Let me remind the hon. Member that there was no Human Rights Bill until 1998. There was none!

(Interruptions)

There was none! They tell me why they take so long to appoint!

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: You only appointed in April of...

(Interruptions)

The election was in 2000, they only appointed in 2001. I can understand; they are probably the same reasons that I am giving. The other thing is that it is not true that the complaints against the Police are not being investigated. They are being investigated, but not by this body.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there had been any cases of actual breach of human rights being brought to light by the Human Rights Commission over the past five years and remedial actions recommended?

The Prime Minister: The answer is yes and yes.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister just mentioned that he is looking for the rare bird. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether any advertisement had been placed, asking people interested to serve, patriots interested to serve on Human Rights Commission to apply for the job?

The Prime Minister: Normally, I don't think these posts are advertised, but I will have to look into it whether they have been advertised or not.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has stated that preliminary reports have been submitted for 2009, 2010, etc. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister why these preliminary reports have not been finalised yet?

The Prime Minister: That I will have to ask but, I think, basically, it is because we are restructuring. So, there is going to be a completely new Human Rights Commission. That is probably why.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, coming back to the report of the Human Rights Commission, in a reply to PQ No. B/535 on 09 November 2010, the hon. Prime Minister replied -

“The draft report for 2009 has been prepared and is being finalised.”

We are now in 2013 and we still have not had any report since 2008. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister how far the publication of the report has to do with the restructuring of the Human Rights Commission.

The Prime Minister: It has everything to do with it, Mr Speaker, Sir. For example, the Chairperson of the Commission was supposed to be in office for two terms. We have changed this precisely because there is this problem and now he can be re-appointed and that is what we are going to do.

Mr Baloomoody: Following the question of my friend, hon. Uteem, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - I know personally of many lawyers who have been recruited in international agencies to

work for human rights - whether this time the Commission is prepared to advertise for that post and we get this post filled?

The Prime Minister: Yes, but it depends on how much we are going to pay them; internationally they are paid a lot more money. The hon. Member knows this.

(Interruptions)

Then, we can pay them Rs1 billion a month! That is fine!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, considering that the National Preventive Mechanism Division recommends visiting the prisons, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House how many visits have been conducted by the Human Rights Commission to the prisons over the past five years?

The Prime Minister: By the smile of the hon. Member, he thinks there has not been, but there has been. I don't know how many, but I know they are still visiting the prisons.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/61 on 29 March 2010, the hon. Prime Minister said that the draft Bill has already been prepared and will be introduced in the National Assembly as soon as it has been finalised. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure I understood the hon. Member's question. What draft Bill is she talking about?

Mrs Ribot: The Protection of Human Rights draft Bill.

The Prime Minister: That has already been passed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the hon. Prime Minister what happens next? What is Government's intention? Since we know that for nearly three years, the Commission is not properly constituted; the law could not be proclaimed for one year because there is a lack of the right people. What is now Government's intention? Is there any hope left for the enforcement of human rights?

The Prime Minister: I have just explained, Mr Speaker, Sir - I don't know, the hon. Member was not listening probably – that the law is about to be proclaimed and then we will be nearing these people.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ms Deepalsing!

QUATRE BORNES - BUS TRAFFIC CENTRE

(No. B/456) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Bus Traffic Centre, at St Jean Road, in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if traffic outside the premises thereof is being hindered by buses owned by private individuals and, if so, indicate the measures taken in relation thereto.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is fully conscious of the fact that there are major traffic problems in the centre of Quatre Bornes. It is no good we say that there has not when there is, and I know why the hon. Member is saying it. An integrated approach to traffic management is being adopted. A number of new road infrastructure developments is being carried out by Government to address the issue. I have in mind the Phoenix-Beau Songes Link Road as well as the ongoing road widening and related works at Avenue des Tulipes. Furthermore, the project for the delocation of the Quatre Bornes Market – the hon. Member was the one who asked that the market be delocated - has already been approved by Government.

The problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, is compounded by a number of traffic deviations within the St. Jean Road and Sodnac areas rendered necessary by waste water infrastructural works which are going on.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in order to ensure fluidity of traffic, four Police Constables and one Woman Police Constable from the Quatre Bornes Police Station perform fixed point duties at the Traffic Centre during peak hours, that is, from 07 30 to 09 30 hours in the morning and from 14 30 to 18 30 hours in the afternoon. Mobile patrols are carried out throughout the whole day by riders from the Divisional Traffic Police, the Traffic Branch, the officers of the Emergency Response Service and so on. But since 2010, the Police have established 190 contraventions under the Road Traffic Act for “Obstruction”, “Hindering Traffic”, “Picking Passengers outside Bus Stop” and other offences.

Officers of the inspectorate of the National Transport Authority also carry out surprise checks – they’re supposed to check - at least twice a week at the Traffic Centre.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that additional measures are being taken to ensure that no bus operators hinder the smooth flow of traffic in the vicinity of the Bus Traffic Centre.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that this situation has been going on for a long, long time even before the Waste Water Project and every Saturday I collect photographs of these buses and I keep shouting on all roof tops.

(Interruptions)

I keep shouting about these buses which continue everyday and every week to obstruct and I have asked even the NTA people to come, but they do not come. So, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to ensure that the Police take contraventions and, at least, one of these buses, their permit should be taken out?

(Interruptions)

At least, for example...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, hon. Bhagwan!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand fully what the hon. Member is stating. I have told the Police, in fact, that they should use the penalty points. These people have to be sanctioned. They will have to lose their licences. They can be anyone they want to be. They will lose their licences if they do not conform to the regulations and to the law.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, on two occasions, the same hon. Member asked questions in this House.

Mr Speaker: Put your question, please!

Dr. Sorefan: I have to explain, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: No explanation! Put your question!

Dr. Sorefan: On two occasions, the same question was asked by hon. Ms Deepalsing to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether those bus proprietors whom hon. Ms Deepalsing is referring to are from Flacq and they are related to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am told...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence now! Please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am told that not one single bus owner is from that area. I am told.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Bhagwan! Last question!

(Interruptions)

I say silence now! Some order! Hon. Bhagwan, put your question!

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Bhagwan: *Aller do ta. Li pas trafiquant li!*

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, do you have any question?

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, I am asking my question. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there have been cases where there have been *parts de vies*, fatal accidents in that particular area; small kids lost their lives through the negligence of these bus owners and tolerated by the National Transport Authority?

The Prime Minister: Every time there is a loss of life, there is a judicial enquiry. As you know, all the responsibilities are stringent. They won't be right, they might be. Accidents happen, but we have to see to it that people are obeying the law.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, hon. Bhagwan has just been calling me *trafiquant*; could he please withdraw it?

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Well, I want some order. Let me listen! If everybody is going to talk at the same time ... I have only two ears. Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I have mentioned the word '*trafiquant*' *et celui qui s'excuse s'accuse*.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I am speaking to you; have you...

(*Interruptions*)

Listen to my question! Have you used the word '*trafiquant*' with regard to hon. Mohamed?

Mr Bhagwan: '*Trafiquant*' *en général*. The one who wants to wear the hat can wear it.

(*Interruptions*)

Ms Deepalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would consider through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Ms Deepalsing: ...for the NTA to send warning letters to all these individual bus operators that they should not act with impunity and that they should obey the law and if they do not their permits will be - can these warning letters be sent to all these bus operators?

The Prime Minister: They are doing it. I don't know whether they are doing it by letters, but maybe the hon. Member is right. They should send letters. They are doing it and action is going to be taken especially through the penalty point.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Fakemeeah!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Bhagwan has just admitted having used an unparliamentary word in this Assembly.

(Interruptions)

Now, my humble request is that he withdraws ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Mohamed: ...the unparliamentary words, in general, as he likes saying it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Well, the point of order is noted and I will consider and give a ruling.

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Fakemeeah!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I say no provocation, please! I want some order!

(Interruptions)

I want some order, hon. Bhagwan and hon. Mohamed! I am not going to give warning this time. So, let's proceed with hon. Fakemeeah!

CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION – MANAGING DIRECTOR - CONTRACT

(No. B/457) Mr C. Fakkeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr G. D., Managing Director of the Cargo Handling Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if his contract has been renewed and, if so –

- (a) indicate the terms and conditions of his former and new contracts, and
- (b) table copy of his qualifications.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo...

The Prime Minister: ...the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd that Mr G. D. was appointed Managing Director on contract for a period of one year as from 28 May 2012. His contract has been renewed for a further period of two years.

At the time the present Managing Director assumed duty in May 2012, productivity at the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd was as low as 15 moves per hour which was well beyond the target of 20 moves per hour as set out in the concession contract with the Mauritius Ports Authority. I am informed by the Corporation that Mr G. D. took the necessary measures to redress the situation and to bring back confidence among the stakeholders in the port. The productivity improved gradually and has now reached an average of 22 moves per hour, which is above the target.

Concerning parts (a) and (b) of the Question, the Cargo Handling Corporation Limited is a company governed by the Companies Act and its own Articles of Memorandum. As such, the Corporation has its own procedures to recruit its personnel and to set the terms and conditions of employment. However, I should like to point out, as has been asked, that Mr G. D. holds the following professional qualifications -

- (i) *Diplôme Supérieur en Administration des Entreprises/Diploma in Management – With Distinction (Gold Medallist) University of Mauritius;*
- (ii) Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants of the United Kingdom.

Before joining the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd, Mr G. D. occupied several positions in the private sector and was the General Manager of the Madagascar International Container Terminal Services from 2007 to 2011.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that Mr G. D. has already obtained a pay increase of Rs50,000 whereas all other workers are waiting for the SRC report of 2013 to know how they are going to be compensated? Is this normal?

The Prime Minister: I must point out he is on a contract. But again the same question, if you want to get good people you have to pay. If you want to pay peanuts you get monkeys.

Mr Fakeemeeah: I want to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware of the general state of affairs prevailing at the Cargo Handling Corporation where Mr G. D is applying a type of divide and rule policy *au détriment des autres*.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with all due respect to the hon. Member, I know his good intentions, but you have to impose discipline. This is one of the things that we have to learn. We have to be disciplined. You have come to work at the time you are supposed. You can decide you want to come later, but there must be discipline, otherwise, we cannot, we would not have had this improvement in productivity from 15 moves per hour to over 20, in fact, 22 moves per hour. Had he not been strong disciplinarian, this would not have happened. That is what he is doing. I think we should congratulate him instead.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether Mr G. D. has worked for the World Bank or any of its related institutions prior to coming to the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd?

The Prime Minister: I see here that he has worked for the World Bank, but I will check. But the World Bank would not have recruited him if he was not only good. I can't see that he has worked at the World Bank, but maybe he has, it is not here. But I don't see it here.

Mr Speaker: Do you have a question hon. Baloomoody?

Mr Baloomoody: In view of the strange industrial relation at the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd where the case of the workers for the increase in salary is before the CCM, does the hon. Prime Minister find it proper that in such circumstances the management should allow himself an increase in salary of Rs50,000 after working for only one year?

The Prime Minister: If you see what is his qualifications and what he has done and whether you want to attract the best people, you have to consider this.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Fakeemeeah!

MOTORWAYS – ILLEGAL MOTORCYCLE & CAR RALLIES

(No. B/458) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the motorways, he will, for the benefit of the House,

obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of illegal motorcycle and car rallies held along same, over the past two years, indicating if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof in each case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two cases of illegal motorcycle rallies have been established along motorways in August 2012.

Police are enquiring into both cases.

In regard to illegal car rally, no such case has been established by the Police during the last two years.

To address the issue of illegal road racing and following complaints received, the following measures have been taken by the Police -

- (i) They are doing localised crack down operations by the Divisional Support Unit, the Divisional Traffic Police, and all the other units and if required, the Special Mobile Force is called in. Since June 2011 to 05 June 2013, 145 such crack down operations have been carried out against illegal rallies along Motorways 1 and 2 and other places where complaints have been received and this has resulted in 17 road traffic offences including two cases of illegal motorcycle rallies.
- (ii) Since September 2009, the Traffic Field and Motorway Patrol Division is implementing the motorway policing strategy which ensures a visible Police presence on the roads by day and by night. The Divisional Commanders also carry out vehicle checks within their respective Division at strategic places and also during the night at staggered hours.
- (iii) Road users are being sensitized on road safety issues through media, press and info-route programme. The Road Safety Unit has carried out 380 such sensitization sessions in 2012 with 7,116 attendees and this year as at 05 June, some 3,832 persons have been sensitised through 69 such sessions.

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that presently, motorcycling and car races are organized, with the authorization of the Commissioner of Police, at La Nicolière, Pont Bon Dieu, Salazie, Chamarel, La Pipe, Midlands, Petrin and in closed circuits in certain areas.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to providing a safe and secure place for the practice of motorsport, we are considering the possibility of constructing a racing track.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm the number of complaints obtained from inhabitants of Roche Bois and the northern part of the island due to disturbance caused by these rallies?

The Prime Minister: Precisely, I don't have the exact number of complaints from all the areas, but this is precisely because of the complaints that the Police have acted more efficiently. As I said, they have stopped, there have been cases which have been prosecuted and contraventions are established, but we are going to further improve that record I hope.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been made aware by the Commissioner of Police that in, at least, one case or two cases of illegal car and motorcycle rallies there have been deaths of motorcycle riders?

The Prime Minister: I think the answer is yes. Again, when there is death, the whole procedure started, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Fakkeemeeah: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that huge sums of money are involved in these rallies? Have the Police proceeded to any arrest and can the hon. Prime Minister look into the issue, please?

The Prime Minister: I will look into it. They have proceeded to arrest people, but I don't know whether they are actually looking at this. This is not their duty. There are other sections of the institution that have to look into this. I will make them aware of this.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Jugnauth!

MITD - ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/459) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the recent case of alleged sexual abuse at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if the Police has applied for a Judge's Order as regards the phone calls and messages exchanged between the suspect and -

- (a) the minor;
- (b) Dr. the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, and
- (c) the hon. Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions and, if so, indicate when and the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in connection with the alleged case of sexual abuse on a minor at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), three cases are under investigation at the level of the Central CID: one for 'Sedition', one for 'Alleged sexual relationship with a minor' and one for 'Conspiracy'.

On 05 March 2013, Police wrote to the Director of Public Prosecutions to initiate actions for a Judge's Order with a view to obtaining information with regard to certain telephone calls and SMSs, as well as relevant details of subscribers of mobile phone numbers, which are required for the purpose of the enquiry. The Judge's Order was obtained on 20 May 2013.

The House will appreciate that it would not be proper to disclose any information obtained as a result of the Judge's Order.

As I have already indicated to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, paedophilia is a despicable and heinous crime which no society worthy of this name should condone. No stone will be left unturned to bring paedophiles to justice.

Again, I appeal and urge individuals, whether they have already given, or are hesitant about giving, to give their statements freely, they have nothing to fear to give statements and see if there is anything that needs to be done further. But the enquiry is ongoing on the three cases.

Mr Jugnauth: May I declare my interest in the supplementary question which I am going to ask?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Jugnauth: It is with regard to a statement that was taken from me on 03 January by the Police wherein I gave all the detailed phone numbers of some parties with regard to this allegation. May I know why since 03 January up to 05 March, no action has been taken by the Police with regard to a Judge's Order?

The Prime Minister: The reason is, Mr Speaker, Sir, once they get the information, I take it that it is the same information that the hon. Member gave us in Parliament. The reason is they have to go through their list first and then they have to apply a Judge's Order. They cannot as if anybody brings whatever information, they must verify it and they try to do it through a Judge's Order to be able to go to the telephone company to be able to see. That is why it took them time. They applied on 05 March; they went to the DPP to ask for the application to a Judge's Order.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what kind of verification the Police had to do with regard to the information that was submitted on 03 January?

The Prime Minister: First of all, they had to check the telephone numbers for people. They had to check whether the telephone belongs to the very person that they have been alleged to belong. And thirdly, then they have to look through the numbers and then to be able to get further information they go for the Judge's Order and that is what they have done.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister that it is precisely the very fact that the Police cannot, on its own, verify those numbers and whom they belong to that the Police should go and ask for an Order from the Court in order to be able to ascertain that the information is correct?

The Prime Minister: First of all, they have to look at the information they get and then they decide whether they need a Judge's Order. That is what they have done.

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, in the case of the alleged sexual relation with the minor, whether in this case witness Mrs Sudha Singh who was arrested in another....

Mr Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition should avoid...

Mr Ganoo: Has she been invited to give a statement in this case?

The Prime Minister: I don't delve into the details of the enquiry as the hon. Leader of the Opposition is probably aware, but I suppose yes, she would be able to.

Mr Speaker: It's not proper to mention names. Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the request that has been made from the Police, does it also include the contents with regard to SMSs that have been texted with regard to those parties that are mentioned in the question?

The Prime Minister: The answer is yes.

Mr Obeegadoo: Considering that the Fact-Finding Committee, in fact, recommended that the Police should act promptly upon receipt of such complaints and recommended further enquiries, could at least the report of that Fact-Finding Committee now be made available to Members of this House?

The Prime Minister: As I explained, I invited the Leader of the Opposition if he wants to look...

(Interruptions)

but there are details about the small child in this. It cannot just be put in public like this...

(Interruptions)

La Cour va décider, but not here. There is a procedure that the Police have to follow, unfortunately. That is why we are bringing PACE among other things. That is one of the reasons. At the moment, the Police cannot enquire unless there is a statement. If there is no statement, the Police cannot act at the moment. That is what they are following. That is what has been done all the time whether they are here or not here, born or not born. That is the thing.

(Interruptions)

They have their procedures and that is what they are following and, therefore, if there is no complaint from the child, no complaint from the parents, they cannot go and start enquiring. That is the situation we want to remedy through PACE.

Mr Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/461 addressed to the Dr. hon. Prime Minister will now be replied by the hon. Minister of Environment. We have said it. Now, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/488 and A/171 have been withdrawn. Also, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/460 and B/462 have been duly and simply withdrawn. Now, we proceed to questions addressed to hon. Ministers.

RIVIERE DES GALETS – BURNT DOWN HOUSE – DEATH OF HANDICAP PERSON

(No. B/460) Mrs Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the death of Mr K. A., a handicap person of 28 years old, in a house which was burnt down, at Rivière des Galets, in the night of Thursday 09 April 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

(Withdrawn)

MID – PROJECTS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/461) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to *Maurice Ile Durable*, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –
 - (i) name of the person at the head thereof;
 - (ii) projects initiated as at to date, indicating the projects earmarked for implementation;
 - (iii) number of seminars, committees, conferences and cocktails organized as at to date, indicating the total amount of money spent therefor, and
- (b) state if he has received representations for the replacement of the person at the head thereof on account of delay in projects implementation and, if so, the actions taken, if any, in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PRISONERS (FORMER) – RE-OFFENDING

(No. B/462) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the former prisoners, he will state the measures taken, if any, to curb the incidence of them re-offending, following their release from jail.

(Withdrawn)

CHOISY - CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 - BUS STOPS

(No. B/466) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Upper Choisy, in Constituency No.14, he will state if consideration will be given for the provision of sheltered bus stops thereat, adjacent to the Rammah Road and if so, when and if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House, that, in fact, there is no bus stop in either way adjacent to Rammah Road on the main road from Choisy to Upper Choisy. Two sheltered bus stops built by Black River District Council in 2006 and 2007 already exist on the main road.

Following a request to site a bus stop near Rammah Road, Choisy, Baie du Cap, site visits were carried out and it was observed that -

- (i) Rammah Road is a small lane of 4 houses only and it is found in a dangerous curve;
- (ii) bus drivers alight and take on passengers on their own willingness;
- (iii) the bus terminus is about 200 metres from Rammah Road;
- (iv) the road in the vicinity is very curvy, and
- (v) the distance with the nearest sheltered bus stop is about 300 metres which is within a reasonable walking distance.

The request for the provision of sheltered bus stops was, therefore, not entertained.

RING ROAD PHASE 1 - SORÈZE - ACCESS

(No. B/467) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to access to the Ring Road Phase 1, through the Sorèze underpass from the M1 motorway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if the construction thereof has been made according to standard civil engineering norms and, if so, give details thereof and if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ring Road Phase I project was designed by International Consultants namely Consulting Engineering Services (India) Pvt Ltd and reviewed and supervised by Arab Consulting Engineering Ltd in accordance with AASHTO, that is, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials standards. These standards, together with British Standards, are among the most widely used in the world.

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the hon. Minister, with that acute curve, what is the speed that was used to design this curvature?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the speed which has been put there is the one that has been recommended by the technicians of the Ministry.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, coming down on M1 from Pont Colville, it is sixty kilometres per hour. May I know from the hon. Minister whether sixty kilometres per hour in that curvature is very safe for the Mauritian people?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, whatever has been approved by the consultants has been put there. That is all I can say on that.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Will the hon. Minister state whether he had received representations from the Sorezia Welfare Association which drew the attention of the Minister to the dangers faced by the inhabitants of the region particularly to that project?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a request for a flyover in that region which was very difficult and impossible. We have received a few representations and I have explained to them the difficulty to put up flyovers. That was one of the representations which I have received, but if in case representations are made to me; I am going to report back all these issues to the consultants who are still looking on the project.

Mr Ganoo: In the unfortunate light of the Sorèze accident which took place recently – and this is the purpose of this question - can the hon. Minister ask his technicians and experts to revisit this access to Ring Road Phase I, since, in case a breakdown happens or the brake system fails in any

vehicle and if that vehicle wants to turn on the left into this access road, can his experts review the situation, if possible, with a view to make the road more accessible and less dangerous!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very important question I have to say to the hon. Member. In fact, we have given instructions to the consultants and engineers of my Ministry to have a thorough look at it because the third lane starting from Colville Deverell Bridge to Sorèze will be opened, let us say, in the weeks to come. So, before opening up, I have to double sure and I have also requested a team of consultants, those working in Mauritius, to give us a helping hand. If certain additional measures are required, I don't have any problem, Government is going to put it in practice.

Mr Bhagwan: On many occasions, I raised the issue of road markings - we are talking about this accident - which is also linked to the Sorèze area. What action has the Ministry or the RDA taken in the light of the numerous cases of accidents which have occurred where the markings have disappeared after a few days due to the bad quality of the paint?

Mr Bachoo: I have already given instructions to RDA. In fact, they have started marking all those places where the markings have faded and the works have already started but, of course, the hon. Member has to bear with me because there is only one contractor, if I am not mistaken, that undertakes that type of good works.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the Sorèze underpass, as it has been built today, was designed the same way initially by the consultants and, if not, why has the plan been changed?

Mr Bachoo: No, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has not been any alteration, no change, because the topography is the same. There has not been any change whatsoever.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister say whether, prior to the opening of that road, an independent safety audit had been carried out and, if yes, would he table a copy of that report?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question which I am going to answer regarding road safety audit.

Mr Baloomoody: Following an answer given to a question asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Minister mentioned that he has asked his technician to review the whole area...

Mr Bachoo: If any!

Mr Baloomoody: It has to be reviewed. Before reviewing same, the hon. Minister is saying if any. Let's get the expert to look at it; the hon. Minister is not an expert.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Minister prepared, whilst reviewing, to take into consideration the request of the inhabitants, which my learned colleague, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie, has referred to?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that if any advice, any recommendation or any suggestion whoever will make that can add up to the safety of that particular region, I don't have any problem; that is the reason I have mentioned that if in case we are looking at the whole third lane over again, but I can assure the House that we have just done a Road Traffic Assessment and I am going to place a copy of the report in the Library.

Mr Roopun: Mr Speaker, Sir, some years back, it was question of putting some special dedicated track filled with sand where vehicles which had some brake failure could go and just be immobilised. Can I know whether this has been considered and what is the situation as regards this?

Mr Bachoo: This question was never raised in the past. It is recently that some propositions were made that could have been one of the safety measures which can be introduced. We are going to look into it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Vice-Prime Minister, with regard to any modification of the road alignment – this question has been put again today – will he then table a copy of the road alignment as per the design that was made? Because we do not understand how come...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has put his question. It is enough.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot keep on submitting. I have submitted in the past many copies of detailed engineering designs and these are all complicated things, highly technical and only top engineers can understand it. So I don't think it is important for me or for every project that we have, we have to submit designs.

Mr Jugnauth: May I come back again to my question? The hon. Minister is saying that he will answer...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member will have to be fast! Be fast!

Mr Jugnauth: Yes. Then, let me rephrase my question: has an Independent Safety Audit been carried out with regard to this road? It is either yes or no!

Mr Bachoo: In fact, there has been an Audit Road Traffic Assessment rather I would say, because the third lane is not yet completed. Once it is completed, then a final audit will be conducted, but as at now, there has been a Road Safety Assessment which has been conducted by a group of engineers from TMRSU headed by Dr. Reesaul, from RDA and the Road Traffic Unit. We have done that and I am going to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is satisfied with the street lighting as he is aware that it is a very dark spot?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the work is not yet completed. In fact, in the central verge, we are putting up lighting, the poles will be installed in the weeks to come, it is only after that. Let the road be completed, we have not yet completed the work.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister indicate to the House whether in the vicinity of the access road to the Ring Road Phase 1, land was acquired by Government, whether compulsorily or not, and what was the price paid for the land in the vicinity of this access road?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member himself had been Minister of Housing, he knows. As far as land acquisition is concerned, that goes to the Ministry of Housing because we don't know the value of the land which has been bought.

Mr Ganoo: Was land bought in the vicinity of this road?

Mr Bachoo: The answer is in the affirmative.

Mr Speaker: More questions, one for hon. Bhagwan...

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, we have just been informed by the hon. Minister that the work which is being carried out from Pont Colville will be open very soon. Has the hon. Minister received representations concerning the bad quality of the works which are being carried out by the Sinohydro? Whether he has been informed of that, whether action has been taken to double check this question of safety also, the quality of the roads which are under construction and the safety aspect?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are all very much concerned about the safety aspect, that is the reason why I have put two senior engineers on site every day and we haven't received up till now any complaint regarding the quality of the work, because that is being done strictly under the supervision of technicians of my Ministry.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister, coming from Pont Colville, joining this access acute curve, this is as the hon. Minister has said that, probably, it is within international norm? May I ask the hon. Minister that this curvature is as per a French design system? You go, you do a curvature as a roundabout in an anti-clockwise...

(Interruptions)

...anti-clockwise as opposed to a clock-wise which we, Mauritians, are used to and this looks as a very narrow roundabout where 60 kilometres per hour is not tolerated?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, give way! Your question is complicated.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am neither a consultant nor an engineer. I have just mentioned, we have got two international groups of engineers working on that: the Consulting

Engineering Services of India and, secondly, the Arab Consultant. I am aware, they are consultants of international repute, they know their responsibility in their jobs.

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the hon. Minister, at this point, whether there will be a third level interchange flyover?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, recently I had answered a question when we are going to link A1-M1, then there will be a Grade separated junction in that region. The hon. Member has to bear with us because the PPP will sooner or later be out.

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

At 1.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.37 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

M1 MOTORWAY - HILLCREST/TULIPES STREETS – EXTENSION

(No. B/468) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the extension of the Hillcrest/Tulipes streets to the M1 motorway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority -

- (a) and table copy of the report of the traffic impact assessment and of the road engineering design in connection therewith, and
- (b) obtain information as to if the contractor therefor will reinstate the drains thereat at no cost and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a traffic study along Tulipes Avenue was carried out by Luxconsult (Mtius) Ltd in 2002. Among the measures proposed was the upgrading of Tulipes Avenue and the inclusion of a link with motorway M1. The Road Development Authority has undertaken a thorough assessment of the traffic situation, and produced an updated report on the impact of upgrading Tulipes Avenue and introducing a link with the Motorway.

A simulation has been carried out using VISUM Modelling software. It has demonstrated that, in addition to relieving Tulipes Avenue, the introduction of a link to the Motorway at M1 will relieve the traffic problems on the St Jean Road at the junction with Tulipes Avenue by reducing the right turning movement at that location.

Furthermore, the link has been found to be a highly attractive option for traffic wanting to join motorway M1 from Sodnac region.

The design of the project, including the junctions, has been carried out in accordance with British and American standards, as is the case for all projects implemented by the RDA.

The documents requested are technical documents and, therefore, internal consumption, and they cannot be tabled as the work is on.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the drain along Motorway M1 is being relocated because of the construction of an acceleration lane to join the Motorway. Its functionality is being maintained. The precast elements that were used in the construction of the third lane along Motorway M1 have been recovered and are being reused for that relocation. The cost involved is about Rs48,000.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, coming from Phoenix roundabout to join Hillcrest, there is a large water pipe on the surface. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware of that, and what action will be taken so that they don't damage the pipe?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the technicians of the Ministry will do the needful. We are looking at a holistic approach. The whole region is being looked into. I would also like to add that Hillcrest Avenue also will be upgraded.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, just to have a clear idea of what exactly is projected. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, on a previous occasion, told us that Tulipes Avenue would be simply enlarged. There won't be a dual carriage way; it would be enlarged. What about the connection from Hillcrest to the motorway? Is that a double lane road, with a roundabout before the motorway? Could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister please clarify exactly what is the nature of the works being envisaged?

Mr Bachoo: From Hillcrest down to the third lane of the motorway, we are bound to put up a roundabout. From Sodnac towards Hillcrest, that road is being enlarged. Unfortunately, we cannot dual the road because there are buildings on both sides of the road. That is the reason. We are only trying to enlarge the road. That will be around seven metres plus $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres on both sides, and it comes to about ten metres in all. So, from Sodnac to Hillcrest, the new roundabout, which is being constructed, is ten metres large, inclusive of footpath on both sides. The upgrading of the Hillcrest Avenue will lead to the roundabout from there, with the third lane of M 1.

Mr Bhagwan: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether, at the new roundabout, his Ministry or the National Transport Authority has received application from a promoter to build a filling station with in and out exit? I would like to know whether, before giving the permit, a proper plan will be designed to ensure the safety of not only the public, but also the cars using that road.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of any permission that has been granted to any filling station there. As far as I am aware, I think we have not allowed the construction of any petrol pump in that region.

Mr Lesjongard: In his reply, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated that we are bound to put a roundabout. May we know why?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the best the way to control the traffic. Because I know that early in the morning and in the evening, it will be difficult in case we do not have a system of roundabout. We have tried it in the past, and it has not been of great help. So, according to the technicians of my Ministry, we should put a roundabout. It may not be as large and as vast, but it has to be there. Because it is almost in our culture now that people are used to ...

(Interruptions)

This is the information that I have, and I do believe in that.

Dr. Sorefan: As per contract, it was mentioned that it should be terminated in 365 days. May we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister where matters stand, and whether it is within schedule?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we had a big problem. We had to go to the court. There had been out of court settlement. Then, we had to wait for the sewerage to complete its work. There had been many difficulties on the way. But, if a substantive question is put to me, definitely I will look into it. We have given instructions to the contractor to go as fast as possible, and if in case they will not be able to complete the work on time, definitely liquidated damages will be there.

Mr Bhagwan: On several occasions, I have raised the issue with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister concerning the problem of street lighting from St Jean to Quality Beverages. I was given the assurance that this component would be taken into consideration. May I know whether, in that particular contract, provision has been made for this portion of motorway?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, I have given assurance to the House. This is in our project. I am just waiting for the completion, and then we are going to do the needful.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the mess caused to traffic with three roundabouts at Jumbo, Phoenix and Supercash, which slow down the traffic terribly, does not the hon. Vice-Prime Minister think that, maybe, traffic lights only might be handier to get the Sodnac traffic out rather than a roundabout, which will slow down and bring to a halt the intense traffic from Sodnac?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, this roundabout which we are constructing will not be on the way from Phoenix to Réduit. I don't think it will slow down the traffic. It is very dangerous also and we have to be very cautious before we do anything. We have to be cautious because the amount of traffic that will come from Hillcrest Avenue on the third lane will be too much and we have to be extra careful because of this. The engineer and technicians of TMRSU also have recommended that we should have a roundabout.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre si le plan initial d'élargissement de l'Avenue des Tulipes a été modifié en raison de la présence des maisons sur le côté gauche parce qu'à un certain moment c'était d'une certaine largeur, mais en présence d'autres maisons la largeur semble rétrécir ?

Mr Bachoo: Well, we have maintained the ten metres which I have said, but if the houses would not have been there, probably we would have decided otherwise. But, it is very difficult for us even to pull down buildings also. So, ten metres, I personally believe that it is good for any highway.

Mr Jhugroo: With the increasing number of traffic flow near the roundabout at Phoenix and other roundabouts, will the hon. vice-Prime Minister consider having flyovers even if they are costly because we should plan for the future?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, on many occasions I have informed the House that this forms an integral part for the PPP project, that is, a grade separated junction that is going to connect all the three big roundabouts which are there. I sincerely hope that we can start with the project as early as possible.

Mr Obeegadoo: Since this connection to the motorway will only relieve traffic and only be of assistance to traffic going towards St Jean, Port Louis and Rose Hill, why has consideration not been given to enlarge Tulipes Avenue so that this traffic moving uphill from St Jean Road has a double lane?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we are enlarging the Tulipes Avenue. I can't go more than that, because in the first place we had difficulties in the court itself and out of court settlement whatever was made we could not go more than that. I am making maximum use of whatever land is available, or else I will have to pull down buildings; it is very difficult.

Dr. Sorefan: To follow the question of my hon. friend, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether those coming from St Jean going towards Phoenix, if they want to join the roundabout at Hillcrest whether there will be a separated bridge?

Mr Bachoo: No, that is unimaginable, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is meant for those who are moving toward Hillcrest. If you want to take the risk and go from St Jean towards the roundabout, you are stuck. If in the morning you are doing so or in the afternoon, you will get stuck definitely.

NTC – BUSES - SPEEDOMETERS

(No. B/469) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport

and Shipping whether, in regard to the buses of the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to -

- (a) if the speedometers thereof are in good running conditions;
- (b) if they are fitted with speed limiters and, if so, indicate if it has been ascertained whether each one of them works when the bus goes uphill and downhill respectively, and
- (c) the amount of revenue received for the placing of advertisement thereon, over the past five years.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the National Transport Corporation owns a fleet of 519 buses which are fitted with either manual or automatic transmissions as follows -

Manual transmission	-	279 buses
Automatic transmission	-	240 buses

All buses fitted with manual transmission are equipped with mechanical speedometers, whereas buses fitted with automatic transmission are fitted with electronic speedometers.

Except for old models of buses with manual transmission, for which spare parts are no longer available, the speedometers on 185 NTC buses are either functioning properly or repaired as and when required.

As regards buses with automatic transmission, they are fitted with electronic speedometers. Sixty-eight (68) electronic speedometers are functioning at present.

Since December 2010, the NTC has attempted to procure replacement of speedometers for the faulty ones.

In that context a survey was carried out in the month of December 2010. At that time, it was found that the electronic speedometers in fifty-four (54) buses were already out of order.

Consequently, the National Transport Corporation (NTC) launched a Quotation, Ref IQ 20 for the supply of ultra speedometers. The closing date was 11 February 2011.

At the time of opening of the quotation on 11 February 2011, it was observed that no bid was received. One major local supplier of Ashok Leyland spare parts to the NTC, DSS Trading Co. Ltd, informed that it did not quote because its principals were not agreeable to guarantee the electronic speedometers.

Moreover, the local agent of Tata buses, ACC Ltd, did not submit any offer.

Thereafter, the NTC procured, for a trial, electronic speedometers from three overseas suppliers, namely -

- (i) Nimbus Automotive Pvt Ltd – India (2 Nos)
- (ii) Sawhney Pvt Ltd – India (1 No)
- (iii) Interex – United Kingdom (1 No)

In all we procured four, the trial has not been conclusive.

As regards part (b), all the 519 NTC buses are fitted with speed limiters, as per the requirement of the Road Traffic Regulations 2010.

Regarding buses with faulty speedometers, the speed limiters are being set at 60 kms per hour, as most of our roads in Mauritius allow for a maximum speed of 60 kms per hour.

I have also been informed that speed limiters in some buses have been tampered with and the matter has been referred to the Police. However, remedial action for replacing the speed limiters has already been initiated.

As regards part (c), the amounts received over the last five years by the NTC from contractors for the placing of advertisement outside its buses, are as follows -

Year	Amount (Rs)	Contractor
2009	1,000,000	The Legendary Management Services
2010	1,000,000	The Legendary Management Services
2011	2,007,000	Century Advertising Co Lt
2012	2,007,000	Century Advertising Co Ltd
2013	501,750	Century Advertising Co Ltd

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that NTC bus drivers have no choice than to drive buses with defected speedometers, with a risk to be fined for exceeding speed as well as losing the penalty points?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that we have got a big problem. It is not only for buses, but for cars also the speedometers don't work in most of the cases.

I have personally contacted the Triolet bus service because even though they are equipped with mechanical speedometers they have the same problem. In many of the Triolet bus service they are not able to provide speedometers. Similarly, it is the case for UBS also and at the same time with the private company, that is, the cooperative bus companies. Though they are trying every means in order to procure speedometers for the old buses which are comparatively older than others, they are not able to get them.

That is the reason why we are trying to limit the speed limiters. We are putting it up to 60 kms because on about 96% to 97% of our roads you can go up to a maximum of 60 kms an hour. That is the reason. Instead of 70 kms an hour, we have put it at 60 kms for those buses which don't have the speedometers. I am aware of this problem but, unfortunately, I have just mentioned we have made every effort to procure from outside, but we have not been able to get.

Secondly, we tried from England also. I am willing to lay a copy on the table of the Assembly of the request which we have made to the different companies for the procurement of speedometers.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm to the House that these speed limiters work only when the buses go uphill and do not work when the buses go downhill? If so, what is the importance of placing this device on these vehicles?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, for the first time I am hearing about this, that downhill the speed limiters are not working. I am going to have this checked. Definitely, I am going to take up the matter with the Member concerned.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the Vice-Prime Minister been drawn, especially after the tragic accident and whether he has asked the NTC to check because there are many buses which have their starters off? They start in the morning and when they reach at night then they remove the cable battery to have the engine stopped.

Mr Bachoo: The speed limiters?

Mr Bhagwan: No, the starter. I am just asking the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact. Because we have been made aware that buses start in the morning and then all day it remains on and at night when reach the *depot*, then it is put off; all day it is on.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have given written instructions - I can produce a copy of the letter - to NTC to see to it that any bus which is defective should not go on the road. Instructions have been given, but if they are going to violate those instructions then, of course, action has to be taken. But, as far as I am concerned, almost on a daily basis I am talking to the General Manager. I can give him directives of general nature. In fact, a letter has already reached his table.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say whether the bus which was involved in the accident at Sorèze had this speed limiter device and whether it was in good working order?

Mr Bachoo: Only one answer I can give that in fact the speed limiter was there, but now it is up to the investigating team to investigate about it. Secondly, one thing I am also aware, that in a few buses - not only buses but heavy vehicles also - you know, they are so sharp, the drivers, at times, they disconnect the speed limiter and, in fact, the Police has been informed and they are investigating into such cases also.

Mr Roopun: Out of the 500 or so buses, could the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us how many buses are more than 15 years old?

Mr Bachoo: I had already answered this in the past that we have got less than a hundred, but, in fact, we are trying to procure about 65 new buses.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister explain to the House what is the function of the speed limiter in case of brake failure as it happened on 03 May 2013 at Sorèze?

Mr Bachoo: The speed limiter only prevents you from going beyond 70 kms, but, here, in the buses when you are putting at 60 kms, you won't be able to go beyond 60 kms.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the hon. Minister been drawn and whether survey has been effected that nearly 80% - and I know what I am saying - *les tableaux de bord* are not functioning, the switches; when you put the ignition you have the lights - of the buses of the National Transport Corporation, especially the Leyland, *les tableaux de bord sont* out completely?

Mr Bachoo: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned, I have given instructions to see to it and at the same time, I have earlier informed the House that they are spending almost Rs7 m. monthly on spare parts. I do hope that they have taken our warning seriously.

Mr Ganoo: Would the hon. Vice-Prime Minister contemplate the possibility of legislating so that speed limiters be fixed into all the heavy duty vehicles?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, the regulations are there, but if you feel that there is any mishap, any type of negligence, we have no hesitation in at least changing the law but, in fact, the regulations are there. It provides for that.

Mr Ganoo: For lorries also.

Mr Bachoo: Yes, all heavy vehicles.

Mr Jugnauth: En ce qui concerne, M. le président, les bus dont le compteur de vitesse ne travaille pas - le ministre vient de le dire, il y a bon nombre qui ne fonctionnent pas - est-ce que le vice-Premier ministre ne considère pas injuste qu'on donne à ces chauffeurs ces bus-là pour travailler et qu'ils ne sachent même pas est la vitesse à laquelle ils sont en train de rouler, finalement ils seront même pénalisés et risquent de perdre leur emploi ?

Mr Bachoo: That is the reason why I have mentioned that the speed limiter has limited the *vitesse* up till 60 kms. We are aware of this, and, secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, it is not only the case for NTC but even for all the other bus companies. If it were available in the market anywhere, we could have bought them and, at the same time, we have also in the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Act which is there, buses which are, let us say, before 1995, they have also been absolved of that clause because they knew at the time when we were preparing the

regulations that these speedometers are not available. But I do hope that slowly but surely we are going to remove those old buses and they will be replaced by the new ones.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that some drivers fiddle with the speedometer or the speed meter. May I suggest or ask the hon. Minister to see to it that future buses that are supplied with those speedometers or the speed meters that they are fiddle-proof?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Police is enquiring into such cases and, in fact, the Police has been trained properly to look into these things.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has just mentioned that there are some drivers who are so sharp that they disconnect the speed limiters. Can he tell us whether there have been sanctions taken against those drivers and how many sanctions have been taken during the past three years?

Mr Bachoo: Well, in fact, this is the work of the Police, but we have already requested the Police to look into it. They are aware and once they are caught, definitely actions will be taken against them.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has been telling us about the state of affairs which is of a great concern to us. May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, being given that there are so many deliberate flouting of the law going on in these transport companies, is his Ministry sending inspectors not only to NTC but also to other bus operators to see whether there are other problems, not just speed meters, but other parts also and how often do his inspectors inspect these places?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, with the number of inspectors that we have at the NTA, there are regular monitoring and checks carried out and there are many contraventions which have already been established. That, I can assure you because, in fact, there are many, I don't have in mind how many contraventions, but many contraventions have been established.

Mr Jhugroo: Due to the fact that we have got many advertisements placed on buses, is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that the *indicateurs de route* found at the back of the windscreen of the buses are mostly invisible to passengers, *surtout les vieilles personnes*?

Mr Bachoo: Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, it is the work of the bus companies to see to it that their indications are proper otherwise they are going to lose passengers.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just mentioned that he has given instructions to the management of NTC not to have on the road buses which are not roadworthy. Is he aware that

in some cases pressure has been put on the workers to drive buses which they, as professional drivers, think are not roadworthy?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I honestly say, I would invite any driver of the Corporation to come to the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry or to me to report cases where they have been compelled to use buses which are not safe. I have been telling all the time and I have given instructions, I hope that these instructions are being carried out.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. In answering my question the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said for those buses where the speedometers are not working there is a speed limiter that will limit the speed to 60 km/hour. Now, what about in places where the speed limit is less than 60 km/hr? How would those drivers be aware of what speed the bus is going?

Mr Bachoo: Well, it is less than 60 kms in places where construction works are on and it is clearly indicated, I hope the drivers are aware of it and they will have to reduce the speed, it is definite.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: One last question to the author of the question.

(*Interruptions*)

Silence!

Mr Jhugroo: What had been mentioned by hon. Baloomoody...

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Jhugroo: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm that what has been said by hon. Baloomoody, that a bus driver working in bus No.1424 May 03 who reported that '*disque pé glisser et veilleuse pas bon*', has been suspended for one day in December 2012 and is now in the bad book of the NTC?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, these cases are not reported to me. I am not aware of it. This is the first time I am listening that, but I can assure the hon. Member, I maintain over again, I can show a copy of the letter which my Ministry has sent to NTC.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ms Anquetil!

LAMAIREE - COMMUNITY CENTRE

(No. B/470) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a Community Centre at La Mairée, she will state where matters stand.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that tenders for the renting of the building to house a new Community Centre at La Mairée, have been launched by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund on three occasions.

So far, no building as per required specifications has been identified.

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Minister state the date of bids in the press?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, the launching dates of the different bids were 27 July 2010, 14 September 2011 and 07 May 2012.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the date of meeting of the Evaluation Committee and can she state and table the report of the Committee?

(Interruptions)

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have the different dates when the...

(Interruptions)

committee sat down, but I can tell you that for the tender exercise number one, two bids were received; the second one, one bid was received, and for the third one, four bids were received and they were non-responsive.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what actions have been taken since then?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that as from the fact that three bids had already been launched by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, the only possibility is to launch another bid again.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Taking from the reply of the hon. Minister, can she state what are the criteria for the setting up of a Community Centre in a particular region?

Mrs Martin: The criteria, I am informed, to set up a Community Centre in a specific area are the requests from the local community and NGOs of the locality, the availability of existing alternatives and other social facilities in the locality and the availability of required funds to run the Community Centre.

Mr Speaker: One last question!

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the youths of La Mairée have been waiting for long to have a place for their activities?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, please!

Mrs Martin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member, herself, spoke to me about that and we are quite conscious of it. This is the reason why we are thinking of launching another bid in a few weeks to come.

Mr Speaker: Okay!

Mr Jugnauth: Has the hon. Minister considered any of the alternatives, that is, probably for the construction of a building to house the Community Centre?

Mrs Martin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, the launching of the bids for the setting up of the Community Centre did not require the constructing as such. We were also looking for the renting of the building, but unfortunately the offers that were given were not according to the specifications.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know from the hon. Minister since when this plot of land has been vested to her Ministry?

Mrs Martin: It is not a question of a plot of land, Mr Speaker, Sir. What I have said was that the tenders were for the renting of a building. We do not have available land as far as I am aware there that we are planning to construct a Community Centre on, but, in fact, we were planning to rent one existing building.

Mr Speaker: The Table has been advised that parliamentary question no. B/471 has been withdrawn. Hon. Bhagwan!

GRNW - GENDER DROP-IN CENTRE - REINSTATEMENT

(No. B/471) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Gender Drop-in Centre at Grand River North West, he will state where matters stand as to the reinstatement of part of the wall surrounding the premises thereof which was demolished by the flash floods of 30 March 2013.

(Withdrawn)

PLAZA THEATRE - RENOVATION

(No. B/472) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin &Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Plaza Theatre, he will state if his Ministry has received a request from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, through the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, to either release funds or give approval to secure a loan from a commercial bank for the implementation of Phase II of the renovation thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has received, on 08 April 2013, a request from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill for the funding of Phase II of the Plaza Project, i.e. the renovation of the *façades*, the *salle des fêtes* and the administrative wing of the building.

This Phase II project is included in the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for the implementation as from 2015 to the tune of Rs67 m. and to be financed wholly by the Municipal Council.

However, the Municipal Council now wishes to implement the project during this current fiscal year and has submitted a request through the Ministry of Local Government & Outer Islands for my Ministry to consider a grant of Rs67 m. in this current fiscal year. Alternatively, the Municipal Council wishes to be authorised to contract a bridging loan, with Government guarantee, from a Commercial Bank pending release of funds which it is expecting from Government earmarked for 2015.

I wish to inform the House that for Phase I of the project concerning the renovation of the roofs, out of a total cost of Rs87 m., Government has provided an amount of Rs80 m. The Plaza Renovation Project has also a Phase III consisting of the refurbishment of the Plaza theatre amounting to Rs390 m. In whole, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Phase I, Phase II and Phase III will cost Rs544 m.

The request for Phase II is being duly examined by my Ministry which will consult the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and the Municipal Council to explore also other possible options, including contribution under Code 501 of the CSR guidelines.

Mr Bhagwan: I thank the hon. Vice- Prime Minister for his reply. Being given that this building officially now forms part of the National Heritage, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will consider giving due diligence to any other requests made by the Municipality towards the CSR Scheme and any other such schemes approved by the Ministry?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the provisions in the guidelines already exist as I mentioned under Code 501. We can give a help. There should not be any issue so far as Phase II is concerned,

but Phase III is another matter which is nearly Rs400 m. So, we would have to look at that. As I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a meeting, because it is a national monument, we will try and do our best.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the issues is precisely how one phase is connected to the other one. We had Phase I, a lot of time went by and we don't know whether we have got our money worth. Can I appeal to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that in considering financing of Phase II, we should have a clear idea of when we will embark on phase III and how we will provide the funds because, otherwise, it could be public money going down the drain?

Mr Duval: Well, if it is public money going down the drain, then maybe we should not do Phase II because I can't give any guarantee as for Phase III. Even for Phase II, Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to make it clear that in the Public Sector Investment Programme, it was to be financed entirely by the Municipal Council not by Government. Now, because we are now introducing CSR, we can also perhaps do *un tour de table* to see what could happen. But, then the issue of the Rs400 m. is another issue.

Mr Bhagwan: I see the positive reaction of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Being given that this forms part of the National Heritage, can I make a plea to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, at least, to expedite matters because this building is without insurance and no company, even SICOM, is not ready to give insurance policy unless Phase II is implemented which consists of the construction of a water reservoir?

Mr Duval: I understand, from a previous reply by my predecessor, that the reason for the non-insurance of the building is to do with the electrical works and all that are not guaranteed. I cannot reply on this insurance and the water, etc, whether it has to do with the water tank or not. What I can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will certainly do it as quickly as we can and try to find a solution to the Plaza Theatre.

Mr Speaker: I have an announcement to make. In the light of the point of order taken by hon. Mohamed, this morning, about the use of the word '*trafiquant*', I have concluded that the word is unparliamentary. I, therefore, invite hon. Rajesh Bhagwan to withdraw this word.

Mr Bhagwan: I will discuss with you and I withdraw it.

Mr Speaker: Thank you. Next question, hon. Quirin!

FOOTBALL - DIRECTEUR TECHNIQUE NATIONALE

(No. B/473) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to football, he will state if Mr C. D. has been officially appointed as *Directeur Technique Nationale* therefor and, if so-

- (a) indicate his date of appointment, and
- (b) lay copy of his Action Plan.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Football Association that Mr C. D. has been offered the responsibility of *Directeur Technique Nationale* as from 01 April 2013. The terms and conditions of his assignment are still being finalised by my Ministry.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am laying a copy of the development plan submitted to the MFA by the Mr C. D.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, vu que monsieur C. D. est un officier du ministère de la jeunesse et des sports, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si son ministère a déjà répondu à la requête de la MFA pour qu'il soit *seconded for duty* en tant que DTN de football?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, Mr C. D. is a permanent officer of the Ministry and there is need to look into all his responsibilities and to harmonise his earnings with regard to his responsibilities and assignments. That is why his terms and conditions have yet to be finalised. For the time being, he is only receiving his MYS salary and the FIFA allowance.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai une copie de la lettre adressée par la MFA au ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports qui date du 28 février de cette année dans laquelle le président de la MFA, M. Persunno, sollicite justement l'approbation de l'honorable ministre à l'effet que monsieur C. D. soit *seconded for duty* en tant que DTN. Ma question est que cela fait quand même plusieurs mois que la MFA attend la réponse de l'honorable ministre, de ses officiers, de son PS par rapport au poste que doit occuper monsieur C. D. à la MFA, c'est-à-dire, le poste de DTN. Cela fait quand même plusieurs mois, presqu'une année depuis que le football mauricien n'a plus de DNT depuis le départ de monsieur C. D. Est-ce que le ministre ne considère-t-il pas urgent qu'une réponse soit envoyée à la MFA à l'effet qu'il soit *seconded for duty* ou pas ? Est-ce que le ministre est d'accord qu'il y a urgence en ce qui concerne le poste de DTN ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I indicated in my answer that he has been proposed for appointment as from 01 April 2013 and Mr C. D. who is already an officer of my Ministry is willing to continue his work at the level of my Ministry and get an allowance from the MFA regarding his post of *Directeur Technique Nationale*. So, we are finalising with him as to what is the best offer that he would like to have.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, est ce qu'on peut savoir du ministre quand la dernière fois l'équipe nationale a joué un match à l'extérieur parce que cela fait assez longtemps qu'on n'entend pas l'équipe de l'île Maurice, c'est à croire que le football est paralysé, le football est mort dans le pays ?

Mr Speaker: No, it does not relate to the question. Hon. Quirin! Do you have a last question or you don't have? We move to the next one. Next one, hon. Quirin!

MFA - GRAND PORT REGIONAL COMMITTEE - AMOUNT DISBURSED

(No. B/474) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to one Mr J. B., he will for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Football Association Grand Port Regional Committee, information as to if, in July and August 2012, an amount of Rs40,000 was paid thereto and, if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Football Association Grand Port Regional Committee is a private and independent organisation. I am therefore not in a position to provide the information asked.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous dise d'où provienne les fonds du comité régional de football de Grand Port ?

Mr Ritoo : Mr Speaker, Sir, I have got a statement here of the Grand Port Regional Committee where they received contributions from stakeholders, sponsors, and also a certain amount of money is given to each regional committee of Mauritius through my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: Est- ce que le ministre est en train de confirmer que le comité régional de football de Grand Port reçoit aussi une contribution de son ministère c'est-à-dire du gouvernement, des fonds publics ?

Mr Ritoo: My Ministry gives football regional grant to all the regional committees, that is, 13 in all, 12 in Mauritius and one in Rodrigues. 13 regional committees get Rs80,000 each as regional grant every year.

Dr. S. Boolell: Can the hon. Minister confirm that the sum of Rs80,000 is given to each regional committee and that there is a contract of accountability between his Ministry and the regional committee and at the end of each calendar year, the accounts have to be shown concerning the money spent and how it was spent?

Mr Ritoo: That's exactly what I am showing Mr Speaker, Sir. I have got a statement of the exact amount they collected and how the amount was utilized.

Mr Baloomoody: From the account that the hon. Minister has, can he state whether the sum of Rs40,000 was paid by that association for Mr Dubit?

Mr Ritoo: Yes, it was a damage cost of Rs40,000.

Mr Uteem: Being given that the hon. Minister has just confirmed that this association paid Rs40,000 on behalf of J. B. will the hon. Minister consider to refer the matter for ICAC to investigate whether Mr J. B. has used his influence for personal gratification?

Mr Speaker: I have said that you have to avoid mentioning names.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I stated at the very beginning of my reply that this is an organisation which is private and independent. So, it is the managing committee that decides whether they are going to refer the matter to ICAC.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, je ne suis pas d'accord avec le ministre dans le sens quand il dit que c'est au comité régional, comité indépendant etc. Nous ne demandons pas au ministre d'intervenir dans le *day-to-day* running de la fédération du comité régional en question. Le ministre lui-même a tout à fait le droit d'avoir un droit de regard sur tout ce qui touche les finances que son ministère, que le gouvernement alloue aux fédérations et aux comités régionaux M. le président. Tout ça pour dire à un moment où tous les comités régionaux se plaignent qu'ils manquent de fonds ...

Mr Speaker: What is your question?

Mr Quirin: M. le président, il est bon d'informer la Chambre...

Mr Speaker: No, what is your question? I'm not going to explain again the purpose of a question.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, peut on savoir du ministre, est ce qu'il ne pas entraîne de refuser de reconnaître qu'il a eu un paiement qui a été effectué par le comité régional de Grand Port à monsieur Jaylall Bhojawon...

Mr Speaker: No, you see...

Mr Quirin: Excusez-moi.

Mr Speaker: You withdraw the names.

Mr Quirin: Je retire le nom que j'ai cité à J. B. deux chèques de R 20,000 roupies avec l'entête de *Mauritius Football Association* Grand Port. Voilà deux chèques de R 20,000 payés à J. B. par le comité régional de Grand Port alors qu'il y avait un procès que J. B. avait intenté en Cour à un certain D. P. aussi connu comme V. P. ancien président de la *Mauritius Football Association* et qui était à l'époque *Chairman* du comité régional de Grand Port ? C'est pour une affaire de diffamation M. le président...

Mr Speaker: No, hon. Member! I am asking myself whether you are putting a question or making a speech. Put the question. I have said it on several occasions.

Mr Quirin: Voilà M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre informe la Chambre s'il trouve cela tout à fait normal ? Est-ce qu'il approuve ce paiement qu'a effectué le comité régional de Grand Port à J. B. en ce qui concerne un procès en diffamation qu'avait intenté J. P. à V. P. que tout le monde connaît dans cette Chambre ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Grand Port Regional Committee is private and independent. They receive a grant and they are autonomous anyway. They receive a grant from my Ministry like all the other regional grants, and they make their expenses, in the statement they are referring to ball collectors, ground marking, white page, travelling, sundries, bars. So, they do the payment. If anyone is not satisfied in the committee, they have to challenge this payment.

Mr Baloomoody: Does the hon. Minister find it proper that there is an action between two private individuals, be it that they are in the same society or not, it is a private action of defamation, and the money of the association, part of it consists of our money, is being used to compensate the other one. When there is a private action between two individuals, the money of the society is being used to compensate the other party?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we give one million rupees to each first division team and Rs500,000 to each second division football team and Rs80,000 to each regional committee. We don't ask a statement of how to use it. It is a question of money given for them to promote their discipline. So, how they manage the money, it is for the members of the management to go and ask the question.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would be very straight to the hon. Minister. Can the hon. Minister, at least, confirm to the public, to the nation at large, that Mr V. P. ...

Mr Speaker: Refrain from ...

Mr Bhagwan: This guy Mr V. P. is being protected...

Mr Speaker: No ...

Mr Bhagwan: Because he is...

Mr Speaker: No, I'm not going to allow this. You have to be fair in your question.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, does hon. Minister consider that it is good governance that public funds be used to pay damages on behalf of a private individual who was sued as a private individual not as a federation?

Mr Ritoo: If the hon. Member feels aggrieved with this payment, he can go and put a case. Again I say, Mr Speaker, Sir, we give money as grant. This money is given as regional grant. So, they spend the money buying balls or whatever and they do payments. This is not my problem.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think *c'est un cas scandaleux*. May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is the first time that such payment is being made or we have had previous cases, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Ritoo: I am not aware if there have been any previous cases, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that there has been a *maldonne*, why is the hon. Minister refusing to send this case to ICAC?

Mr Ritoo: I think the hon. Member can send this case to ICAC himself.

Mr Uteem: Being given that the hon. Minister, himself, has realised by now that this money, which he has given for the promotion of sports, has been diverted away to pay a private individual. In the circumstances, would not the hon. Minister find it fit to start an enquiry and ask for a refund of that money to Government?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will seek legal advice.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, from the answers given by the hon. Minister, must we take it that, as from now, regional grant, as my colleague has just said, for the promotion of football can be used for other purposes and will this be an example for the other federations?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I mentioned that they have an executive committee where each member has got the right to enquire about the amount...

(Interruptions)

We give the regional grant of Rs80,000 for the promotion of football. They organise football and if they are satisfied that the football is being organised in their region, we don't have any problem.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister enlighten the House, the country and the nation, les sportifs that Mr V. P. is the same person on whom there is an accusation of match fixing.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think everyone knows that Mr V. P. who is the president of the MFA has got a problem regarding match fixing, but, again I'll repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the grant that was given and they collect money also regarding the promotion of football through other stakeholders and sponsors to promote football. The hon. Member is talking about match fixing...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't interrupt.

Mr Ritoo: ...which is something very different concerning the President of the MFA who is the same Mr V. P.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (FOREIGN) - REGISTRATION

(No. B/475) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the foreign medical practitioners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council, information as to the number thereof registered therewith and working in the country, indicating in each case -

- (a) the criteria on which the registration was effected, and
- (b) if a permit was applied for and obtained from the Board of Investment and other authorities, indicating the criteria considered therefor.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Medical Council that presently there are 6 foreign medical practitioners registered with the Council who are employed by my Ministry in scarcity areas. In this connection, I am tabling the list thereof together with all details asked for in parts (a) and (b) of the question. With regard to foreign medical practitioners employed in the private sector, the information asked for is being compiled and will be tabled in due course.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also wish to inform the House that, as I said earlier, a Ministerial Committee has been set up to review the Medical Council Act. Moreover, the hon. Prime Minister has already initiated discussions with the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom to address issues of interest with the Medical Council of Mauritius and, in particular, for licensing; registration of doctors and assessing medical qualification, ethics and standards.

The Ministerial Committee will also review the criteria with regard to streamlining the procedure to facilitate foreign doctors to practise medicine in Mauritius so as to enable Government to achieve its objective of transforming Mauritius into a medical hub and a medical tourist destination in line with Government Programme 2010-2015.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister as to which institution assesses the credibility, be it professional or otherwise, of these professionals who are called upon to work in the private sector. Is it the BOI or the Medical Council itself and at what speed do they assess the credibility of these doctors?

Mr Bundhoo: I would imagine with regard to the qualifications, it is the Medical Council and with other issues, it is either the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations or the BOI.

Dr. S. Boolell: In view of the fact that there have been allegations in this House and questions requesting investigations into cases of death which have occurred in the private sector, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether these professionals, who are called upon to work in Mauritius, are of good professional standing; are duly registered with their Medical Councils of origin and have no police cases whatsoever pending anywhere in the world?

Mr Bundhoo: I would imagine, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, prior for them to be registered and to be able to practice medicine in Mauritius, all these information would have been checked by the Medical Council and other institutions in this country.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, in some private clinics, medical practitioners come here only for the weekend to effect certain operations or surgery and then they go away. Do the people of the BOI or the Medical Council have any control on these people?

Mr Bundhoo: I am sure, Mr Speaker, Sir, the private clinics, the Medical Council and all other relevant institutions must be having some form of control and mechanism whereby they can follow what these doctors are doing in Mauritius and this is all in line in order to make and to establish Mauritius as a medical and tourism hub.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that there are six foreign medical practitioners in scarcity areas. Can I know from the hon. Minister what are these scarcity areas and whether any advertisement had been put in newspapers to see whether there were Mauritians who were qualified to occupy these positions?

Mr Bundhoo: This is a quite relevant question, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, my hon. friend is right those scarcity areas were anaesthesia and fortunately since November last year, vacancies have already been published by the Public Service Commission. The process is still on and once these vacancies will be filled; those who are classified as scarcity areas; who are employed as anaesthetists would be terminated in line with the contract the Government has signed with these people.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the Ministry of Health is the only institution responsible for the whole of the health sector in Mauritius and, being given the serious issues of safety of members of the public involved here, will he consider the advisability of having the Ministry of Health imposed mandatory registration for all private practitioners coming here whether for a weekend or for a year so that the next time there is a parliamentary question, he does have all the facts in hand to give us a comprehensive answer.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to read again this bit of the answer where it goes like this: Moreover, the hon. Prime Minister has already initiated discussions with the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom to address issues of interest with the Medical Council of Mauritius

and, in particular, for licensing; registration of doctors and assessing medical qualifications, ethics and standards whether they are local or foreign practitioners.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The Minister, in his reply, has mentioned six scarcity areas and then hon. Uteem asked him - he has unmentioned only anaesthesia. Can the hon. Minister mention the other five scarcity areas?

Mr Bundhoo: From what I have with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, there are also general medicine, radiology, neurosurgery and others.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister as to whether these doctors, these superstars, who turn up for the weekend and operate are MRA compliant or friendly?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, while listening to the hon. Member it refreshes my memory of the discussions we had in this House sometime back with regard to the amendment of the Law Practitioners Bill - the same kind of query; the same kind of questions; the same apprehensions were being asked.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we did not and we had not taken the decision we had taken before, how come when we assume office in 2006 there were only 1000 foreigners coming to Mauritius for medical treatment and today in this country, thanks to the vision, we have 21,410 people coming for treatment.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister table...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Don't interrupt!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister table a copy of all the foreign medical practitioners who have been working here for a weekend or for a short while and who have been registered with the Medical Council?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem with this House, but I am going to repeat. With regard to foreign medical practitioners employed in the private sector, the information asked for is being compiled, and will be tabled in due course. I said that in my main reply.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! What is the problem with this House, hon. Minister?

Mr Bundhoo: I withdraw the words. I wanted to say that my hon. colleague has not listened to the first part of my reply.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether those doctors who come during the weekend pay any form of tax to the Government.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would humbly transmit the hon. Member's request to the MRA through the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Baloomoody: I know the hon. Minister is very excited. I will ask him a simple question, and I expect a simple answer. Can he inform the House what is the procedure for a doctor who comes here for the weekend to do a specific operation in a specific clinic, and goes on Monday morning?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the same procedures apply to everybody, whether it is a weekend, it's a month, it's three months...

(Interruptions)

Can I finish? Whether he is given a three years' contract? But these doctors are super specialists, and are not attached specifically to Mauritius for a continuous period of three years. Some come, go back and come again.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister how many cases of alleged medical negligence have been made against these foreign practitioners?

Mr Bundhoo: I would have to seek the information from the Medical Council, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: I take on where my friend just left. These doctors who come for a weekend are not employed by the clinics; they are non-citizens, they have no licence to operate, and every foreigner who works in this country must be in possession of a valid permit to work according to the law. In case of medical negligence, can the hon. Minister give us the reply as to who will assume the responsibility in case there is a civil suit against them?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my hon. friend, who is also a lawyer by profession, would understand that those doctors who are allowed to work in Mauritius, whether on a short term or a long term period, are employed at a specific institution, and if ever there is anything that goes wrong – God forbid – the medical institution whereby he has practised medicine on a patient would have to take the responsibility of this specific case.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! No cross-talking!

(Interruptions)

No cross-talking, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since I understand that the criteria for these foreign medical practitioners to come to Mauritius, according to an answer provided by the Minister's predecessor, are

special skills they possess and their availability, is he aware that there is increasing frustration amongst Mauritian specialists in the private sector, that doctors who have no better qualifications than they have are being allowed to come here in private clinics to work for a weekend or a week, and then to leave again? Is there any control by his Ministry of practices that may be unfair; unfair competition on the part of those doctors being brought in by private clinics?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I've just replied to this question. We live in a free country, whereby we have competition. If the doctors based...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Ministers should listen, at least, to their own colleague answering a question!

Mr Bundhoo: If the doctors working in the private sector for any reason, feel aggrieved, they have several ways and means to voice out their opinion. By the way, can I also inform the House that the patient also has a freedom of choice; he is paying his money!

PARISOT & HIGHLANDS – FOOTBRIDGE

(No. B/476) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the flyovers located between Parisot and Highlands, on the motorway leading to La Vigie, he will state if he has received representations complaining of safety problems arising out of the bad state thereof and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, following representations made by the Chief Whip, hon. Dr. Hawoldar, and the PPS, hon. Assirvaden, to RDA regarding the footbridge between Parisot and Highlands, a complete survey has been carried out, and remedial measures have already started. The side cladding has already been replaced by the RDA.

I am further informed that a major overhaul of the structure is required, and that necessary action is being initiated.

A tender has been prepared for the rehabilitation of footbridges islandwide, which includes around 14 footbridges.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he has received any petition from the inhabitants of Parisot and Highlands?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that representations were made by the Members of the constituency to me. I am not aware of the representations which the hon. Member is

talking about. They might have written to my Ministry, but before that has reached my table, I have already initiated action. At the same time, I have mentioned that all the 14 footbridges will be repaired, but we are just awaiting the tender, the procedures to be followed.

Mr Soodhun: I am going to submit copy of petition. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, for the Ramadan month, most of the people are going to use this flyover? I have taken a photo myself, Mr Speaker, Sir, this morning, and I am going to lay it on the Table.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister when he was made aware about his case by the two hon. Members of Constituency No. 15?

Mr Bachoo: It has been, let's say, a few months ago, but I have just mentioned that we are preparing the tender documents. Of course, funds also must be available because we are trying to have a look at all the footbridges; not only one.

Mr Obeegadoo: On the same line, given the many representations made by hon. Soodhun and hon. Dr. Sorefan, given the urgency of the problem - and you were yourself, Mr Speaker, Sir, a Member of Parliament for this constituency in a not too distant past - will the hon. Minister give some indication as to when he will address the grievances expressed many times in this House by hon. Dr. Sorefan and hon. Soodhun?

Mr Bachoo: This is already being addressed, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have just mentioned that.

Mr Soodhun: Will the hon. Minister consider looking urgently at the issue of lighting system which is now completely damaged, as Ramadan is coming very soon?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, normally, as far as lighting is concerned, that falls under the responsibility of the local authorities. When the roads are constructed, the RDA puts up the lighting, and thereafter it hands it over to the local authorities. Therefore, this matter has to be addressed to the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix.

MITD – ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/477) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the recent case of alleged sexual abuse at the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Institute, information as to if actions have been taken against the then Director for not having revealed the existence of the minutes of the second meeting held by the psychologist in the presence of the mother of the minor involved therein prior to the production thereof in the House, and if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will answer this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the MITD that it has not been established at which particular point in time the then Director of the MITD was made aware of the minutes of the second meeting held on 25 November 2011 by the Psychologist in the presence of the mother and the minor involved.

I am further informed that the MITD, for all intents and purposes, took cognizance of the minutes dated 25 November 2011 after the then hon. Leader of the Opposition tabled the document on 17 November 2012 in the context of a Private Notice Question.

I wish to point out that, by that time, the then Director of the MITD had already resigned on 17 September 2012, and was no longer an employee of the MITD.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister how the Ministry was aware that this document from the Psychologist was in the possession of the then Director?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that this answer was already given by my colleague, the substantive Minister. But, in PQ No. B/477, the MITD had also informed that sometimes or around June 2012, a bundle of documents, including the Minutes of the second meeting held on 25 November 2011 by the Psychologist, which were in the possession of the then Director, were handed over by him to the Human Resource Division.

I wish to point out that no formal handing over was carried out. I am surprised! And MITD has informed that when the former Director left in September 2012. It was only when they were going through the bundle of documents that eventually this was found after the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know on which date it came out that they examined this bundle of documents and found out about this report?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not aware of it. But it would appear that this bundle was examined when they were looking whether there was a report. Since there was no formal handing over, this is why they went through each and every one and this was after the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

I must point out, it is a matter of regret that a Director of an institution does not formally do a handing over when leaving an institution.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that upon receipt of the document from the Psychologist, in fact, the then Director on 22 December 2011 had conveyed an enquiry, whereby he set up a panel of himself, Mr L. and another person and interviewed, at least, four people,

that is, Mr G., Mr M., Mr M. and the suspected paedophile and the teacher who has been now provisionally charged and released on bail? They have all given evidence during that enquiry.

Dr. Kasenally: To be frank, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware. I have not been informed about all these meetings by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

Mr Jugnauth: If the hon. Minister is not aware about this, fair enough. But then, may I know if the hon. Minister has replied to say that it is only when there was no proper handing over and when they looked at the bundle of documents that they found out about this document. Therefore, may I know what action the Ministry has taken against the then Director to, at least, have his explanation with regard to why this document has been *farouchement gardé, comme a dit le ministre?*

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as my colleague had informed, there is currently a Police enquiry and there is also an interministerial committee. In the light of their findings, they will take whatever appropriate actions that need to be taken, being given also that this Officer is no longer employed by the MITD or the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know, therefore, from the answer of the hon. Minister whether that inter-ministerial committee is enquiring into the case of the then Director not having – according to the Ministry – done anything with regard to that report?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the inter-ministerial committee and the Police enquiry will look at all the aspects related to this case for which so much ink has been spilled.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: We should be given, at least, an indication about when this inter-ministerial committee will come up with its findings.

Dr. Kasenally: With all the goodwill I can show, I am not in a position to say exactly when...

(Interruptions)

Not being also a member of the interministerial committee, I am unable – I humbly accept – to give a timeframe.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said that no action could be taken against the then Director since he had resigned. Can the hon. Minister confirm that the same ex-former Director is now working as Advisor with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member misquoted me. I said that the interministerial committee, in its deliberation and its wise judgement, will take whatever action that

may deem to be necessary. As far as the then Director is concerned, I am officially not aware where he is working at the moment.

SEVEN WATERFALLS MOUNTAIN CABLE CAR PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/478) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Seven Waterfalls Mountain Cable Car Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the amount of money invested therein, indicating where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/742 of 18 December 2012, wherein I informed the House that the promoters of the project incorporated a private company, the Seven Waterfalls Horizons (Mauritius) Ltd, on 07 January 2004 and had also obtained relevant permits and licences pertaining to that project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Seven Waterfalls Mountain Cable Car Project is an integrated development project which will comprise a cable car operation, a tourism leisure village and an ayurvedic village at Tamarind Falls.

I am also informed that in the first phase of the project, the promoters are focusing on the setting up of the cable car operation. The implementation of this phase will entail an investment of some Rs805 m. According to the Financing Structure submitted by the promoters, the project will be financed by way of equity amounting to Rs300 m., loans Rs245 m., preference shares Rs210 m. and redeemable debentures Rs50 m.

The Board of the SIC has approved investment in the project in the form of equity amounting to Rs30 m. and Rs50 m. in redeemable debentures. As at to date, the SIC has disbursed Rs31.7 m. as part of the project finance in the form of Secured Redeemable Debentures. This disbursement has been made against a bank guarantee (fixed charge on a first rank basis) on the freehold land at the project site at Tamarind Falls, of an extent of 8 *Arpents* and 74 *perches*, valued at Rs50 m. by the Government Valuer and owned by the project company. The disbursement has been effected directly to the cable car supplier Garaventa based in Switzerland.

Regarding the status of the implementation, I am informed that the on-site design and planning with respect to site mobilisation, construction of internal roads and preliminary works relating to the parking area have been completed. The production of the steel towers have been completed in Switzerland and upon completion of the relevant technical and quality tests, same will be delivered to the Company.

The first shipment of steel towers is expected to be made in October 2013. On site works at Tamarind Falls will start as soon as the steel towers have been received. The cable car component of the project is expected to be completed by October 2014.

Mr Lesjongard: From the reply of the Minister that he gave when replying to PQ No. B/742 and in his reply today, he stated that disbursement was made to the cable car supplier Garaventa based in Switzerland. May we know now what is the position with regard to that supplier, what is supposed to happen after that disbursement has been made?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can go back to my formal reply wherein it is said that the equipment, the steel towers have been completed and upon completion will be sent to Mauritius in October 2013.

Mr Lesjongard: From what I understand, there has been a reply by the supplier. Has anybody from SIC gone there to check whether what has been stated is correct?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to ask SIC, but it is not stated here whether he has been on site, but by memory I don't think he has been on site but, obviously, SIC would deal with the main shareholders. But I would remind the House that this question deals with the Board of Investment not the SIC but I am replying from whatever information I have.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Being given that the SIC has given funding, has the attention of the Vice-Prime Minister and Government been drawn - even the SIC - that the promoter is now bargaining to sell this project with other promoters, whether this information has been received by Government and whether it is seriously being inquired into?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no information whatsoever regarding this.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance inform the House whether he really believes in this project?

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a question of opinion.

Mr Speaker: No, this is a matter of opinion. Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether the project company is meeting all the milestones for disbursement in conformity with the plan submitted to the Board of Investment?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must make one thing clear. I do not at all interfere with the SIC in connection with this project. The SIC has a Board of Directors, they have a fiduciary responsibility

towards the SIC and I respect that, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can't say the same for my predecessors, but I do not meddle in this project at the SIC.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, again with regard to the SIC, we've taken note of the reply of the hon. Minister of Finance. Now, he stated in a reply that he has been informed that in January 2012, the Board of SIC gave its approval for investment in Seven Waterfalls Horizons Project in the form of Rs30 m. in equity and Rs50 m. in debentures which he has confirmed today and he stated that it was based on a due diligence exercise that this decision was taken.

Now, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware or to verify that the last financial statements filed with the Registrar of Companies by Seven Waterfalls Horizons (Mtius) Ltd dates back to 2008...

(Interruptions)

...and since then nothing has been filed as financial statement? Now, may we know on the basis of what that decision was taken by SIC to invest in the project?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think there must be some problem here. The question is about the Board of Investment, about whether they have obtained the permits from the Board of Investment, etc., etc. This question does not relate to SIC. So, I have not got the information relating to SIC, but I can obtain it if the House asks for the information, but I cannot expect the unexpected. I respected the question as it is.

Mr Speaker: Yes. Normally, the question concerns the Board of Investment, but you have answered a question about SIC. You have opened the door for questions on SIC.

Mr Duval: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I tried to help going by memory. That does not mean that I have to remember everything, what the accounts were in 2008, of which I have no clue when the last accounts were published because this is not the question and, anyway, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is published information, if the accounts are published or not. So, I don't have that information. All that I know, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that my predecessor was a keen supporter of the project and we have Minutes on that.

(Interruptions)

And that is all I know and I leave it ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I fully respect ...

(Interruptions)

the independence of the SIC.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: They are taking commercial decisions.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: We have Minutes on that and I mentioned this last time. Mr Speaker, Sir, I fully respect the independence of the SIC. It is a commercial operation. I can help somehow if I am given notice of the question. I cannot expect to imagine things that are not in the question.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Uteem: Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, my question relates not to the SIC but to the Board of Investment.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Well, there is a question, let us listen to the question!

Mr Uteem: My question relates to the Board of Investment. When the promoters obtained authorisation from the Board of Investment to carry out this investment, they submitted a business plan and a feasibility study where they had to meet certain milestone and they required injection of capital from a foreigner. So, my question is whether this promoter has respected all the conditions attached to the licence granted to it by the Board of Investment.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is a lawyer. Back in 2004, there existed something called an Investment Certificate which the Board of Investment was delivering. This is no more. The Investment Certificate no longer exists. If you want to do an investment, you no longer go to the Board of Investment for an Investment Certificate. Only IRS and RES go to the Board of Investment. So, what he is asking me is no longer applicable; it has become *caduque*. You see, Mr Speaker, Sir. I cannot answer. There is no such thing anymore as an Investment Certificate and he ought to know that.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll get back to the reply given by the Minister on 18 December 2012 and today in his reply he stated – *et je pèse mes mots* - in January 2012 that the Board of SIC gave its approval. It is not before that. It is in 2012 that the Board of SIC gave its approval and at the same time he himself came forward with a...

Mr Speaker: No, but therefore what is your question?

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I am coming to my question – at the same time Government was disinvesting in properties belonging to SIC.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but this is not a question hon. Member. Put a question!

Mr Lesjongard: Fine! How does he reconcile the fact that at the same time SIC is investing in another project?

Mr Speaker: Do you want me to refer you to the Standing Orders? Have a look at the Standing Orders on questions, then you are going to discuss with me. Put your question!

Mr Lesjongard: My question is: how does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister reconcile the fact that, at the same time, Government has taken a decision to disinvest in properties belonging to SIC; Government, through SIC, is investing in another project?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll respond to that because it is a policy decision. You'll have to bear with my answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, at various stages of our economic life, Government wants to promote certain activities. At some point in time, back 20 or 30 years ago, it was thought that casinos had to be promoted. Nowadays, this is no longer the case. They are not profitable anyway because of the competition all around the island and Government has decided that it is no longer a priority for which it can, after 20 or 30 years, sell this investment. But that does not mean on a general basis, because I do not interfere with the nitty-gritty of what is happening. On a general basis, Government has to promote new activities; that is obvious. Whether it is this, that or the other, whatever requires support from Government and this investment arm in innovative activities, then Government should support these investments and that is a general rule, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have, for instance, the Port Louis Waterfront, etc., these can be disinvested in because they are no longer of strategic value. New things should be whether it is ICT whether it is anything else. That is a general rule, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has talked about innovations and new projects. Can he inform the House whether, within the framework of this teleferic project, one of the major components for Government to take decision was for one Member of the House to cross the floor?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet! Please, I am on my feet!

Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Next question!

(Interruptions)

Silence, now!

ÉCOLE DE MÉDECINE LOUIS PASTEUR – DE-REGISTRATION

(No. B/479) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to *L'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur*, he will state the measures taken, if any, by his Ministry to support the students thereof, following the decision of the Tertiary Education Commission for the de-registration thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that -

- (i) the *École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* formerly known as the *l'Université Scientifique et Médicale Louis Pasteur – Ocean Indien* was first granted authorisation in 2000 by the then Minister of Education to offer the *Attestation de Fin de Deuxième Cycle de Médecine Générale*, awarded by the *Université de Paris 6, France*;
- (ii) in October 2005, after the Tertiary Education Commission was given legal authority to register private tertiary education institutions, it granted registration to the institution from 12 August 2006 to 11 August 2007. The registration was further extended up to 04 February 2013;
- (iii) the *École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* has not been deregistered but its registration lapsed on 4 February 2013;
- (iv) it was only on 05 March 2013, that the institution applied for renewal of its registration. Institutions which are not awarding Bodies are required to submit a duly signed agreement with a university to certify that the university will award the degree or diploma. The *École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* had such an agreement with *Université de Lille 2* which expired in September 2012 and which the *Université de Lille 2* has decided not to renew. I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that the institution has not yet submitted a legally binding Memorandum of Understanding with a recognised awarding Body to provide degrees which will qualify students for registration by Medical Council.

As regards the students at the *École de Médecine Louis Pasteur*, they were enrolled for the academic year 2012-2013, in the absence of an agreement with an awarding Body. Upon the intervention of my Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy, Prof. Pelayo, Vice-President of *Université de Lille 2* visited Mauritius in February 2013. He confirmed that the students are not enrolled with his university and has advised that these students should take the French

Concours (PACES), that is, *Première Année Commune des Etudes de Santé* if they wish to continue their medical studies in the French system.

I am advised by the Tertiary Education Commission that the *École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* has been requested to refund these students, failing which legal action will be taken against them.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not consider it to be the responsibility of the Tertiary Education Commission to take care of the students because, as he mentioned himself, in 2012 these children got enrolled in this college and this, with the approval of TEC because it was still registered by TEC in 2012? Is it not the responsibility and the obligation of the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure that an institution can take its students till the end of the course that it is dispensing before providing a recognition to that institution?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a lot of sympathy for these students. Hon. Dr. A. Boolell, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and myself together with TEC and monsieur Dobell, the Ambassador of France, had sat together to try to find a solution. The difficulty is with the awarding Body, that is, *Université de Lille*. They actually sent their Vice President here, Professor Pelayo, to look into the matter.

What we have done, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have looked into various possibilities and we have been able to find with the University of Mauritius a solution for the nine students. Mr Speaker, Sir - at their 548th Special Meeting held on 10 April 2013, the University Senate considered the proposal to run a one-off top-up M.D programme, that is, *Docteur en Médecine Générale*, of a one-year duration specifically to the nine students of *L'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur*. I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that they are discussing with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to find a way forward.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that pressure is being put on *L'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* to refund the students for the fees paid to the college. However, would he consider the fact that some of these students have spent six years of their life studying in that institution and cannot be allowed to go away and be given monetary compensation only for six years of studies, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member is probably right, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think this could become a legal matter and they will have to sort it out between themselves. TEC has done whatever it has in its powers.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: M. le président, c'est vraiment incroyable! On ne peut pas avoir une Commission qui donne une reconnaissance à une institution et les étudiants mauriciens dépendent

de cette reconnaissance pour se faire admettre dans ces institutions-là. Par la suite, pour une erreur technique, on vient dire à ces élèves-là de se débrouiller *on their own*. C'est inacceptable, M. le président!

Dr. Jeetah: I think the hon. Member did not get me right. I did not say that. I did not ask the students to go and find their own solutions. What I said is that regarding the fees that have been charged, that's a matter between the students and the institution. What we have done, I have personally asked the Tertiary Education Commission to look into the matter and make sure that the issue of charging fees be sorted out. But then, there is this aspect of further claims. That will have to be settled in some court of justice.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I just ask the hon. Minister to consider it not as a matter of monetary compensation. We do not only have students who have spent six years of their life, some of them are in their third or fourth year of study. What do we do with these students, Mr Speaker, Sir? Should not the Government, should not the Tertiary Education Commission see to it that they may be given the opportunity to complete their studies in Mauritian institutions because the State, through the Tertiary Education Commission, is responsible for this state of affairs?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member does not seem to be listening to my answers, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I want some silence, please!

Dr. Jeetah: Let me say it again, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Labour, Attorney General and hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life! This is a matter that concerns you, hon. Minister of Health!

Dr. Jeetah: Maybe I did not make it clear enough. We sat together and we have discussed with the University of Mauritius which has consulted, of course, their Senate and they have agreed to run a one-off top-up M.D programme, that is, *Docteur en Médecine Générale* of a one-year duration specifically for the nine students of *l'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, here!

Dr. Jeetah: For these students, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been able to find a solution. For the information of the hon. Member, there is another group of 62 students and after our discussions *Université de Lille 2* has given us an undertaking that they will take care of these students after our discussions. Hon. Dr. A. Boolell also took part in the discussions. But then, these students will have

to take the *concours*, that is, the PACES. That was the main problem with the University in France because they did not do their *concours*.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do agree that there have been some efforts made by the Tertiary Education Commission. But then, we are talking about students who have completed five years of studies and asking them to go and take the first year's *concours* to accept them in the institution. I think this is not fair. If we can ask *l'Université de Lille d'aller faire des choses pareilles*, why not ask our Mauritian institutions and medical schools operating in Mauritius to come forward and help these students?

Dr. Jeetah: I am afraid, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think there is a problem of communication here.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Dr. Jeetah: What I am suggesting here is that we have talked to the University. The hon. Member has to understand that University of Mauritius has its statutes as well. It will not be able to recognise a student who has not been through its own academic process. That is why, exceptionally, our main University has agreed to sort out this problem. That is why they have agreed at their senate meeting to talk with the Ministry of Health and professionals in the field and see how they can, within a year, sort out this very difficult situation in which these students find themselves. We have found a solution.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not agree that this state of affairs is due to some malfunctioning at the level of the Tertiary Education Commission and that it is his duty to see to it that these students are not penalised in any way?

Dr. Jeetah: If you would like to go back at the very start, I think this whole issue has been badly handled and this was when the then Minister of Education started the process. He knew well that these students wouldn't take the *concours*...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't disturb the hon. Minister!

Dr. Jeetah: ...and this was, in my humble view, probably used as some form of subterfuge to go round the French system and this is why we are faced with this situation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: I won't respond to insinuations; I want to look from a human point of view for a practical solution to a real problem. I tried to understand the hon. Minister. There was a lot of noise on the Government benches, but do I understand that for these nine students who are in Mauritius having completed their studies abroad, they will be taking care of by the University of

Mauritius. I was a little bit confused. I understand the *concours* would be for the 14 who are still in France, but the nine who are here, will embark on a one-year course at the University of Mauritius. If that is so, could I appeal to the hon. Minister that this be officially communicated to those students as soon as possible and the modalities spelt out because they are still extremely worried about the situation?

Dr. Jeetah: This is what I have been saying all along, Mr Speaker, Sir. The University of Mauritius has agreed at their senate meeting - that is why I have brought the letter written by the Vice Chancellor to my Permanent Secretary - to take care of these nine students and this is being handled.

Mr Obeegadoo: My appeal was that these students have not as yet been officially informed that this proposal - which is good - has been approved by the senate of the University. The hon. Minister said that the modalities are still being discussed with the Ministry of Health and some other Ministries. May I appeal to the hon. Minister to intervene personally so that the soonest possible we get this course off the ground and the students are informed so that their minds are at rest?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will definitely ensure that they get to know about the decision promptly, but then we have to appreciate that there is a certain amount of procedures that the senate, the council has to go through and we will have to wait, but then this is being done.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister clearly tell us about *le sort de ces 42 étudiants ; il n'a rien fait jusqu'à l'heure, c'est-à-dire, rien n'a été complété et les 42 étudiants auront à se débrouiller par eux-même*?

Dr. Jeetah: I do not know of which *42 étudiants* the hon. Member is referring to. As I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will say it for the last time. Please, listen. There are nine students and these students are going to be taken care by the University of Mauritius. There is a letter to that effect written by the Vice Chancellor. There has been a senate approval on this. Now, with regard to the 62 students who are at Lille, there is a communication from Professor Pelayo and if you would bear with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, so that I could actually read.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a communication from Professor Pelayo, and I quote -

« Lille 2 tiendra ses engagements concernant les étudiants inscrits à Louis Pasteur en Deuxième et Troisième Année de Pharmacie dont la liste est jointe en annexe. Des solutions leur seront proposées en dehors du contexte de l'Ecole Louis Pasteur pour finaliser ces deux années pour accéder aux trois années suivantes à Lille. »

And he goes on like this. So, for this group of students, they are being taken care of by Lille 2.

Now, with regard to other students who joined after the agreement with Lille had lapsed, these students will have to take the *concours*, that is, PACES. This is what has been suggested by Lille.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I have a last supplementary, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I?

Mr Speaker: Okay!

Mr Obeegadoo: The students at Lille, could I ask the hon. Minister to make sure that we don't have to same problem as in the past where the French Authority has, apparently, objected to them taking the final *concours* because that would have entitled them to work in France. Apparently that is where the problem came, so may I ask the hon. Minister to have a close look to make sure that beyond the hazy commitments we have just heard, that those students do not face the same problem latter on.

And, secondly, as regards those who are in Paris, I believe the other batch, that there will be no problem further down the line.

Dr. Jeetah: I have stated what I have as information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, next question!

SORÈZE – FATAL ROAD ACCIDENT – MEASURES

(No. B/480) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the recent fatal road accident which occurred at Sorèze, on 03 May 2013, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to the measures, if any, taken to improve the maintenance of the buses thereof
- (b) state –
 - (i) if consideration is being given for the introduction of legislation to make the installation of a break fault system on heavy vehicles mandatory, and
 - (ii) the measures, if any, being envisaged to improve road safety in respect of the road bend at Sorèze.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Corporation (NTC) that currently the NTC has a fleet of 519 buses, spread out among its five depots.

While fitness and running repairs as well as maintenance of buses are carried out at depot level, major repairs to buses are carried out at the NTC's Central Workshop.

All NTC buses are subject to routine maintenance and the frequency is based on the manufacturer's recommendations.

These include daily verification by a mechanic and the driver, normal servicing and general servicing.

All buses undergo fitness repairs once or twice a year depending on the age of the bus.

I am further informed that in addition to the above measures, the following actions have been taken after the fatal accident that occurred at Sorèze -

- (i) a thorough check is being carried out on the braking system of all buses;
- (ii) drivers have been instructed to immediately stop the bus whenever any alarming situation, particularly in relation to safety and security aspect, is suspected and to inform the depot immediately;
- (iii) a refresher training programme for drivers is being finalised, and
- (iv) a bidding exercise for the procurement of 65 buses is in progress.

Additionally, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that Government has on 18 January 2013, approved the restructuring plan of the NTC, wherein one of the components is the acquisition of 150 modern buses. Specifications for these buses are being finalised.

Moreover, a letter has been issued to the NTC instructing them to ensure that -

- (i) all buses are fit and roadworthy;
- (ii) the spare parts being used are reliable;
- (iii) buses are regularly inspected and maintained in good running conditions;
- (iv) constant supervision is carried out by appropriate officers during repairs, servicing and maintenance works, and
- (v) buses found unfit and not roadworthy should not be put in use.

I have also requested the General Manager of the NTC to impress upon the employees to assume their responsibilities and to perform their duties with diligence and care. Those who flout the instructions

should be severely dealt with. I have additionally proposed that the NTC could arrange for an independent team of qualified officers to carry out a one-off supervision of the docking exercise and scheduled maintenance with a view to counter verifying the critical elements and ensuring the fitness and safety of the buses.

As regards part (b), sections 12-16 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010, already provide for any motor vehicle to be fitted with different types of brakes, depending on their gross weight.

Moreover, section (22) provides for every bus and every goods vehicle, the gross vehicle weight of which exceeds 3,500 kilograms and which is capable of speed in excess of 70 kms per hour to be fitted with a speed limiter.

As regards part (c), following the accident at Sorèze, my Ministry has requested for another Road Safety Assessment. Accordingly, a dedicated team carried out the assessment.

The Report confirms that the stretch of the Ring Road phase I qualitatively meets all the general and road safety provisions.

I am going to lay a copy on the Table of the House.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the starting point is, of course, the fatal accident at Sorèze and what would have helped enormously would be to know whether the course of that accident was due to defective maintenance or a mechanically problem. Can I once again ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether at long last the report produced by the Indian experts will be laid on the Table of the Assembly so that we can all know what were the findings of those experts?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, as far as the report is concerned, I am not aware of the contents of the report. I hope the authorities concerned are looking into that report.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is a loss of faith in the NTC buses on the part of the public, and being given that the Minister himself, last week, conceded that the situation is very sensitive at the NTC - I have heard him talk of independent specialists to be commissioned by the NTC - would he not agree that what is now required is an independent audit, not appointed by the NTC, but by Government, to report on the state of the fleet of buses that is in operation, and to report on management practices pertaining to maintenance of buses at the NTC.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I have mentioned repeatedly on many occasions that anybody who is responsible for whatever occurred will have to pay the consequences. There is no cover-up of any type.

Secondly, we are taking extra care to see to it that all buses are in running condition, and everything is being monitored at the garage. I have mentioned that I have given instructions to NTC,

if they can go outside and get the services of independent bodies, independent engineers to have a look at the condition of the buses, I have no problem. On top of it, I have also requested the Mechanical Division of my Ministry, if they can - because that is a different department that does not form part of NTC - come forward and help the NTC to have a look at the conditions of the buses; I have no problem.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister clarify the situation with regard to the advisability of introducing legislation to make the brake fail system mandatory? The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has answered that the law already provides for speed limiters. But is there a difference between speed limiters and a brake fail system? The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has explained that with regard to the speed limiters, it is already provided for in our law. But the question is that when the brake system fails, then there is another operative brake fail system which comes into place and prevents the vehicle from moving ahead!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that this matter has already been taken care of. I don't have the exact wording, but I am aware that this has been taken care of, particularly for heavy vehicles. It is not only the speed limiters, but at the same time, the brake system is a bit different from that of other vehicles. For example, the front one is different from the back one and, at the same time, there is also the emergency brake, which we call in our local jargon the *frein à bras*. As far as buses are concerned, particularly Indian buses, if you make use of the *frein à bras*, that is, the emergency brake, the four back wheels get clogged, and then you can stop a vehicle. This is what I have been informed.

Mr Speaker: Time is already over. However, I will allow the author of the question a last question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a proposal mooted by the Leader of the Opposition many weeks ago, which is to have on the left hand side a sort of an extended sandpit as exist in other countries, so that if ever the brake system of any vehicle fails, there is an alternative that will guarantee that the vehicle stops, and avoids casualties as we have known. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister undertake to look into that urgently and come and make a statement here?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, earlier I have mentioned that we are trying to look at various alternatives, not only at that particular place in Sorèze but in many places in our country where additional measures are required. I have requested consultants to have a look at it; what is best, in order to avoid any such problem on our roads.

Mr Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that PQs B/461 and B/484 have been withdrawn.

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

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.28 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.06 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair

PUBLIC BILL*Second Reading***THE MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE BILL**

(No. X of 2013)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Ministry of Local Government & Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill be read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am indeed very pleased to present to the House today the new Fire and Rescue Service Bill. This Bill goes in line with the waves of modernisation over which our country is surfing today. Before commenting on the major reforms in the fire services sector that the new legislation is purporting to bring about, allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to highlight the guiding principles and philosophy underlying the preparation of the new Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fire Services, as established under the Fire Services Act 1954, are entrusted with the duty of extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in case of fire throughout the Republic of Mauritius. Over the years, the Fire Services have been centralised and consolidated into the Government Fire Services, which currently operates as a department, under the aegis of my Ministry. To date, the Government Fire Services has been performing its main duty of extinguishing fires but has concurrently developed an effective fire prevention, mitigation and management system. It has also been providing, on numerous occasions, rescue services on a voluntary and humanitarian basis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Fire Services, nowadays, is being driven and shaped, like all fire services around the world by the rapid changes taking place in its operating environment. These changes relate, on the one hand, to the nature, complexity and magnitude of hazards and risks, brought by new types of materials and industrial processes and, also, more sophisticated architecture and infrastructure linked to urbanisation. On the other hand, they are the result of the increasing demands and expectations of the different stakeholders in our society.

Thus, in order to address new challenges and inherent dangers, the Government Fire Services has gradually evolved from its primary mandate of extinguishing fires to become an “All-Hazard” response agency. Its mission of saving life, protecting property and the environment requires fire-fighters to attend to fire outbreaks, flooding incidents, landslides, tsunamis, industrial accidents, chemicals incidents, oil spills, aircraft incidents, road traffic accidents, technical rescues and other types of man-made and natural disasters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government Fire Services is at the forefront today in building safer, stronger and more resilient communities, through better emphasis on prevention, education and emergency preparedness. It has an on-going programme to inform and educate our communities about the measures they need to take to prevent fires and accidents from occurring in the first place, as well as measures which they can take to limit the destructive potential of such incidents on human life, property and the environment.

The Government Fire Services currently operates 9 fire stations, manned by about 650 fire-fighters working on 4 shifts, and provides fire and emergency cover for the whole country. With a population of about 1.2 million, we thus have a fire-fighter-to-population ratio of 1 fire-fighter on-duty for every 7400 in population. The Service has a fleet of about 30 fire fighting vehicles and responds to an annual average of 5000 – 6000 fires and about 2000 non-fire incidents.

The Control and Mobilizing Centre, located at the Government Fire Services Headquarters in Port-Louis, receives all incoming emergency calls on hotline 115, dispatches fire crews to incidents and monitors management of operations on incident grounds.

The Fire Prevention Unit carries out inspection of buildings, filling stations, fuel depots, gas installations, office and commercial buildings, places of public entertainment, and other premises prone to fire hazards throughout the island for the purpose of fire certification and registration. In addition, the Unit conducts fire safety educational programmes for various categories of target groups, including workers, students and citizen groups.

This being said, it is clear that the Government Fire Services has been performing and delivering services to the community that exceeds by far the provisions of the 1954 Fire Services Act. There is therefore a need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the fire legislation to be re-engineered

completely in order to capture properly the full scale of activities of the Fire Services and also to respond to the growing and changing needs of modern Mauritius.

In this context, Government has proposed in its Programme for 2010-2015, to undertake a full review of the fire and rescue emergency cover across the whole country, to enhance the rescue capability of the Government Fire Services to deal with more complex incidents, and, to review the fire safety legislation. Subsequently, in the Government Programme 2012-2015, mention was made about the introduction into the National Assembly of a new Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill. The Bill being presented today bears testimony that this Government actually lives up to its promises.

The main objectives of the new Bill are to define, within legal parameters, the roles and functions of the Government Fire Services with respect to prevention of and response to fires and other incidents, and to enhance co-ordination and working relationships among emergency organisations. To this end, my Ministry and the Fire Services Department have engaged in consultations with a large number of public bodies, including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, the Commissioner of Police, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, the Central Water Authority, the Central Electricity Board and the Conservator of Forests. The outcome of the wide consultations has been embodied in the Bill which is now before the Assembly.

The main changes being brought to the legislation through the new Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill include –

New Appellation

The Government Fire Services is being renamed as the “Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service”, in order to encompass the core duties and functions of the Service, that is, response to fires and provision of rescue services. Some of us may recall the disastrous explosion of the Mauritius Chemicals and Fertilisers Industry in 2000 or the chemicals spills at Mare Tabac in 2009 where the fire-fighters were actively involved to mitigate damages to life, property and the environment. Most of us will never forget the horrendous flooding incidents following ex-Cyclone Lola in 2008 and, more recently, the two events of torrential rains earlier this year where our courageous fire-fighters have brought priceless contribution in avoiding greater loss of lives. The House will also appreciate the laudable support of the Service in rescue operations such as extrication of victims trapped in major road accidents like the very sad event which occurred recently at Sorèze.

Legal provision has also been made for the Service to participate in national schemes for the management, prevention, mitigation and reduction of disasters and to assist the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre set up by Government to ensure timely disaster management

response. Already, the Government Fire Services is a major player in the Cyclone and Other Natural Disaster Scheme, the Port Disaster Management Plan, the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan. A National Hazardous Materials (Hazmat) Response Plan is currently being finalised.

Working Agreement

Provision has been made in the Bill for the working agreement to be made, with the approval of the Minister, between the Service and any relevant organisation such as the Police, the Central Water Authority or the Mauritius Ports Authority, to promote mutual assistance in case of a specific emergency. It is to be noted that there already exists an Agreement between the Government Fire Services and the Airports of Mauritius Ltd. regarding emergency response in the event of on-airport and off-airport aircraft accidents and other emergencies in the perimeter of the airport.

Operation of Service

The Bill lays down clearly the parameters in which the Service shall operate in order to fulfil its duties and functions under the Act. For example, some additional powers being given to the Service under the Bill include –

- to make use of recording equipment for recording every alarm call and related outgoing call;
- to make use of any fire extinguishing materials or other resources, whether public or private, for the purpose of its functions;
- to authorise burning under certain conditions. This would apply to non-domestic purposes such as agricultural fires and burning of obsolete confidential documents, and
- to enable an authorised officer of the Service to search, inspect any record, book, document or thing and to seize any equipment where he has reasonable ground to believe that the equipment does not comply with the Act or any guidelines issued by the Chief Fire Officer. The power of entry and seizure would only be effective upon a warrant being issued by a Magistrate for the purpose.

Powers of Minister

The Bill includes a section on the powers of the Minister responsible for the subject of fire. This provision is meant to ensure that the programmes, measures and actions taken by the Service are in line with the vision and policies of Government insofar as public safety is concerned and also to convey the idea of effective stewardship. In particular, the Bill empowers the Minister to –

- define, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and other relevant authorities, the broad policy of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service;

- in the event that the Service fails to act in compliance with the broad policy mentioned above, give a direction to the Service to comply with that policy, in order to promote public safety, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service, and
- place a duty on the Service to respond to a particular type of emergency, not specifically referred to under the Act.

These powers are similar, but not as extensive to those given to the Secretary of State responsible for Fire Services in the United Kingdom.

Duties of Stakeholders

The current Fire Services Act requires the Police to inform promptly the Service upon being itself informed of the outbreak of a fire and provide all necessary assistance to the fire officer in charge on the emergency site. The Bill is extending similar duties to other stakeholders such as the Central Water Authority, the Central Electricity Board and other energy distributors and suppliers.

Fire Prevention, Fire Safety Plans and Fire Certificate

The Bill contains a number of general clauses pertaining to fire prevention, fire safety and fire certificate. The provisions pertaining to the fire prevention and the fire certificate have up to now been governed by the Occupational Safety & Health Act (OSHA) 2005, which is an anomalous situation as they pertain to the core duties of the Government Fire Services. Furthermore, it is to be noted that this Act covers only buildings being used as places of work. Thus, consequential amendments are being brought to the Occupational Safety & Health Act in order to streamline, under one piece of legislation, the issue of fire certificate for all premises, including buildings used as places of work.

Volunteer Fire Brigades

The Bill caters for the possibility of setting up Volunteer Fire Brigades to promote community participation and ensure promptness in response and better coverage in case of emergencies. Volunteer fire brigades will be set up according to established criteria and will be provided training and protective equipment by the Service. It is proposed to proclaim this section only when the relevant criteria for enlistment of volunteers and the *modus operandi* of the Volunteer Fire Brigades would have been duly established, through regulations, to be made under the new Act.

Training Facilities

The Bill highlights the importance of training to firefighters and provides for the establishment of training centres for the purpose. Furthermore, to ensure quality and appropriateness of training dispensed by private parties, the Bill places an obligation on any person providing training in fire safety to be registered with the Fire Service and with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority.

Firefighting or Fire Warning Equipment

In order to ensure maximum protection to the public, the Bill provides that no person shall import, sell, supply, install or maintain firefighting or fire warning equipment unless such equipment complies with standards to be prescribed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new Bill is, in fact, a legal tool to facilitate the firefighters in the performance of their actual duties and functions. Over and above the legal framework, I wish to highlight some of the areas where this Government has taken important measures to improve the firefighting and rescue cover of the country. I have also, personally, since my taking office as Minister, given special attention to build up the capacity of the Government Fire Services and enhancing the work conditions of our brave firemen.

Amongst others,

- Government has undertaken to construct four new Fire stations at Tamarin, Rose-Belle, Montagne Blanche and Goodlands during the coming years. The one at Tamarin is currently under construction and the station to become operational within three months.
- Five modern water tenders for a contract value of approximately Rs60 m. have been acquired in the year 2011. These vehicles are fully equipped with a large range of firefighting and rescue equipment such as pumps, water monitors, rescue gears, breathing apparatus and ladders designed to the highest standards.
- A modern aerial turntable ladder has been delivered in January 2013 for the sum of Rs35 m. to equip the Fire Service for attending fires and also perform rescue activities in high rise buildings.
- The updating and upgrading of the radio communication network have been completed in December 2011 at the cost of Rs9.1 m.
- As from this year, the Government Fire Services has decentralised its fire prevention service, which includes the inspection of premises and the issue of Fire Certificates in respect of building premises and Certificates of Registration for storage and transportation of inflammable liquids and substances.
- In November 2011, the Fire Prevention Unit has been awarded ISO 9001:2008 certification.
- 9 posts of Senior Station Officers were created and filled in August 2011.
- 83 posts of firefighters have been filled since January 2012, including 5 female firefighters.
- An additional batch of 37 temporary firefighters have been recruited in April this year and are currently undergoing training.

- The PRB Report and the EOAC Report have both recommended the setting up of a “Bank of Fire Officers Scheme”, the payment of night duty allowance and the payment of Risk Allowance to operational staff. This has been realised with my personal support and that of the management.
- A plot of land has been identified at Riche Terre for the setting up of a Fire and Rescue Training Academy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the existing Fire Services Act, though proclaimed in May 1954, was actually Act No. 56 of 1953. The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill 2013, therefore, is the first major change in legislation in this sector in 60 years. My earnest wish is that this Bill will allow the forthcoming Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, to face the challenges of the modern world and contribute to make modern Mauritius a safe place for visitors, businesses and the public at large.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

(5.17 p.m.)

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fire Services is a fundamental and integral part of our public services aimed at keeping our communities safe and secure. It is a service that prevents fire, protects people, properties and businesses from fire risks and which respond to fire, road traffic collisions, flooding and other emergencies for the benefit of one and all. But there is no denying that the Fire Services do now need to undergo a radical transformation so as to adapt itself to the completely different realm of risk in which they now evolve. It is obvious that without major reforms, the fire services which had played and is still playing a crucial role in the safety sector in Mauritius, moving from a preponderantly emergency response service to one that provides services and assistance in almost all cases of emergencies, which not be able to preserve its credential in the future.

As such, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me at the very outset make it clear that we, on this side of the House, do not find the adoption of the present Bill as objectionable. However, I remain convinced that had there been proper consultation with the relevant stakeholders, my information is that such has not been the case. A comprehensive plan for the fire and emergency sector, a better piece of legislation would have been brought in front of this House today, but the facts remain that for reasons known only to the hon. Minister of Local Government, unfortunately, there have been no consultations with stakeholders, especially with representatives of trade union of Fire Services despite their request for same, whilst, on the other hand, it is more than obvious that this Government is trying to govern through project rather than through long-term strategic plan.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the adoption of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill, Government intends to make better provisions and responds to fires and other incidents likely to endanger persons, animals, properties or the environment. Besides, this is clearly what is spelt out in the Explanatory Memorandum of this Bill. This is highly commendable. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one should not lose sight of the fact that the degree of efficiency of an organisation in the delivery of its services is directly proportional to the skill of those forming part of that organisation. Thus, training is the key.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the purpose of this Bill, the Fire Services Act is repealed and this new Bill is being introduced, so that, fire services will, from now on, cater for rescue service also. Noble aspirations! But what about training for the firefighters with regard to the delivery of these new services? This is one of the reasons why I insist that much confusion could have been avoided through consultation with the stakeholders. Clause 5, paragraph 2 (g) provides that the service should -

- (g) cooperate with any entity that provides a service in case of emergency, including intervention at sea;

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are the firefighters trained for such an intervention? Such intervention requires high skill and technique and it would have been most appropriate to arrange for proper training of our firefighters prior to the introduction of this Bill in front of this House. True it is that clause 22 of the Bill provides for training facilities, but it seems like putting the horse before the cart. It would have been more logical to give out training to the firefighters prior to introducing this Bill before the House so that at proclamation of this Bill we would already have a well trained fire and rescue service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, along with training, the issue of equipment is equally wholly relevant. What about equipment? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can you imagine firefighters making an intervention at sea with fire tunics, leggings and fire boots? In such a scenario, this House will have to adopt another Bill to provide for the setting up of another service to save our firefighters at sea. I know that the Minister might consider my apprehension as trivial issues but how will I know what he has in mind as far as the implementation of this Bill is concerned? This is precisely the type of questions that the firefighters are asking themselves. But the Minister has chosen to bring this Bill in the most unilateral way with an uttered disregard to the request of consultation with firefighters through their Trade Union. This is a question of choice and management style but does it help in anyway? I'll leave this question to the apprehension of this House. It is right that every avenue be exploited to deliver the best efficient service to communities, but we need to do this in the context of a nationally coherent service. And for an organisation to deliver coherent service, it must consist of properly trained people and adequate human resources.

The very fact that the fire services will now have to shoulder additional responsibilities implies that more people will be required to help delivering an efficient service. How will Government tackle this issue? Does the Minister intend to recruit new staff for the service? This is the logical way forward, but as far as I can recall, the previous budget is very silent on the issue of human resources or recruitment in fire services. Worse, not a single word was spelt out on the fire services, and now we are asked to support a Bill aiming to revitalise the fire services. I find this situation quite paradoxical to say the least.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said earlier, I find it highly commendable to aim at transforming our fire services into an efficient service, but efficiency is surely not achieved by rebranding or changing the name of an organisation nor does it just mean doing the same for less. But efficiency may be achieved by doing the same activity differently, by ensuring that the new service is not an expensive one, that the question of matching resources to risk is properly tackled and that public funds are judiciously spent. But, unfortunately, this Bill makes no provision for any mechanism which may promote the judicious use of public funds.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, God knows how many cases of wasteful use, misappropriation or rather pillaging public funds are related to fire services. I will take a few examples if you allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With a view to upgrading the fire services, Government approved, in June 1998, the purchase of a hydraulic platform to be used for firefighting in high-rise buildings of a maximum height of 54 metres. The then Government requested the fire services to initiate early actions and the aerial ladder platform was delivered sometimes later and cost Rs29 m. Where is that platform today? It is lying somewhere and will eventually be disposed as *vieux ferrailles*. A turn table ladder at the cost of Rs35 m. - we have just heard the hon. Minister said it - has been purchased. Has anyone in this House ever seen the truck in action? No. Not even during the recent flooding. This is also kept pour *les décors* in Coromandel.

According to my information, four officers have received the proper training from a German Technician to operate this equipment, but they have been forbidden from operating it for unknown reasons. Perhaps the Minister can inquire and enlighten us on this issue. Why these four people cannot operate the truck or rather why only four officers? In less than three months, three trucks of the fire services *se sont renversés* and they may be declared as total loss. The total sum of money involved here is around Rs25 m. without taking into account a truck which was purchased at Rs21 m. and which was involved in an accident in Fond du Sac in 2006. This truck has already been declared as total loss. I agree Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are accident cases, but the reason of the accident may well be due to lack of training of the drivers. That is why I stated earlier that training has a vital role to play in the enhancement of the efficiency of the service.

Just on a different tag, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fire services carry out home and industrial fire safety checks with a view to making our homes and commercial and industrial buildings safer by identifying potential risks and drawing up fire escape plans. As a result, a reduction in fire risk incidents is being noted. This is certainly due to the action of the fire services and also due to technological improvements. Nevertheless, I believe that safety campaigns and Government regulations relating to electricity supply in buildings have also played a huge part. Thus, the application of stringent regulations and the holding of safety campaigns must be maintained at any cost. We must not lose sight of the importance of fire safety which has been responsible for the substantial progress we have made in reducing fires and deaths from fires. The new service which will be set up through the adoption of this Bill must be entrusted with the responsibility of holding awareness activities.

The new service which will be set up through the adoption of this Bill must be entrusted with the responsibility of holding awareness activities. The most effective way to save life is to prevent fires and other emergency incidents from occurring. The key to efficiency is prevention and protection work comes back to understand anguish and devising strategies to mitigate it. With the rapid urbanisation in every nook and corner of the country, safety campaign is of utmost importance while the response site of the Fire and Rescue Service should be universal. Prevention and protection is about targeting those areas, business people most at risk.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to address the issue of the powers of the Minister under this Bill. Clause 6 of the Bill - Working agreement provides and stipulates that –

‘6. Working agreement

- (1) The Service may, with the approval of the Minister, enter into, vary or revoke a working agreement with any relevant organisation or stakeholder for mutual assistance in case of a specific emergency.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Service will be headed by a Chief Fire Officer. He is a professional in this field. Why should he seek the approval of the Minister before entering or revoking a working agreement? It would be most appropriate to get him to discharge this responsibility in accordance with certain specific guidelines and parameters and to give him a free hand to handle such issues.

I am afraid that this may be devised allowing for putting square pegs in round holes in as much as this Bill provides for the setting up of volunteers fire brigades. Is this not a means to give way to the '*politique de petits copains*'? This sounds fishy. Proper caution should be exerted here when we know how contracts are being awarded here and there. Even in this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have witnessed Ministers admitting that contracts are being awarded to companies

not having the skill to carry out the tasks they have been assigned for. I wish that the hon. Minister could enlighten us on this issue and, at the same time, elaborate on the issue of volunteers fire brigades which, I must admit, is a good thing provided it is implemented under specific parameters and guidelines.

Finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to lay emphasis on the fact that fire authorities, as a key part of the wider Local Government family, are providing themselves to be an efficient, accountable and trusted component of the public sector, but, as matters stand now, this service needs to be revamped and that does not only mean to bring a change of name. Adoption of a new Bill won't suffice. Adequate human resource and equipment, proper training, judicious use of funds, and incentives to fire-fighters are some of the elements which should be taken on board with a view to promote a more efficient service for the benefit of one and all.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(5.34 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened very carefully to hon. Nagalingum who intervened on this piece of legislation. At one point of his intervention, he did say the following words, and that is what struck me, he said that -

“I leave that part of the Bill to the apprehension of the House.”

I gather it was a slip of the tongue, because if it was not a slip of the tongue, it is a very serious confession on the part of a Member of the Opposition: ‘I leave it to the apprehension of the House’; most probably, I would have thought he meant ‘I leave it to the appreciation of the House’, because if he meant ‘appreciation’ most probably it was a slip of the tongue that shows exactly what the Opposition is all about. That they are there to only surf and grow and blossom on the apprehension that they create in the minds of the public. I am very conscious about what I am saying and I confirm what I am about to say by substantiating it in the following manner. He says it that there should have been training before the Bill is brought to this august Assembly. I am but a layperson when it comes to the details and the fundamentals of fire training. I am no expert. I will never purport myself forward as being an expert in the field. Now, maybe hon. Nagalingum is an expert and, if he is, I bow to his expertise, but there is one thing that laymen should all be aware of. It is the following: ‘Training is not something that must be done prior to any *événement* or even, after any *événement*. Training is something that is a continuous process.’

When he goes on to say that there should be training, have we ever seen Fire Officers train for sea rescue? And, he goes as far as to say that this is not the case that they are not trained in sea rescue,

it is shocking and surprising. I humbly put it that this is in violation of our Standing Orders. Our Standing Orders say: if a Member is to come to this House and say something, he should be ready to substantiate it. Is hon. Nagalingum, Member of the Opposition, ready to substantiate the fact that he says that fire training officers do not receive any training? Of course, he cannot, but it is this whole process of creating apprehension without any evidence whatsoever that they are so good at. Point that the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands will confirm later on; they have been following training sessions with the Mauritius Ports Authority, at the airport; like the coastguards, they have. To come here in a very simplistic manner in this august Assembly under the cover of the protection of this House, and diminish, ridicule the officers that go through training for sea rescue is very sad.

We should not, with the only objective of doing politics, score points on those Police Officers that allegedly have had no consultation with the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands. That is also untrue. I, as Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, know for a fact that there have been consultations. So, once again, can hon. Nagalingum come and substantiate the fact that he says: there have been no consultations? And, I say it for all to hear, here out loud, can hon. Nagalingum speaking for the Opposition qualify this Bill as a paradox and I qualify his speech as worse than a paradox because, at some point, he says he is agreeable with it. But then, again, just to be the typical Opposition that they are very good at criticisms and nothing else, he has to say: well there have been no consultations. Have we not heard many a time for various pieces of legislation this excuse that comes out of the Opposition? There has been no consultation. There should be more consultations. There should be consultations with a party that was not consulted and we are not happy with the type of consultation. They have always got something to say which is a lame excuse, in my humble view. You cannot be happy with what is provided for, but, at the same time, you go on to criticise, save and except, if the purpose of the criticism is only to score political points not to construct a better Fire and Rescue Service.

Now, they talk about Government trying to govern by project rather than by long-term strategic plan. Let's be serious. Is it the Opposition that kept on having '*comités corbeaux, lor comités corbeaux, on comités corbeaux*'. They are going to come and tell us on *chiens errants*. They are going to come and tell us how to run the country with a long-term vision. If it is a long-term vision that they had about the Mauritius Fire Services, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if it is all - maybe hon. Nagalingum is not aware - maybe other Members who were in Government at the time should, at least, brief him how many fire stations did they construct when they were in power between 2000 and 2005.

(Interruptions)

Let us be, at least, nice and not crush those who are already lying down on the floor. They are there lying down and bleeding away because they are aware that they have not built a single Fire Station between 2000 and 2005, and they are those who have the gall to come and give us lessons; amazing!

There is something else, which hon. Nagalingum said, that really shocked me. He said there is a high rise ladder that has been purchased and not been used! We have not seen it in action! Thank god, we have not seen it in action! Is this what the hon. Member is saying? He would feel better, as a Member of the Opposition, to have seen the 35 metre ladder up in action, with a burning building? Then, the Opposition would have felt better. They would have said 'yes, we have seen it in action; it works.'

(Interruptions)

Don't talk about the floods. The floods are on the ground, not in the sky. Just because they have to criticise, the Opposition - they said it through their spokesman - would have been happy to see the 35 metre ladder in action. What would that mean? A burning building, live at risk! He would have been happy then. He would then have satisfied his sick curiosity. That is wrong!

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member had his chance! He lost it. The hon. Member had his chance! He crucified himself. The hon. Member had his chance! He condemned the Opposition. I am sorry! Once again, if you are seeing the *ébullition* et *l'opposition* right now, it is because they want to surf on the cadavers of people and do their politics. Dirty Opposition!

(Interruptions)

The Member of the Opposition, hon. Nagalingum, said something else. He said that the trucks overturn and there are accidents because of the lack of training that the drivers have. Does he have a report he can table to that effect? Does he have a report that can substantiate what he has just said? Or is that we come in this august Assembly and say whatever we want, in order for the members of the press to write it down and have headlines! If this is the purpose of the Opposition, then shame on them! Does the hon. Member have a report? Does the hon. Member have that report that he can enlighten the members of the press with? If he does not have that report, then I humbly submit that he should stand up on a point of personal explanation and withdraw that attack; baseless, shameful attack on the drivers of the fire services. I have seen fire trucks overturn in the United States of America. I have seen fire trucks overturn in Japan. I have seen them in London! I have seen them in Paris! Does that mean that they are not trained? But the only thing is that we don't have hon. Nagalingum in the *Assemblée* or the House of Commons to give his valuable remarks, insulting the trainers and the officers of the fire service. We are unique; we have an Opposition, and we have the spokesperson

who will leave no stone unturned, not even being able to substantiate what he said, but he is going to say it. At least, let the members of the press note that still there is silence here with regard to whether he can prove what he said or not. There is silence, and the silence means he cannot.

(Interruptions)

That is a stupid remark!

There is something else, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I would like to say. The be all and end all of some people's life is politics. Some people's life is a question about to get elected and nothing else. As far as I am concerned, my mission here is not to get elected. My mission here is to serve the country.

(Interruptions)

They are not aware of the sacrifice. They are not aware of that. And you have a lot of jealousy. That's why jealousy makes them really talk. And then, again, they say 'when dog barks, I shall not stop, I will continue.' So, let them continue barking.

(Interruptions)

I have got a lot more to say. In 1953, when the Fire Services Bill was brought to this august Assembly...

(Interruptions)

Very interesting! How intelligent! Very intelligent! You are shining with intelligence!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, go ahead! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, do not the interrupt the hon. Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, please refrain from interrupting the hon. Minister!

(Interruptions)

Enough of it! Hon Assirvaden, please refrain from making any remark from a sitting position! Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Mohamed: Some people think they know what God plans. They know better. They are in conversation with them. What is really interesting here is what happened in 1953, and I have to thank the hon. Minister of Local Government.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would just like not to be interrupted by some, I don't know what it is, but it sounds like an empty drum running along.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, go ahead! I have already talked to him.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Patrick Assirvaden!

Mr Mohamed: In 1953, when in this august Assembly we heard this Bill being debated, one of the main issues - and hon. Aimée drew my attention to that - is whether or not in those days firefighters would be allowed to unionise. In those days, hon. Mohamed, hon. Ramgoolam, hon. Boolell - all of them - had only one thing in mind. One of the main issues many of the great stalwarts in history fought for was that they be allowed to unionise. When we talk today about the Mauritius Labour Party, represented here by the hon. Minister of Local Government, putting forward this Bill, the battle and the way we do business in this party has not changed. The same people in this House, in Government here, are coming with change - the only change that has been brought in the past 60 years - and those changes show only one thing: that we have had consultations. We think about the protection and the security of the inhabitants of our country and the users of the services. We want the firemen to feel more comfortable. It is also, not because of the public, but because of the request of the fire people working in the service, that there have been some changes brought about, and those changes are fundamental changes.

As far as I am concerned, when I go through the Bill of 1953, through the debates and the words, the way things were spoken in 1953, people may have not agreed with one another, but the great thing about 1953 is that there were no insults. What came first in their minds were the public. You may not have agreed with what was being proposed, but there were no insults. There were no below the belt remarks, and true it is to say that we have a lot to learn from people in those days. When I say learn, I say we have a lot to learn from them.

Let me go on to say that when I, as Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, stand up to talk about this Bill, it's precisely because one of the clauses of this Bill will bring some fundamental changes to the Occupational Safety and Health Act. A lot of the clauses are being amended. A lot of the clauses are being deleted - repealed - in the Bill, but we have worked in close collaboration with my colleague, hon. Minister of Local Government, and our main objective of working closely together was the following: that we come up with a better system. We have made things more disciplined; we have put things in their proper perspective and structure, and it is not necessary for me to go into all the very details. But then again, now, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment will take care of work places, as far as the five issues are concerned. In collaboration, we will have the training that we have already done in the past. As far as the accommodation of workers is concerned, we will still continue working together. There are more

that 1,163 lodging accommodation permits that have already been issued with the assistance of the Ministry and Department headed by my good friend, hon. Aimée, with the fire clearances and what have not.

In that perspective, I am of the view that this is an excellent piece of legislation. I wanted to say one thing with regard to the Bill, namely that I am totally happy about clause 12. Clause 12(3) of the Bill talks about 'every police officer present at the scene of a fire or other emergency shall assist every officer in the execution of his duty.'

Now, some people may think, well, why is this there? And clause 4, any Police officer may of his own motion, who, at the request of an authorised officer, close any road in the vicinity of the scene of any fire or emergency, what this Bill does in actual fact; because very far it is basically saying giving the power, you are empowering a Police officer to take it upon himself when he sees an emergency, on his own motion, he does not have to wait for the chain of command. He does not have to wait for superior officers to tell him that he is entitled. He does not any more have to give a phone call to someone to say: "May I do it with your permission?" He does not have to have a report from the Commissioner of Police, from the Deputy Commissioner of Police, from the Superintendent or the Inspector. He is a Police officer; he can take it upon himself to close any road in the vicinity of a scene of any fire and emergency to order, to withdraw people in a scene of a disaster; that is different.

I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for having been so bold as to think about doing such a thing and I would therefore recommend - and this is my personal view - that the Police, not only in situations of fire and rescue service, but in all situations, should be able to circumvent something that slows matters down, which is the chain of command.

I am only here trying to be constructive, and I have hope that my last remark which is only there in order to help things go faster will make things better for the public and for the service in question.

Once again, I thank and congratulate my colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government. One last remark I would like to say, when coming back to 1953 I would like to, once again, underline that in those days there may have been very short interventions, there may have been very short but very to the point and very sweet interventions. There were a lot of people who didn't agree with one another but, at no time did those hon. Members of those days, at no time did those gentlemen of those days - because they were that - do what some people of the Opposition do today.

Thank you very much.

(6.52 p.m.)

Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in participating in this Fire and Rescue Service Bill debate, I have a few tragic pictures flashing in my mind.

First, the fire that broke out in a nightclub in Brazil which resulted in more than 200 fatalities; the 11 September 2011 terrorist attacks in New York, the Christ Church earthquake in New Zealand, the Sorèze accident here, in Mauritius, and the recent flash floods that hit Port Louis and the surroundings badly. We will recall the valuable presence and involvement of firefighters. It is a fact that every year many lives are saved and properties protected by professional and dedicated firefighters, who often have to deal with very challenging and dangerous situations of rescues to protect and help our community. *“Le sacrifice de soi pour la vie de l’autre est un plus beau métier” disait un sapeur-pompier.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all owe these firefighters a huge debt of gratitude for the work that they do for our community. And allow me to thank and congratulate them for same, as well as the hon. Minister to come forward with this Bill.

The setting-up of a Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service will certainly reflect its role as one which offers services based on resources and skills similar to other fire and rescue services around the world. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, firefighters throughout the world have been tasked with many responsibilities such as road accidents, emergencies, rescues, land and sea, building collapses, ambulance services - which I will come later on - and natural disasters caused by floods, cyclones in our country, chemical spills and others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear today that the demand for an expectation from the fire and rescue services in our Republic will certainly increase as being influenced by a range of factors beyond their control, such as accidents as just mentioned, and our democratic situation and changes where more investments on property development and pressures on natural resources, for example, residential buildings in risky areas, as we have seen at Montagne Ory.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the introduction of this Bill does bring a positive look ahead, despite the fact that I am not quite sure whether there has been a full review through a comprehensive report with problems identified, potential and co-options assessment and recommendations drafted for the actual functioning of the service and also resources and funds requirement for a sustainable, stable and equitable fire service for our country.

In the 2013 Programme-Based Budgeting, the current establishment for fire rescue prevention provides for 717 officers. But, the hon. Minister just confirmed there are only 650 Fire Officers in post. For this year 2013, there are 756 for a population of 1,293,549 souls as at December 2012, that is, making a ratio as pointed out of a per capita of 0.4%, that is, one firefighter per 1,700 residents, as rightly said by the hon. Minister and excluding the 900,000 tourists that visit us every year.

At present, there is no exact information of the number of volunteer fire brigades. However, clause 21 and clause 22 of the Bill show an important and commendable feature of the Fire and Rescue Services by providing for formation of volunteer firefighters. My question is: how are volunteers called to a scene? Will there be an independent means of communication? What about volunteers already in employment, should they request for leaves and wait for approval of same when they are called for an emergency scene?

As per clause 21(2), the Chief Fire Officer will define the number of volunteers for firefighters, but this is not clear whether it will be in relation to the number of fire stations or demographic location or simply what is the criteria. In fact, the criteria have to be clear-cut as will be prescribed by regulation and as informed by the hon. Minister.

The provision as per clause 22(1) for the service to set up and maintain one or more training centres for providing education and training matters relating to instructions certainly substantiate the requirement for highly trained firefighters and rescuers. By the way, I appeal also for more women firefighters in the service. Five women out of 83 recruited, that makes only 0.06%, that is, less than 1% according to the recruitment exercises and that is not enough.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will recommend that the service shall formalise the voluntary training of every citizen and also competent authorities in the fire rescue and calamities. However, the policy for volunteer firefighters should not be a ground for not to recruit more firefighters and rescuers in the service.

In the case of Rodrigues, we must foresee the possibility of being struck seriously by an earthquake one day. I don't wish that to happen, but we need to foresee the future as there are frequent seismic activities around the island. In that line, being given the lack of training for the present firefighters in Rodrigues, I plead for the right training facilities for them, as well as a possibility of the recruitment of volunteer firefighters and rescuers for training.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to meet the exigencies of this new service role, the firefighters and rescuers will have to benefit from more advanced training in first aid, land, search and rescue, chemical incidents, road accidents, humanitarian related training and others. There should be more exchange training, for example, in floods, earthquakes, tsunamis calamities with countries like Japan, United States, Australia and Canada which have well-established and progressive training programmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the people of our Republic including Rodrigues and Agaléga must feel safe in their knowledge that help is close at hand through an improved Fire Services. In that connection, specifically for Rodrigues, I will urge the Chief Fire Officer and other technical personnel to effect shortly a working visit to Rodrigues to meet the Chief Commissioner responsible for Fire Services as well as the officers of the Fire Department; the Rodrigues Police and other stakeholders such as Red

Cross, the Scouts Association, Airport of Rodrigues Limited and the Port Authority to work out a memorandum of understanding in a partnership perspective along with the Fire and Rescue Services in line with the with the autonomous status of Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from a practical point of view, as nothing is mentioned of the applicability of this legislation to Rodrigues, any reference in this Act is also a reference to the authority of the Fire Services in Rodrigues as is conferred by section 32 of the RRA. Section 32 of the RRA Act reads as follows –

‘32. References to Ministers and Departments

Any reference in any enactment or other document to -

- (a) a Minister; or
- (b) a government department,

whether by name or in general terms, shall, for the purpose or in consequence of the exercise by the Regional Assembly of any of its functions and duties in relation to Rodrigues, be construed as being or including a reference to the Regional Assembly.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, public education on fire hazards and safety shall become a continuous component of our community service. This will certainly pave the way towards placing a great emphasis on fire prevention and fire safety by raising community awareness through education. The Service will need to focus also on the responsibility of the future generation to learn from this present generation and then take it on for when one grows up to become a responsible citizen in our community and leader of tomorrow to make sure that we are all safe and that our committees can keep going on.

In that perspective, our Republic needs to create a resilient society towards any calamities or disasters when it comes to emergency through best practices in risk management by enhancing community resilience as rightly said and pointed out by the hon. Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, building community resilience is about providing our communities with the knowledge and right tools to reduce the risk of emergencies in the first place and to manage response to emergencies when they occur. I think we will all accept that our geographical position will cause us to continue to have cyclones, heavy rains, and that we have to live with them, and to prepare our community to face them.

Coming to road accidents, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir: road accidents are still worrying each one of us. Accidents will always happen and we have to be ready to help as quickly as we can. We need a safer society by preventing road accidents or fires happening. This is where more road safety

campaigning on safe driving by Police, fire officers and others must be a continuous and well co-ordinated one as referred to in this Bill. The number of people killed or injured on the country's roads is still a concern for us today Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and to keep us safe, we must have fire stations in the right place and fire-fighters with the right equipment and skills to do the job. Is it not important to consider the construction of many more fire stations despite those mentioned on the Government Public Investment Programme? In the same line, I appeal that Rodrigues also moves quickly into the construction of a new modern fire station in the centre of the island mainly near Malabar or Mont Lubin because there is only one fire station which is found at Port Mathurin and you imagine if something happens in the different locations of the island how long and how far those fire-fighters will have to travel.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as specified in the Explanatory Memorandum,

'The object of this Bill is to provide for the setting up of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service –

- (a) (...);
- (b) to enhance coordination and harmonise working relationships among emergency organisations; and (...)'

This is needed for a better coordination between the Police, medical service, coast guards and others in building a cohesive, equitable and unified workforce towards safer, efficient and effective services. Here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Bill should also instigate the implementation of a national strategy mainly in terms of leadership for the Fire and Rescue Services. Why? Because the initial role of Fire and Rescue Services Officers and Fire Station Officers in promoting quality service is crucial to the service delivery. I recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when an Air Mauritius plane could not take off from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International airport to fly to Rodrigues because there was a situation where the required number of fire officers were not present as a matter of sickness and other in-house problems which should not have arisen in any case. That happened, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Coming to equipment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said education alone, however, is not the sole factor to influence fire service culture. Skills need to be supported by the necessary technical equipment to enable officers to carry out their tasks efficiently. In line with the setting up of the Fire and Rescue Services, while performing both fire and rescue services, there is need to be fully equipped to meet its full objectives and the operation of the Service as per section 7 which stipulates that –

‘7. Operation of Service

- (1) The Service shall use such equipment as may be required (...)'

From information I gathered the present equipment available are not enough to meet the exigencies of the service. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Service will now be called upon for expansion to include rescue mainly in seawater and underwater. The Service will have to be equipped with, for example, primary response vessels like rigid inflatable boats to perform the duties with other accredited services. Today, with the re-route of tankers and ships in our ocean water due to piracy, there are significant shipping risks along our coastal line where, at any time, an emergency at sea may be required maybe for aircraft incidents or any accidents at sea. I here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, call upon the hon. Minister as well as the Minister for Maritime and Ports to implement additional measures that improve all marine rescue and to ensure the provision of ongoing funding to support the future capital equipment purchases for the service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth to note that the ports, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues, in general, are not fully equipped for the fire fighting at sea. These require more sophisticated and modern practical equipment. Here, for example, fire-fighters and rescuers require motorcycles equipped for fighting fires and emergencies. These can be used as a first Responder Unit. Motorcycles are commonly used, we know, like in Japan, Hong Kong, for example, in normal everyday duties and they easily negotiate, you know, the small streets and heavy traffics.

Coming to another point on equipment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, equipment for evidence and IT: officers may sometimes face challenging situations while performing their duties leading to disputes or maybe court cases. In that case, other equipment for evidence like CCTV will have to be placed on some fire vehicles fitted with video cameras used to record activities. They may also be fitted with sound recording facilities. These might be used for the protection of the officers or as evidence relating to the incident itself.

The Service will also have to be equipped with modern information technology such as a mobile data terminal, but it requires sound, reliable and dedicated wireless communication means to communicate with stations and between the units themselves. This will enable firefighters to call details such as incidence, maps of locations or zone. The Service also, from a technical point of view, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shall be conversant with technology such as Geographical Information System that would provide an integrated collection updating processing and storage of events in real time. This is the way forward, modernising the service. This will enable also to enhance and coordinate responses to emergencies and to ensure an effective and provide information for rapid response. Going on GIS, the Geographical Information System, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the system should be the core component of the emergency response operational centre and the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre as mentioned. Here also, I add that another fundamental equipment requires by the Service for each interdependency is an ambulance service as it is practised internationally to offer the public in case of an emergency first aid treatment, for example, drug overdoses, poisonings, accident injuries, burns, smoke emanation and others in the event that a person

could not walk and had to be conveyed to a hospital regardless the response from over medical services. This is where I suggest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in line with this new fire and rescue role operations the Service will need to acquire such amount of ambulances, as may be required, as part of its vehicular response apparatus in addition to other rescue resources supportive of a strategy to transform the Service into a real, modern, responsive institution.

Coming to funding, after having said so about equipment, certainly, this Bill is a big call for my good friend, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who is not present, to earmark a few more millions in the coming budget for the purchases of more fire and rescue equipment and building more fire stations while the Fire and Rescue Services moves towards this modern institution.

Another important point which I want to raise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the execution of the duties of the service with regard to Media Management. As per clause 6 of the Bill, there is a working agreement. In clause 5 Duties and powers of Service, in clause 11 Command and control and in clause 12 Duties of police officers - well raised by hon. Mohamed. Nothing defines Media Management with regard to this Bill. Why? Because it appears that the Bill falls short to provide a media plan, nor details of who is responsible for briefing the media in case of emergencies, where Police, fire rescue officers or others are present on a scene of accident or any calamities. Here, I am referring also in emergencies where the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre is not being covered by such emergencies, because it says in clause 11(3) of the Bill, Command and Control. In the event of a multiagency progress funds, the authorised officer, that is, the fire officer, highest in the rank on the site, shall take command in accordance with a new working agreement or emergency plan. My questions are: who will be the contact person for the media during the course of emergency on site? Who will set up facilities for the media? Who will organise media interviews and times and location? Who will all log contacts for media personnel to include names, stations from radio/TVs, newspapers, details of query, time, date, query and action and so on, because this is a very important part of this Media Management Plan with regard to dissemination of information.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the lack of such definition may lead to confusion and in some cases contradictory or incorrect information being given to the media.

I believe that the Bill shall clearly define, in specific circumstances, who shall be the spokesperson unless a code of practice will be established and to provide for media training for officers who regularly must deal with media and journalists. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I recommend that media spokesperson, according to law, be appointed and that appropriate training be given. Ideally, all officers from the rank of station officers upward should receive this media training. This would enable each station to have its own media liaison officer who would be able to liaise and facilitate with the media during an emergency situation. He or she would act as an intermediary

between the spokesperson, the media police and others, to ensure that facts, as I said, are not misrepresented in media report for the general public at large.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a few more questions, particularly in this Bill, with regard to protection of the firefighters, with regard to whether firefighters are personally liable if something goes wrong while in service. What is the legal protection of fire officers if things, unfortunately, go wrong during a rescue or emergency?

Coming to the powers of Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, clause 8 gives plenty of powers to the Minister in defining the broad policy. Clause 8 subclause 1(a) refers to the responsibility of the Minister for defining the broad policy to be followed by the Service where in subclause (c)

“(...) the Minister may consult –

- (i) the Chief Fire Officer or his representative;
- (ii) persons considered by the Minister to represent employees of the Service;
- (iii) such other persons as he considers appropriate.”

As I said, this clause gives plenty of powers to the Minister. I believe in a more democratic way that there should have been the establishment of an Emergency Service Advisory Council to advise the Minister, through an acceptable appointment procedure, for its members. This is how I see it.

However, coming to the power of seizure and powers supporting seizure for firefighter officers, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill gives power of entry under clause 7 subclause 4(b) for firefighters, but do not provide for power to seize and powers supporting seizure where this leads me to raise a few questions. My first question is: what shall an authorised fire officer who enters the premises do where any evidence may be seized from the premises if the authorised officer reasonably believes the thing is evidenced of an offence against this act and the seizure is necessary to prevent the thing being hidden, lost or destroyed. Further, what happens to the forfeiture of seized things? Shall be forfeited to the State if the authorised officer who seizes the things cannot find its owner after making reasonable enquiries?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another technical query is, if the Chief Fire Officer is satisfied that a licence building is a at risk license building or overcrowding, is he mandated to take action to issue an at risk occupancy in relation to Fire Safety Plans.

Another point, injunctions where the fire officer is satisfied in relation to any building that the risks to persons in the event of fire or in the event of hazardous materials, emergency or the risks of spread of fire is so serious that the use of the building should be prohibited or restricted until steps have been taken to reduce the risk to a reasonable level. My question is whether the Chief Fire Officer

is entitled by action such as an injunction in the Supreme Court may claim against the occupier of a building an injunction prohibiting or restricting the use of a building.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I won't go any further over technical questions regarding this present Fire and Rescue Service Bill, I will conclude by saying, I do support the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill towards its modernisation to protect and save life together with a few questions as I raised for further clarifications for a more effective and efficient service.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

(6.20 p.m.)

The Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Mr J. Seetaram): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the outset, to convey my sincere thanks and congratulations to my colleague, the hon. Minister for Local Government, for his proactiveness and foresight in introducing this Bill to the House.

This Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is about two limbs. On one side, we have fire prevention and on the other side we have fire response. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the aim of this Bill, as stressed by my colleague, is, firstly, to make provision for better prevention of fire and also to respond better to fire outbreaks. Concerning the Bill itself, one would tend to think that prevention is the order of the day and, therefore, the saying: 'prevention is better than cure' has been well elaborated. It also makes provisions for mass sensitisation and mass community awareness concerning fire prevention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have it from the Opposition that, at the first place, there has been no consultation in relation to this Bill. Therefore, there were also other disagreements concerning misappropriation of funds and other views in relation to fire equipment, whereas if one looks at the Bill, it would tend to lean towards the aspect of public safety, saving lives, public interests instead of fire equipment as a whole.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have from the Bill itself a very sensible and timely aspect. No one would argue and no one would oppose the blatant reality that today we are facing climate changes. Climate change is a live issue today. And due to climate changes, we have had several calamities, several changes in our habits, several environmental changes, new types of calamities like fast floods, new types of sea surges, outbreaks of fire on mountains and hills and new types of storms and hurricanes. This Bill also distinguishes itself from the Bill of 1954 inasmuch as it does not limit itself to fire, it goes far beyond. It goes straight away to fire rescue and public safety.

In relation to the arguments put forward by the Opposition concerning no consultation has been made, I am advised that there was consultation, the firefighters union was consulted through meetings and this was held at the Ministry. This Bill came for the First Reading a few weeks back

whereas we did not have any views that came forward, neither did we have any concrete proposal from the Opposition. Further, this Bill is coming with several aspects, as I have said, the aspect of prevention and response, but it also touches the aspect of emergency which is very important and very serious. Emergency is described as serious, unexpected and potentially dangerous occurrences such as fire, floods, storms, explosions, landslides, terrorist acts, accidents, sea surges on land, leakage of harmful substances or oil spill. How do we combat all that? This Bill takes care of such emergencies. It is very important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

All these situations call for immediate and coordinated response. This can only be catered for *via* a structured planning and a structured legislation has been laid down in this Bill. In order to minimise the loss of lives, to reduce property damages where possible, this Bill has made provisions for that. We also have to think that the last Bill was in 1954 and after 60 years, this Bill is coming forward and I believe it is a very good time to say that this Bill is the description itself of *gouverner c'est prévoir*. One should make sure to have the appropriate tools to be able to make it happen. It also sends a strong signal that in cases of emergencies of natural calamities, natural disasters and fire, preparation itself is half of the battle won. The hon. Minister of Local Government has really tackled all the necessary points mainly concerning advising the public on prevention of fire outbreaks, preventive measures and protection of property to avoid property damages.

Concerning clause 17 - fire prevention, it is well laid down. Clause 17(3) speaks of prevention of fire on premises and it is a very well laid down procedure. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been put in the Bill and this would be voted to be law very soon. I congratulate the hon. Minister for that. Secondly, it has also included fire safety plans, again, responses to fire and evacuation plans as stipulated by clause 18(2)(a).

Further, there are procedures for all safety requirements, fire certificates, that is, clause 19 speaks of fire certificates to obtain fire clearances on premises. So, the aspect of response to fire has been fully dealt as well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

With regard to the aspect of prevention, public awareness, mass sensitisation, and also the argument put forward by the Opposition that there would be no training, whether there is any provision for training, it is highlighted very clearly in clause 22 that training centres and training facilities will be provided to accommodate all procedures for training in relation to fire prevention and fire response. So, all those aspects which are crucial to fire rescue has been canvassed in this Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Further, community education has also been put in the Bill; like I said, sensitisation and awareness programmes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you would see that such legislation has taken a large step further concerning the element of training and public awareness compared to the previous Bill. You would see that this is quite extensively canvassed in this Bill, and all the fundamentals are

there; the fundamentals of public awareness, sensitisation, which are, I think, imperative to this Bill. That is why we have volunteer fire brigades, which is a concrete example of public participation concerning safety, lifesaving and public safety. This is a concrete example of public participation in relation to awareness, sensitisation and public safety.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill has also basically responded to lots of eventualities, and the powers and duties of the service have also been extensively legislated. It has stipulated in clause 17(1), that –

“The Chief Fire Officer may require any owner of premises to take reasonable measures for the purpose of reducing the risk of a fire occurring on the premises or reducing potential danger to persons, animals, property or the environment in event of a fire occurring within the premises”.

So, it has again taken care of all aspects, namely persons, animals, property and environment; all the four pillars concerning fire rescue. My submission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that this Bill has enhanced coordination, it has harmonised working relationships, it has tackled emergency organisations, and also there is a major step in recognising and accepting that, in fact, when we have calamities, natural disasters, unexpected occurrences, we have to be prepared. We have to be prepared, and we can prepare ourselves in a structured manner. We can prepare ourselves in a systemic manner, so that we can face any natural calamities. The only constant is change, and I am talking about climatic change. We have to be ready for any sort of climatic change. The only way to do that is through structured planning, and this Bill caters for that.

I again congratulate the Minister of Local Government who came with this Bill, and I fully agree to the explanation given by my colleague. With these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

(6.35 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): M. le président, mon intervention ce soir sur ce projet de loi aurait dû être une intervention tranquille et sans polémique, car si nous avons des divergences sur la forme de ce projet de loi, dans le fond, nous sommes d'accord. Il faut reconnaître que nous jetons les bases ce soir pour un service moderne et performant.

Malheureusement, M. le président, l'intervention du ministre Mohamed me force à dévier de mon intervention initiale, car dans ses propos, il faut le dire, il a porté atteinte à la crédibilité et aussi à l'honneur de mon collègue, le député Nagalingum. Et je vais démontrer, dans mon intervention, que, dans le fond, l'honorable Nagalingum a raison dans ses propos. Par exemple, je prends le premier cas

où le ministre Mohamed vient dire à la Chambre qu'entre 2000 et 2005 ‘no fire station has been constructed during that period’. This is not true, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me remind the House that the Triolet Fire Station was constructed during that period. A very modern fire station found at Triolet, in the constituency of the actual Prime Minister. And you know what, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We did not inaugurate that fire station because Government at that time had decided that, prior to the 2005 elections, we would not proceed with inaugural ceremonies. That is why we did not go ahead with the inaugural of that fire station. Do you know what happened? Elections were held on 03 July 2005. Do you know when that fire station was inaugurated? On 11 July 2005; six days after results were proclaimed in 2005. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to set the record straight in this House.

Je vais, au cours de mon discours, réfuter les arguments mis de l'avant par les membres du gouvernement. Like I have said earlier, we are repealing the Fire Services Act, which goes back as far as 1953, that is, 60 years ago, and we are replacing it by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill. As per the Explanatory Memorandum of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill, we see that the primary objective is to make better provision for the prevention of and response to fires, but also to enhance coordination and harmonise working relationships among emergency organisations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we have a look at this piece of legislation, we see that there is an important shift towards prevention of fires, and we take note also of the wider role of the Service, as stipulated in clause 5(2) of this piece of legislation, whereby it is stated, in the legislation, that now the Fire Services will deal with emergency situations. When one has a look at the definition of emergencies as at clause 2, one sees that emergency means a serious, unexpected and potentially dangerous occurrence such as fire, flood, storm, explosion, landslide, terrorist attack, accident, sea surge on land, leakage of harmful substances or oil spill which requires a significant and coordinated response.

When hon. Nagalingum referred to training, I think he was very right in saying what he said because we are now dealing with specific situations that require specific training. For example, when one has a look at the Police Force, you have a section called GIGN, which is specially trained to face certain situations. I think that the Fire Services will have to undergo such training because when one has a look at the reply made by the hon. Minister some time back with regard to training at the Fire Services, he said that the normal training relates to recruit training course, refresher course, physical fitness training, first-aid course, Station Officers course, incident common course. One would ask himself whether such training would enable those firefighters to be able to face such situation in cases of terrorist attack. I think that is what hon. Nagalingum meant when he referred to training. Not only in-house training, it has to be overseas training also, where you can get that expertise.

When the hon. Minister replied again to a question put to him by hon. Nagalingum - and for that matter we should note that hon. Nagalingum does his homework. He has put 27 questions to the hon. Minister based on Fire Services, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - he stated that no officer benefitted from overseas scholarship and overseas courses during the past two years, and that reply dates 21 May 2013.

We are very much concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When we are talking of a modern and competent service, we should ensure that those officers get the required and adequate training, whether it is in-house training in Mauritius or outside, to be able to face such situations defined in this piece of legislation as emergency situations. That is the point hon. Nagalingum wanted to make. We find it cheap; *c'est de la malhonnêteté intellectuelle de la part d'un ministre, notamment le ministre Mohamed, de venir faire des commentaires à l'égard de l'honorable député Nagalingum concernant la formation au niveau de ce service, M. le président.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill represents a comprehensive reform to the statutory framework that we have. As I stated earlier, in this piece of legislation, emphasis is laid on the prevention aspect of fires, that is, prevention is placed at the heart of this piece of legislation, and the wide role to be placed by the Service in a modern society. What we are talking about is our society. *J'ai écouté les intervenants du gouvernement.* When we come forward and say that consultations should have taken place, we do not mean only consultations with the Service. And even that, we have been told that proper consultations have not been held. What we are talking about is consultations with all the stakeholders, including the civil society. Why am I saying the civil society? Let me remind that hon. Minister that when his parents got problems during the flooding, it was the civil society that came to their rescue. That's why we said that consultations should have been wide enough to include even the civil society, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although the Service requires more statutory power to achieve the goals that have been set in this piece of legislation, the Service should remain flexible in order to react promptly to certain immediate situations.

It is important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to note that fire incidents occupy only about 5% to 10% of the total activity of a fire brigade, and even in the future this percentage will not change drastically. That is why the Fire Service of tomorrow should have these specific responsibilities, as I have mentioned, in this piece of legislation.

These functions that we are asking Fire Officers to do now require a wider range of skills and competences. Fire services have always dealt with a wide range of tasks, but these tasks have not been recognised by the community at large. Lately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have seen that these activities have taken a higher proportion. Firefighters now have to apply their skills and expertise in

different ways. It is for this reason that the wider role that we want firefighters to do can only be achieved through a well-planned programme.

With these specific responsibilities in the future, those firefighters will be part in the front line response, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in case of natural disasters, flooding, even unnatural disasters which I have mentioned earlier, for example, act of terrorism. It is for this reason that this piece of Legislation that we are debating today should be clear and precise.

I, for one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, believe that we should have had in this piece of Legislation an integrated risk management plan. We should have made that mandatory, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the new Fire and Rescue Service to have an integrated risk management plan. In other words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this would have placed on the shoulders of the Fire and Rescue Service the responsibility to prepare such an integrated plan.

Another aspect of this piece of Legislation - I think that was mentioned by hon. Nagalingum during his intervention - is related to the powers of the Minister. We don't go along at all with that philosophy.

M. le président depuis quelque temps dans cette Chambre, quand nous débattons des projets de lois, nous faisons ressortir l'accaparement des ministres de ce gouvernement des institutions qui tombent sous leurs responsabilités. Quand on a débattu sur le projet de loi concernant les collectivités locales, nous avions fait la même remarque, les pouvoirs, - sans précédent - la mainmise de l'honorable ministre aujourd'hui sur le *Fire and Rescue Service*.

When you go to that piece of Legislation with regard to the powers of the Minister, although I should say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we agree that it is the role of the Minister to come forward with the policy of the service, but what we do not agree, is that it is for the Minister to decide on other issues. What is the competence of the hon. Minister with regard to fire and rescue service?

What is the competence of, maybe, his Permanent Secretary with regard to these, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? In other countries what happens is that there is the existence of an Advisory Board comprising of people having the required experience and competence in those fields which are very complex today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is for that Advisory Board to advise the hon. Minister on policy concerning that service. It should have been this way in this piece of Legislation and not as it is, 'the hon. Minister shall be responsible for defining the broad policy to be followed by the service; the Minister shall discharge his functions' - and everything; that too, with very few consultations.

I would like the hon. Minister to reply again with regard to his powers at clause 8(2) , where it is stated in the legislation -

"Without prejudice to subsection (1), the Minister may require the Service to respond to a particular type of emergency.'

This is not specifically referred to in this Act. What type of emergency are we talking about? Maybe, when the hon. Minister concludes, he should let us know what are those types of emergencies or that type of emergency which is being referred to at Clause 8(2), Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We require a service which has to be well prepared to face these new challenges; not only prepared in terms of training, but also having the required infrastructure to be able to deliver.

I will raise an issue which I consider as very, very important concerning the Ministry of Local Government and I believe that the hon. Minister will agree with me, because in his reply he even acknowledges this fact. It is with regard to the Port Louis Fire Station.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister himself, in a reply to a question put to him, again by my friend, hon. Deven Nagalingum, states –

“I am aware that the building housing the Fire Station of Port Louis is in a derelict state due to its old age.”

And that is not all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In another reply almost one year later, because that question was put in 2011 and the other question put in 2012 – again, *chapeau à l'honorable Deven Nagalingum qui vient poser la question à l'honorable ministre*. Let us see what the hon. Minister said in his reply –

“I am informed by the Fire Services Department that on 22 November 2006, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping submitted a structural investigation report on the Port Louis Fire Station which states that the building suffers from visible structural defects, in particular the first floor and roof.”

This is where we are housing our firefighters!

Secondly, a survey was conducted on 18 July 2007 by the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities with a view to assessing the overall condition of the electrical installations in the building. The Energy Services Division had highlighted that the electrical installation in the building was in a very poor state and represented a serious hazard for its occupants. It had recommended that a complete electrical re-wiring be carried out. I don't know whether this has been done or not; maybe the hon. Minister will let us know. I don't know whether this has been done or not; maybe, the hon. Minister will let us know.

And lastly, the Occupational Safety and Health Unit has, in its last report, two years later, in January 2012, requested Management to take necessary action to urgently relocate the Fire Station. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are in 2013 and the hon. Minister is still stating to this House that consideration is being given to the relocation of that Fire Station. And the last reply dates back to 09

April 2013. If we want a modern service, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to react to such situations. We cannot ask those officers to perform when they have to work in a building which is in such a situation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, I would urge Government to urgently look into this situation.

The Minister has also spoken about volunteer fire brigades. I want to be clear about that also because we have under volunteer fire brigades what we also call retained fire brigades, and these are new concepts. It is stated in this legislation that those volunteer fire brigades will assist the service in the prevention and suppression of fires and the rest.

The term 'volunteer' as compared to 'retained' has a difference, whereby volunteers are not compensated; retained fire officers are compensated. They will have to leave their work to be able to come and get the necessary in-house training but also whenever they have to attend to emergencies and emergencies can happen at any time of the day or night, those people - some of them, not all - will have to leave the job to be able to help. Now, will they be compensated for the work they are doing and if so, what type of compensation, whether during the time they are undergoing training or whether during the time they are helping in an emergency situation. Now, how will that work? How will they be released from their duties? That is why I said earlier when we talk of consultation, it should have been broad consultation, because now we are asking under that item, that is volunteer fire brigades, members of the civil society to come and help the service. If they are not even consulted on this piece of legislation, how will their employers come forward to release them when they will be required at the fire station, either to undergo training or to attend to an emergency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? That is why we have a good piece of legislation; we are repealing an Act which goes back as far as 1953.

We agree that time has come to come not only with a modern piece of legislation, but with a modern service having a wider role. Not only firefighting, but also they have to attend to emergencies. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should ensure that to implement that piece of legislation, we give them the appropriate tools and equipment for them to be able to shoulder those responsibilities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Thank you.

(7.05 p.m.)

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Members from both sides of the House for their contributions to the debate on the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill. The Government Fire Service is dedicated to building a safer Mauritian society. Yet, there are always challenges, old and new, that need to be faced.

M. le président, depuis ma nomination comme ministre des collectivités locales et des îles en 2010, c'est la deuxième fois que je viens avec le projet de loi. Premièrement, c'était le *Local*

Government Bill, là aussi j'ai écouté tout le monde et comme aujourd'hui quand on voit un des membres, en 15 minutes d'allocution, il y a 47 objections. Tant mieux! C'est la démocratie. Mais j'aime autant vous dire qu'est-ce qui n'a pas été dit dans le *Local Government Bill*, même quand on avait circulé un an en avance. Aujourd'hui, on voit le même scenario, le *Fire*...

(*Interruptions*)

Non, mais...

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair hon. Minister!

Mr Aimée: Aujourd'hui, c'est le même scenario pour le *Fire and Rescue Service Bill*.

(*Interruptions*)

Comme vous voyez le nombre de clause qu'il y a dans le *Fire and Rescue Service Bill*, il y a au moins dix plaintes, quelques fois là où on avait pris en considération comme, par exemple, je vais commencer par l'honorable François, *training and facilities*. L'honorable Lesjongard en a parlé. Notre ami, l'honorable Nagalingum a dit ça. Clause 22 justement dit - the Bill highlights the importance of training to firefighters and provides for the establishment of training centre for the purpose. It has also placed an obligation on any person providing training in fire safety to be registered with the fire service and with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority.

On va plus loin, M. le président. Nos formateurs de la *Fire Department*, ce sont des personnes *trained* sous la loi d'IFE. On ne prend pas au petit bonheur, ce sont des gens qualifiés sous cette partie de la loi de l'IFE. Il faut qu'il soit gradué de l'IFE. A Maurice, qui sont ceux qui sont plus expérimentés *for the training*? Ce sont eux. Qui sont ceux qui ont le *know-how* pour pouvoir donner le *training* que ce soit au *volunteer firefighter* ou *firefighter* tout court en général? Alors, il est dit dans la clause 22 c'est déjà prévu. Je ne vois pas pourquoi ils ont pris ça pour tourner : 'Ah, il n'y a pas de *training*, comment va être fait, le *training*? Ça va être fait sous la supervision du *Chief Fire Officer* qui lui a été ...` 4

(*Interruptions*)

Oui. Pour vous dire, M. le président, nous, on va plus loin. L'honorable Lesjongard a parlé de l'état décrépitude du *fire station* qui se trouve à l'arrière de la municipalité. C'est vrai! Vous avez raison l'honorable membre d'attirer mon attention.

The Deputy Speaker: You must not look in the direction of the hon. Member.

Mr Aimée: J'aime autant dire M. le président, que depuis mon arrivée, on a exploré toutes les possibilités. A un moment donné, il y avait des terrains qui étaient réservés à la colline Monneron mais quand on a fait des études de fiabilité, cela va couter tellement cher et cela ne donne aucune garantie avec le glissement de terrain dans cette région. A un autre moment donné, on a essayé d'avoir

un terrain laissé par le ministère de l'infrastructure publique qui se trouve au rondpoint où se trouve l'ICAC mais là aussi le Road Safety Unit nous a dit que ce n'est pas possible parce qu'avec cette grande artère, ce sera difficile pour les *fire vehicles to move around*. Or, on a dû encore une fois retourner vers le ministère du logement et là, il y a trois semaines, le ministère du logement nous a alloué seize arpents de terrain tout près du Jin Fei.

(*Interruptions*)

Vous pouvez rigoler comme cela je sais qu'il y a des gens heureux autour de moi. Alors, à Port Louis, il n'y a pas d'endroit disponible où on peut mettre vraiment un firefighter digne de ce nom. On ne peut pas le mettre à Port Louis, il n'y a pas de place. Le seul endroit que nous avons maintenant se trouve près de Jin Fei - seize arpents de terrain mis à notre disposition. Là j'aime autant vous dire que dans le *Bill* on a parlé du *Fire Academy*. Il n'y aura pas seulement une station de pompiers mais aussi un *Fire Academy* et il y aura encore du terrain pour pouvoir développer tout ce qui vient après; toutes les décisions qu'on doit prendre après avoir utilisé une partie du terrain parce qu'on ne peut pas utiliser seize arpents à la fois. Merci à l'honorable docteur Kasenally.

(*Interruptions*)

Rigolez je suis content. Clause 6 - working agreement: why is the approval of the Minister required; CFO is professional? Shouldn't he be given flexibility to decide?

Permettez-moi de vous dire M. le président, je pose la question aux membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre. Comment voulez-vous qu'un ministre réponde au Parlement; réponde au media, réponde au public en général ; réponde aux contribuables...

(*Interruptions*)

Pourquoi pas? Je l'ai fait, je n'ai pas honte. M. le président, les questions qu'on entend au Parlement surtout. J'aime autant vous dire que même pour les uniformes des firefighters, les questions sont posées au Parlement. C'est quelque chose de day-to-day management responsable. L'état des bâtiments, les toilettes – on vient poser des questions au ministre: quand vous allez remédier les toilettes. Avec tout cela, je n'aurai pas le droit d'être le policy maker et d'avoir certaines responsabilités. Comment voulez-vous qu'un ministre...

(*Interruptions*)

Je sais qu'il y a des gens heureux autour de moi mais moi je ne rigole pas, je fais mon travail et je ne suis pas sarcastique comme les autres, on peut le dire.

Power to Minister: il y a certaines clauses – il y a deux ou trois où je suis obligé de reprendre et qui sait peut-être en 2015, 2020, 2025; ils vont être au pouvoir ils vont se servir de cette loi.

M. le président, l'honorable Nagalingum et l'honorable François ont parlé de l'emergency rescue. Dans des cas d'exception, ils ont parlé de l'aéroport, ils ont parlé du port et même je crois entendre d'un tremblement de terre ou cela peut être un tsunami. M. le président, le port est équipé; le port a des bateaux et des canots qui sont différents. Ce ne sont pas des équipements de pompiers; cela n'a rien à voir. A l'aéroport, ils sont équipés, ils ont leur firefighting equipment et Dieu sait des firefighting equipment modernes. Nous, nous sommes là à coopérer; nous sommes là en cas d'urgence pour les aider. Cela n'a rien à voir avec le training d'aller apprendre à nager ou bien d'avoir des équipements pour le port. Le port a des bateaux pour; le coast guard a des bateaux pour. Nous allons les renforcer en cas d'urgence pour pouvoir donner un coup de main. Dans des cas d'exception, cela n'a rien à voir ce que vous avez mentionné l'honorable Nagalingum et l'honorable François.

Alors nous avons des arrangements et la loi prend en compte tous ces arrangements avec tous ces stakeholders avec qui on peut à l'avenir travailler pour connaître des résultats positifs, des résultats concrets en ce qui concerne nos valeureux firefighters.

M. le président, ils ont parlé du syndicat mais je regrette si vous avez des informations qui ne sont pas conformes par rapport au projet de loi que j'amène au Parlement aujourd'hui. Déjà j'aime autant vous dire que le projet de loi a été circulé il y a trois semaines mais depuis que je suis arrivé à ce ministère, il y a eu quatre fois où j'ai rencontré les gens de l'union en particulier je peux même citer le nom de monsieur Bacsoo qui est le représentant de l'union. Quand il y a des questions qui arrivent au Parlement, je sais d'où elles viennent. J'ai quand même mes petites sources. Alors ils ont proposé un amendement nécessaire to be consistent with the provision concernant l'union.

The existing paragraph 8(1) (c) (ii) has been left broad enough to capture the possibility of consultation with the recognised trade unions and also any other person whom the Minister considers to represent employees of the Service. *Je suis prêt à collaborer.*

L'honorable François avait parlé de *Fire Department* à Rodrigues. Bien sûr, la loi qu'on a ici peut être serviable aussi à Rodrigues. Il n'y a pas de problème. D'ailleurs, j'ai offert tout le temps ma coopération à l'Assemblée de Rodrigues. Je ne vais pas énumérer tout cela, mais je l'ai fait. Maintenant, il ne faut pas oublier que le *RRA* est autonome. Vous avez votre propre administration, votre propre *management*, vous pouvez vous servir de cette loi pour tout autre aspect. Moi, comme ministre représentant le *Local Government* et le *Fire Department*, je ne peux pas intervenir. Cela va être la même chose comme le *Local Government* qu'on a eu pas mal de frasques.

La clause 5 parle de *Duties and Powers of Service*. Je viens d'énumérer tout ce qui concerne le port, l'aéroport et d'autres calamités qui pourraient surgir.

Clause 22 deals with training facilities. This demonstrates the will of Government to ensure that the officers of the Fire Service are adequately trained and motivated to perform their duties in accordance with the new Act.

Clause 5(3) of the Bill - the Fire Service shall not alone execute schemes for disasters. *Nous avons un Disaster Committee. C'est ce comité qui décide qui doit être on board pour le disaster.*

My Ministry and the Fire Service will welcome all exchanges with the Fire Department of Rodrigues. With regard to the application of the Act to Rodrigues, the administrative purpose should be on the site of the RRA.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fire Service being a discipline falls along the same line as the Police. It is autonomous in its functions. However, it is to be reckoned that the Minister to whom the responsibility of Fire Service is assigned is accountable to the public and to the National Assembly. He is often called upon to reply to questions put to him at the National Assembly and to argue for the Budget allocation. It is, therefore, very much reasonable that a section providing for some policy powers be given to him in the Bill.

M. le président, ce projet de loi répond à un besoin de corriger les décalages actuels entre, d'une part des provisions légales et d'autre part les responsabilités et activités journalières de nos sapeurs-pompiers. En effet, la loi de 1954 ne reflète plus cette diversité des missions et d'interventions. A l'origine, le service des sapeurs-pompiers a été créé pour combattre les incendies, mais les années passant, ce service a connu une telle mutation. Il s'est élargi pour inclure de nouveaux domaines d'intervention. Par conséquent, les sapeurs-pompiers sont aujourd'hui confrontés à de nouveaux risques engendrés par l'évolution de la technologie qui était inconnue lors de la rédaction de la loi de 1954. Leur organisation, leur compétence et les équipements ont dû être adaptés à leur nouvelle mission. Mais la loi vieille d'un demi-siècle est caduque. Porter secours aux personnes dans diverses situations de détresse, accidents de la route, inondations, effondrements constituent de nos jours une des missions les plus importantes de ce service. Ces interventions devenues courantes pour nos sapeurs-pompiers ne sont pas couvertes par la loi de 1954. Ne faudrait-il pas, dès lors, offrir un cadre légal à de telles interventions et reconnaître de telles activités? Outre les incendies des bâtiments résidentiels et commerciaux, les sapeurs-pompiers sont aussi appelés à combattre les incendies industriels. Moins connue l'activité des préventions des sapeurs-pompiers, en effet, ils mènent également des missions, des préventions sur le terrain. Ils ont pour objectif de développer, en collaboration avec des civils, des chefs d'entreprises, des techniciens d'usine et autres – ce que l'honorable Lesjongard m'avait demandé –une action commune de prévention des sinistres.

Pour la première fois en 2011, cinq femmes se sont engagées dans ce service. Il s'agit d'une suite logique au *new Local Government Act*. Au sein des collectivités locales, tout comme chez les sapeurs-pompiers, les femmes mauriciennes ont leur place. Par ailleurs, il me tient à cœur d'instaurer les statuts des pompiers volontaires basés sur le système ayant cours dans d'autres pays. Cette initiative aura pour principal intérêt de responsabiliser les citoyens et de protéger les principes des sauvetages et des premières aides de notre société.

M. le président, l'intérêt que porte ce gouvernement aux services des pompiers est indéniable. On a qu'à juger les investissements dans ce secteur. Ces deux dernières années R 250 millions ont été investies dans les équipements. Sur le plan des infrastructures, la couverture territoriale de ce service se poursuivra. En plus, neuf casernes existantes, la toute première caserne de l'ouest à Tamarin sera bientôt inaugurée, trois autres localisées, comme je viens de mentionner cet après-midi à Montagne Blanche, Goodlands et Rose Belle. Nos sapeurs-pompiers savent déployer dans leurs interventions, dans leurs actions de prévention de grands moyens techniques et savent coordonner avec efficacité les situations les plus périlleuses.

Permettez-moi de souligner l'engagement personnel, physique et moral de chacun de ces soldats de feu et de leur dire combien ils sont appréciés par tous ceux qu'ils secourent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from time to time, surveys are held among the general public to find out the popularity of those working in the different sectors of society, such as politicians, journalists, civil servants, policemen, etc., etc. It is a fact that firefighters consistently come out near the top of those who have the trust of most Mauritians. They fully deserve this recognition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank all those involved in the preparation of this piece of legislation, in particular, the officers of my Ministry, the Government Fire Service and the State Law Office which have spent two years fine-tuning all aspects of the Bill.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill (No. X of 2013) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service Bill (No. X of 2013) was read the third time and passed.

**THE REVENUE AND VALUATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL BILL
(NO. XI OF 2013)**

The Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma) gave notice of his intention not to move the Second Reading and the other stages of the Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal Bill (No. XI of 2013) today.

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

Dr. Kasenally rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.

(7.36 p.m.)

MATTERS RAISED

POLICE SERGEANTS - PROMOTION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo): The issue I want to raise, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerns the hon. Prime Minister. Unfortunately, he is not here.

(Interruptions)

It concerns a recent promotion in the Police Force.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a recent promotion of Police Sergeants to the rank of Sub Inspectors, which took place on 25 May 2013. This exercise of promotion has been, unfortunately, marred by a mishap. This promotion has been introduced in the Police Force for a particular purpose. It was a promotion meant for Police Sergeants over the age of 50 years, having some 34 years of service and this should be their last promotion in a Force which they have served loyally in view of their age and length of service.

However, in the recent exercise, Sergeants under the age of 50, managed to benefit from this promotion because of their old departmental numbers they bear but which do not, in fact, disclose their real batch numbers and do not reflect the year they joined the Police Force. They bear this old departmental numbers of retired officers or those who have already been promoted in the past. Therefore, they have been promoted in lieu of those older Police Sergeants having more than 50 years

and more than 34 years of service in the Force. These older officers who did not receive the promotion have passed the same promotion examinations as their peers who were rightly promoted recently since the year 1992.

The end result, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that several Police Sergeants of more than 50 years have been deprived of a promotion meant for them during this recent exercise.

My plea to the hon. Prime Minister is that since this selection of promotion has been carried out most unfairly on wrong premises, on a flawed basis, which constitutes, in fact, a miscarriage of justice, it has caused immense prejudice to the old Police Sergeants and deprived them from their last and only promotion till their retirement.

So, I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to look into this matter and intervene so that the deserving Police Sergeants be promoted to the rank of Police Sub Inspectors with effect from 25 May of this year.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I will convey the appeal of the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the hon. Prime Minister.

MOKA – MARKET PLACE - OPENING

Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister for Local Government to the fact that the inhabitants of Moka are facing a lot of problems and difficulties due to the delay in the opening of the small market place opposite to the Marketing Board.

The market has not yet become operational in spite of the fact that it is ready since last year. Both the inhabitants and the vegetable sellers of the area are finding a lot of problems and inconveniences due to this.

May I, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter and to do the needful to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of Moka.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will look into the matter. Even the hon. Member knows what is going on.

BUS SERVICE - HENRIETTA-ROSE HILL

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, je voudrais adresser une requête à l'honorable ministre des Infrastructures publiques. Je veux parler des problèmes auxquels font face les usagers de la route 255, c'est-à-dire, Henrietta-Rose Hill, à travers Ebène. Au cours de ces cinq ans, le nombre d'autobus est resté le même tandis qu'il y a une augmentation considérable des passagers faisant cette route. Et, depuis l'accident du 30 mai, la situation s'est détériorée, et l'intervalle de 25 minutes est passé maintenant à 30-40 minutes. Les chauffeurs, à juste raison, ne prennent pas autant de personnes debout, et cela empire les difficultés de ces usagers.

Premièrement, la demande, M. le président, c'est qu'on augmente le nombre d'autobus desservant cette route, et, deuxièmement, de revoir l'heure du dernier départ de la gare de Rose Hill, qui est présentement à 17h15, arrivant à Ebène à 17h25. Il y a tant d'employés qui terminent après 17h25. Donc, la requête est de revoir ces deux points.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware of this problem because since the Sorèze accident, they are not able to take additional passengers. I can assure the hon. Member that we are going to put up additional buses. In fact, we have already started the procedures.

CANAL DAYOT – FLOODS - VICTIMS

Mr A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): M. le président, mon intervention a trait à la région de Canal Dayot, suite aux inondations du 30 mars, et comporte deux volets.

Je m'adresse au Premier ministre pour le premier volet, et cela concerne le voucher de R 100,000 distribué aux victimes pour l'achat de mobiliers. Or, il se trouve, qu'à ce jour, certaines victimes de Canal Dayot et d'ailleurs n'ont toujours rien reçu. Ces personnes ne savent pas à quel saint se vouer pour pouvoir bénéficier de ces bons d'achat. Je fais donc un appel au Premier ministre pour mettre sur pied un *special desk* qui recueillerait les doléances, mener une enquête appropriée au cas par cas, et y remédier.

Le deuxième volet de mon intervention est dirigé vers le ministre du Logement. Le ministre Bachoo avait déclaré récemment que les habitants de Canal Dayot seront relogés ou relocalisés. Certes, il y a eu des cas où des maisons ont été fissurées, lézardées, structurellement endommagées suite aux fortes inondations, comme en témoignent les photos qui m'ont été remises hier par une

habitante de la localité, que je vais déposer. Or, des questions s'imposent. Avant de prendre toute décision dans le sens du relogement ou de délocalisation, il serait nécessaire d'entamer d'abord un processus de dialogue et de consultation avec les habitants ; deuxièmement, d'effectuer un *survey* nécessaire sur le nombre d'habitants qui nécessitent un relogement et, finalement, de prendre la décision qui s'impose.

Or, il semblerait qu'aucune de ces étapes n'ait eu lieu, et les habitants sont dans le flou total, car il paraît que la décision a été prise unilatéralement. Je fais, donc, un appel au ministre, pour qu'il puisse éclairer les habitants sur le sujet.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not been made aware, as the hon. Member said, by anybody about this state of affairs, but most certainly I shall look into it, do the appropriate survey and take appropriate measures for the benefit of those who have suffered.

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS - VOCATIONAL COURSE

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue addressed to the Minister of Tertiary Education, which relates to the vocational course that is being provided by the University of Mauritius concerning about 115 students, potential Barristers, Attorneys and Notary Public.

The course, which was supposed to start in January only started late February, early March, and was supposed to last for five months. Already, two-thirds of the lectures have been completed, and I am told by students that only around 35% of the syllabus have been completed. There are a lot of lecturers that do not turn up and, as a result, there are dozens of lectures that now have to be rescheduled. Attendance to these lectures is now compulsory; you need to attend 80% of the lectures to be eligible to take your vocational exams. All these students are now very concerned whether the University of Mauritius will be able to complete the syllabus by August, and give them sufficient time to prepare for the exam that is going to be held in September.

I would urge the hon. Minister to take up the matter, on the one hand, with the University of Mauritius and see how they can accommodate and give extra classes to catch up on the loss tutorials, but also maybe talk to the Council of Legal Education and, if need be, try to postpone the exams by a few weeks, so that no student is penalised.

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have met the students, and I am well aware of the situation. I also had discussion with my colleague, the Attorney General, and I have requested my Permanent Secretary to talk to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mauritius to look into the matter.

GRNW - GAS FACTORY

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to raise a serious case of both noise, atmosphere and health hazard in Grand River North West, especially as it concerns the inhabitants of Dr. Henry Perraud street and Eugène Pitchen street.

These are two narrow streets. Opposite, on one side of the street, there are the residences and, on the other one, a gas factory. I have in my possession pictures which have been taken from the balcony on this side, where we can see the factory in operation. According to my information, the factory deals with the filling of gas cylinders with oxygen, hydrogen and acetylene.

The inhabitants have made a petition, which I am going to submit as well to the hon. Minister. It concerns the noise because this factory is being run 24-hour a day. There have been many complaints to the *Police de l'environnement* and the Ministry of Health. In fact, the Inspector from the Ministry of Health has even, on one occasion, caused the factory to be closed at 4 o'clock. Apparently, the Ministry of Environment does not have this apparatus, which is called decibel meter, but the Ministry of Health has one. But, unfortunately, as they turned their back, the factory operated again. This creates vibration to the houses of the inhabitants on the other side, and a serious health hazard for the children because of the smell of excess of oxygen or sometimes hydrogen.

There is a petition, and I have three photos here showing the position of the factory, and one where they are working at night - you can see the light - and the noise is unbearable. I have been there together with my two colleagues one evening. You can't stay there; you can't talk to each other in view of the high level of noise. The inhabitants have been kind enough in their petition not to ask for a delocalisation, but they are asking that it operates between working hours, and that they take appropriate action to make it sound proof.

I am appealing to both the hon. Minister of Environment and the Minister of Health. Probably, a site visit has to be done there to look at the state of affairs regarding the old ladies. The old ladies are affected by the noise and are suffering. So, my appeal is to both Ministers.

Thank you.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr L. Bundhoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for having raised this issue. I can assure him that we will try to mount an operation with my friend, the hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development and my friend, the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, through the Municipality of Port Louis and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, as we did in a case that was raised by hon. Mrs Labelle some time back, to look into the matter and see how remedial action could be taken or even what action could be taken.

1) BEL OMBRE SUGAR ESTATE - VRS 2
2) RAMPHUL LTD - EX-EMPLOYEES

Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue with regard to the VRS 2 workers of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate, addressed to the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security - unfortunately, he is not here.

Mr Speaker, Sir, 236 workers of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate opted for the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) and they have received their compensation in 2007. Five years after, in August 2012, the drawing of lot exercise for a subdivision of land with 27.8 acres at Tamarin was effected in Case Noyale. These workers were supposed to receive their land six months after the proceeding of the drawing of the lot exercise. However, until now, these workers have not received their plot of land.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious issue and I feel concerned that these workers, after years of effort to contribute to our economic growth, have to wait so long for their due and even that before obtaining same.

I would like to urge the hon. Minister to look into the matter in order to activate the process which is, in fact, taking too long.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to further request the hon. Minister to treat urgently the dossier of the ex-employees of Ramphul Ltd. who received a *mise en demeure* on 26 April 2013. As these ex-employees have received a letter to call at the office of the Attorney-at-law of Ramphul Ltd in Port Louis, I am now tabling a copy of these letters.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I will convey the concern of the hon. Member to my colleague Minister.

CONGOMAH - PARAMPUTH BRIDGE

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, for allowing me to raise an issue which concerns my constituency and which is addressed to the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

It concerns an ongoing project in the region of Congomah, more precisely on the road leading to Congomah. Mr Speaker, Sir, works have started on that bridge called Paramputh Bridge. Today, inhabitants using that bridge, that is, those coming from Montagne Longue or Les Mariannes going to Congomah or the other way, do not understand what is being constructed in that area. They had a

bridge before and now, they thought that Government was doing the needful to remove that old bridge and construct a new one. Unfortunately, works are progressing; it does not seem that that bridge is being replaced. What is being done there, in fact, is that the contractor onsite is backfilling the space for the bridge with rocks, thereby creating two outlets for water drainage. The inhabitants there believe that the road will be constructed on that backfilling.

Now, the inhabitants have been asking serious questions, whether that project was designed properly by the said Ministry, first of all.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have raised an issue with regard to the region of Boulingrin and now I am raising an issue with regard to Congomah. The perception is that works that are being carried out in that region do not meet the required standards, and that is not correct. That is why I would request the concerned Ministry and the Minister to look into that issue.

I have taken photographs of the ongoing construction. In fact, when one has a look at the project which is being undertaken, first of all one sees that there are no retaining walls on both sides of that construction.

Secondly, like I have said, they have created outlets below the backfilling to evacuate water. Do they know that during heavy rain this course is being used to evacuate water in that region and that those two outlets that have been put there will not suffice to remove all the water which is going to be accumulated in that area?

My appeal to the hon. Minister is, again, to go, make a site visit, go and meet the people there, and explain why this type of construction is ongoing there. Why they do not have that bridge they had asked Government to build for them; why such a construction is being undergone?

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am tabling those photographs.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, those who stay in that region know that the road is so narrow, hardly a few metres, and there were repeated requests from the side of our Members of Parliament that we have to do something and that is a very, very dangerous place. I had been there and I have also questioned the contractors. If I am not mistaken, General Construction is the contractor. We are definitely having the site visit next week as it has already been planned. But, I can assure the hon. Member that all his concerns will be addressed. There is no problem on that.

HOTEL DE VILLE DE CUREPIPE – REPAIRS

Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is addressed to both the Minister for Arts and Culture and the Minister for Local Government and Outer Islands. But in view of the fact that the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands is not here, I think I will deal only with the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture.

I invite the attention of both Ministers to the state of decrepitude which is being seen in the *Hôtel de Ville de Curepipe* which belongs not only to the National Heritage, but belongs to the whole country. This building which is a landmark in Curepipe, a landmark in Mauritius, is actually subjected to all the vagaries of our weather. In Curepipe it rains all the time and much more attention has to be paid to the maintenance of this building. The Municipality of Curepipe obviously does not have the money to be able to deal with the repairs of this building. This building was used as some form of fundraising for the other activities of the Municipality and, no doubt, the hon. Minister has heard of the many weddings which have been cancelled; the bridegrooms and brides-to-be are waiting for compensation to be refunded for the booking. Also, now, progressively we are using canvas to seal the holes before the couples get blessed with holy water during the rainfall.

My appeal to the Ministers is to turn an attentive eye and ear, head and hair to this leaking building and embark on saving what is a monument of our National Heritage.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for having raised the issue. It is true that the town hall of Curepipe is enlisted National Heritage and, at our level, again, there is a shortage of finance this year. We can also at our level, at the level of NHF, assess and recommend what is the remedial action to be taken.

So, we will definitely liaise with the Municipality of Curepipe through the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and see to it that whatever is heritage is saved in the country.

“L’EXPRESS RODRIGUES”- HON. CHRISTIAN LEOPOLD - STATEMENT

Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues): M. le président, j’interviens sur un sujet d’importance républicaine adressée au Premier ministre et ministre responsable de Rodrigues. Cette intervention vise à obtenir des clarifications suite à la déclaration du député de Rodrigues et *Private Parliamentary Secretary (PPS)* relative à la question de « L’avenir de l’autonomie de Rodrigues », lors d’une conférence de presse du Mouvement Rodriguais en date du 27 mai 2013, et rapportée dans la presse locale, en l’occurrence « L’Express Rodrigues », du 30 mai 2013, dont je dépose une copie ici.

Le titre de l'article est, je cite -

‘Christian Léopold prétend que l’autonomie serait en danger.’

Cet article reprend la déclaration du député qui affirme que –

« Nous avons obtenu certaines informations selon lesquels, à cause l’incompétence OPR *finn ena menace pou cancel l’Assemblée Régionale*. C’est ce que le député et PPS ont avancé lors de ce point de presse. »

Fin de citations! A noter qu’il n’y a eu aucune mise au point. Mes questions sont: quelles menaces, de qui et comment ?

M. le président, ceux qui aiment et connaissent la valeur de l’autonomie de Rodrigues, comme une avancée démocratique au sein de la République Mauricienne, votée d’ailleurs ici dans cette auguste assemblée à l’unanimité le 20 novembre 2001, questionne la portée de cette déclaration qui ne constitue pas, au moins, des aveux ou mépris au Premier ministre que je considère très sérieux et graves. Parce que l’autonomie de Rodrigues est un acquis; après des longues luttes par l’OPR, aujourd’hui renforcé et méritant toutefois d’être renforcé après ces 10 ans.

La loi de l’autonomie dans la clause 40(1) donne au Chef Commissaire la possibilité de tenir le Premier ministre au courant, *fully informed*, de la conduite des affaires de Rodrigues, ce qui se passe actuellement où le Chef Commissaire rencontre régulièrement le Premier ministre.

Tout récemment, suite à la publication du rapport *Errors, Omissions and Anomalies* de Dev Manraj, le Premier ministre, lui-même, a dit – « *nous inn donne Rodrigues encore plis l’autonomie.* » Et j’ajoute ce que le Premier ministre aussi a dit lors de sa dernière visite – « *mo pas oulé qui ena deux catégories citoyens dans la République.* »

M. le président, à cet effet, je voudrai demander, au nom du peuple de Rodrigues, à l’honorable Premier ministre d’expliquer et de rassurer la population sur la question de menace pour l’autonomie de Rodrigues, évoquée par ce membre, qui est contraire à l’esprit de la loi de l’autonomie, qui est garantie et ancrée dans notre Constitution.

Ma deuxième intervention, M. le président, est adressée au ministre des finances concernant les difficultés que font face des jeunes étudiants Rodriguais par rapport au *new Student Scheme Loan* de R 200,000 allant jusqu’à R 300,000.

Il y a un gros problème d’interprétation par rapport à ce *scheme* surtout sur cette affaire de *parental guarantee* comme mentionné par l’honorable Vice-Premier ministre. Ma compréhension des conditions est que les demandeurs de ce *loan* ne devraient pas se soucier des exigences s’agissant des hypothèques et garanties bancaires mais seulement la garantie parentale. Malheureusement, les demandes de nombreux étudiants venant des familles pauvres sont rejetées et ces étudiants restent en

difficulté et n'arrivent pas à sécuriser ce *loan* auprès des banques. J'ai consulté la direction des banques, M. le président...

Mr Speaker: Sorry to interrupt, do you still have a long way to go?

Mr François: No.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin is waiting!

Mr François: I won't be long.

Mr Speaker: Normally, you have to be very short!

Mr François: Sure, but it is a very important matter, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker : Yes, but we are not concerned with reported matters.

Mr François: Mais, M. le président, c'est pour cette raison que je demande au Vice-Premier ministre d'intervenir auprès de la direction des banques pour essayer de remédier ce problème concernant ce *loan scheme* pour les étudiants Rodriguais. Merci.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken note of the statement of the hon. Member and it will be forwarded to the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

LA CONFIANCE COLLEGE – ROAD SAFETY

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) : M. le président, ma requête ce soir s'adresse au ministre des infrastructures publiques et je dois souligner que c'est la troisième fois que je le sollicite pour le même problème, c'est-à-dire le danger que représente pour les élèves et enseignants du collège de La Confiance ainsi que pour les habitants de la région. Toute la flotte de véhicules sortant de la rue Albatros au Morcellement de La Confiance et de l'impasse La Confiance pour aller vers la rue Dr. Reid. L'entrée du collège se trouve à proximité de ces deux rues qui sont, je le rappelle, régulièrement utilisées par les automobilistes qui prennent cette rue comme raccourcie ; en sortant de Rose Hill et pour aller vers Port Louis évitant ainsi les embouteillages du centre ville de Beau Bassin et bien sûr tout aussi bien dans le sens inverse, c'est-à-dire, de Port Louis vers Rose Hill. Donc, nous avons eu l'occasion d'effectuer une descente des lieux avec le PPS Reza Issack, il y a quelques mois de cela, mais, malheureusement, rien n'a été fait jusqu'à présent. Comme je l'ai souligné, M le président, c'est la troisième fois que je sollicite l'honorable ministre Bachoo afin qu'il intervienne assez rapidement et personnellement, j'habite la région et je peux vous dire que tous

ces véhicules qui empruntent la rue Albatros, Dr. Reid et l'impasse La Confiance, effectivement représentent un danger pour les habitants et les élèves du collège.

Donc, l'honorable ministre Bachoo avait, lors de ma dernière intervention concernant ce problème, promis d'installer des *speed cameras*, qui je le souligne ne sont pas la solution. Ce qu'on souhaite et ce que je propose, si l'honorable ministre est d'accord, c'est d'installer quelques obstacles dans les rues que j'ai citées, même s'il va nous dire que ce n'est plus dans sa politique d'installer des obstacles, c'est la solution à mon avis à ce problème et aussi de convertir l'impasse La Confiance en *one-way*, sens interdit, à partir de Dr. Reid en allant vers l'impasse La Confiance de façon à ce que les véhicules ne puissent pas entrer dans l'impasse de La Confiance et prennent uniquement la rue Albatros vers Dr. Reid.

Mr Speaker: You are left with one minute! You have to give the hon. Minister a chance to answer!

Mr Quirin : Je compte sur l'intervention de l'honorable ministre Bachoo. Merci, M. le président.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, earlier I have taken up the matter with the TMRSU and they explained to me that it is not so easy to declare one-way. It is very difficult; built up areas on both sides and I have taken up the matter. If I am not mistaken, TMRSU also contacted the hon. Member at that time. But I will have to have a fresh look at this and I will try to see what is possible. If anything is humanly possible for me to do, I am definitely going to help you.

At 08.19 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SUBUTEX - TRAFFICKING IN & UNAUTHORIZED CONSUMPTION

(No. B/463) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the trafficking in and unauthorized consumption of subutex, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith in each case, since 2005 to date, indicating the –
 - (i) nationality of the persons arrested
 - (ii) number of persons presently serving imprisonment sentences therefor, and
- (b) state if consideration will be given for the transfer of the convicted foreign nationals thereof to serve the imprisonment sentence in their respective country.

(Reply not available)

FLASH FLOODS - 30 MARCH 2013 - LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS - REPORTS

(No. B/464) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will table copy of the reports submitted by the local and international experts in connection therewith, indicating the actions taken, if any, in relation thereto.

(Reply not available)

RAPE - LEGISLATION - TOUGHENING

(No. B/465) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to rape, he will state if consideration will be given for the toughening of the legislation in relation thereto and, if so, when and if not, why not.

(Reply not available)

STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - CONTRACT

(No. B/481) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the supply of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the Corporation is envisaging the renewal of the contract with Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd. therefor and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the proposed terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for no confidentiality clauses to be inserted therein.

Reply: I am advised by the State Trading Corporation that the renewal of the contract between the State Trading Corporation and the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd for the supply of petroleum products is envisaged.

Discussions are presently ongoing between the two organisations on the terms and conditions of the contract, which have not yet been finalised.

The contents of the present contract are bound by a confidentiality clause. The keeping of this clause in the next contract depends not only on the State Trading Corporation, but also on the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE - ALLEGED CASES - FACT-FINDING COMMITTEES

(No. B/482) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical negligence, he will state the number of Fact-Finding Committees set up to look into alleged cases thereof, over the past five years, indicating the –

- (a) number thereof which have been presided by a legal person, and
- (b) cost incurred in each case, indicating the respective fees paid to each member thereof.

(Reply not available)

CAP MALHEUREUX - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL - TEACHERS

(No. B/483) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the pre-primary school of Cap Malheureux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from District Council of Rivière du Rempart,

information as to if vacancies for teachers exist thereat and, if so, if same will be filled, indicating when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority that the Pre-primary school run by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart at Cap Malheureux has only 1 teacher for its 31 pupils on roll. The Council has therefore been requested by the ECCEA to recruit an additional pre-primary teacher given that the teacher pupil ratio as per current ECCEA regulations provides that -

“In every pre-primary school, there shall be at least 1 educator for every 25 children.”

I am informed that the filling of one additional vacant post in the grade of Pre-primary school teacher has been recommended on 08 May 2013 to the Local Government Service Commission and the vacancy will be advertised on 02 July 2013.

Meanwhile, the ECCEA is exploring the possibility of providing the services of a pre-primary Teacher to the school to remedy the situation.

ROSE HILL - VANDERMEERSCH STREET - ROAD CONGESTION

(No. B/484) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the roundabout, on the Vandermeersch Street, near the Central Electricity Board, in Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the actions taken, if any, as at to date, under the Road Decongestion Programme, to alleviate the acute road congestion which occur thereat throughout the day.

(Withdrawn)

SPEED CAMERAS - INSTALLATION

(No. B/485) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the speed cameras, he will state if any study had been carried out prior to the installation thereof and, if so, indicate -

- (a) by whom, and
- (b) if copy of the report submitted in connection therewith will be tabled and, if not, the criteria considered therefor.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Government is fully committed to curb down road accidents arising from any cause and more specifically from speeding. The installation of 2 fixed cameras at Pailles and the use of mobile speed cameras have yielded very positive results. Therefore, in the same vein, in order to avoid speeding at black spots, the need for installation of speed cameras at such spots has been found to be very crucial and imperative.

The House may take note that the identification of sites for installation of speed cameras have been based on -

- (i) road accident black spot analysis carried out with the Micro Accident Analysis Package, a software which has been procured and installed by the Transport Research Laboratory from UK and on which road accidents are being mapped, and
- (ii) current road accidents trend.

A report on the black spots analysis was made by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit in the year 2011 and 33 sites were identified mostly along classified roads of the island.

Other criteria considered for the installation of speed cameras are -

- (i) accident clusters where over speeding is a common factor;
- (ii) visibility requirement and road alignment for tracking of speed vehicles by radar;
- (iii) land space availability;
- (iv) availability of power supply;
- (v) communication network coverage for transmission of images, and
- (vi) speed surveys carried out by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit.

Computer software which carries out simulation and analysis and indicate the type of measure to be applied. It classified and categories roads just like a due diligence exercise.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES - VEHICLES - PURCHASE

(No. B/486) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House obtain therefrom, information as to the number of vehicles and trailers bought in 2011 and 2012 which are not being used, indicating the -

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) cost thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that no vehicles were purchased in year 2011. However, one street lighting lorry and a car for the Mayor's use were acquired in 2012 and which are in good running condition.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the cost of the Mayor's car was Rs2,846,250 inclusive of VAT and all taxes whereas the street lighting lorry cost Rs4,061,915 inclusive of VAT and all taxes.

NTC - MANAGING DIRECTOR - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/487) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Mr S. S., Managing Director of the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to his -

- (a) terms and conditions of employment;
- (b) qualifications, and
- (c) mode of recruitment.

Reply: Mr A.M.K.S was appointed General Manager of the National Transport Corporation on 15 January 2010 on contract for an initial period of two years. His contract was renewed on 15 January 2012, for another period of two years.

The National Transport Corporation had invited applications for the post of General Manager through local press on 11 December 2009. Twenty applications were received out of which ten satisfied the laid down criteria. An interview was carried out on 11 January 2010, and Mr Soonarane was found to be the most suitable candidate.

Mr Soonarane draws a salary of Rs100,000 per month and extra duty allowance of Rs20,000 a month. Additionally, he is also entitled to all the benefits as per the PRB.

The General Manager is a Professional Engineer of Mauritius since February 1983, holds a Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales from Université D'Orsay, Paris Sud and a Diplôme d'Ingénieur from l'École Nationale des Travaux Publics de l'État, Paris.

NEF – JOB FAIRS

(No. B/488) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of job fairs it has held, since January 2013 to date, indicating the venue thereof in each case.

(Withdrawn)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS – NGO'S - GRANT-IN-AID

(No. B/489) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Non-Governmental Organisations engaged in the education of children with Special Education Needs, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed review of the present grant in aid formula to best cater for the different types and levels of impairments, indicating if a committee has been set up in connection therewith and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) composition thereof;
- (b) terms of reference thereof, and
- (c) dates on which meetings have been held.

Reply: I am replying to parliamentary questions numbers B/489 and B/490 together.

All NGOs running SEN schools registered with my Ministry are paid a grant-in-aid as a fundamental support to carry out their education activities. As announced in Government Programme 2010-2015, the grant-in- aid formula was reviewed last year by the Office of the Public Sector Governance (OPSG). However, representations have been received from the NGOs that the grant-in-aid formula fell short of their expectations as it did not provide for differentiated allowances for the various categories of impairments.

On 03 May 2013, my Ministry approached the OPSG to review the grant-in-aid formula to provide for differentiated funding for the different categories of impairment. The OPSG, in its reply dated 22 May 2013, requested my Ministry to set up a Committee, comprising, if need be, of medical and paramedical specialists, to assess the categories of impairments of children attending SEN schools requiring additional expenditure in terms of grant-in-aid. The OPSG has also informed that they will provide assistance as member to that Committee.

Now that the OPSG has requested my Ministry to carry out the review of the grant-in-aid formula, this assignment has been entrusted to the Committee which has already been set up at the level of my Ministry to review the norms and standards and quality assurance for SEN schools.

This Committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry and comprises -

- (1) The Director, Special Education Needs of my Ministry;
- (2) The Head National Education Counselling Service of my Ministry;
- (3) The Head of Disability Unit of the Ministry of Social Security, NS & RI;
- (4) A Representative of Mauritius Institute of Education;
- (5) A Representative of Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG); and

(6) A Representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Committee will co-opt specialists in different fields, as and when required.

The Terms of Reference of Committee are to review -

- (i) the Grant-in-aid formula payable to NGOs running SEN schools to best cater for the different types and levels of impairment; and
- (ii) the norms and standards and quality assurance for SEN Schools.

The first meeting of the Committee was held on Friday 07 June 2013 and the next meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday 12 June 2013. All NGOs engaged in the education of children with Special Education Needs are being invited to submit their proposals within fifteen days. The Committee will also invite NGOs to depone. The Committee has been requested to work on a fast track basis and submit its report within three months.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SCHOOLS - QUALITY ASSURANCE

(No. B/490) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Special Education Needs schools, he will state if a committee has been set up to review the norms and standards of quality assurance and, if so, indicate the

- (a) composition thereof;
- (b) terms of reference thereof, and
- (c) dates on which meetings have been held.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/489)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SECTOR – SALARY STRUCTURE

(No. B/491) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Education Special Needs sector, he will state if his Ministry has been requested to invite the National Remuneration Board to prescribe a salary structure and conditions of service therefor and, if so, indicate the actions taken in relation thereto.

Reply: Following a request received on 08 May 2013 from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to take steps to regulate the terms and conditions of employees of the Special Education Needs (SEN) sector, and given that no arrangement exists in the sector for the effective

regulations of wages, terms and conditions of employment by collective agreement or otherwise, I have referred the request to the National Remuneration Board for consideration.

PROJECTS - UNSOLICITED BIDS

(No. A/161) Mr K. C. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the projects implemented by his Ministry, since 2005 to date, he will state the number of unsolicited bids received, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) names and nationality of the bidders
- (b) nature and value thereof, and
- (c) outcome thereof.

(Reply not available)

COURTS - DIGITAL RECORDING SYSTEMS

(No. A/162) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Judiciary, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Master and Registrar, information as to the total cost incurred for the Digital Recording Systems implemented in the courts as at to date, indicating the courts where the proceedings thereof are being digitally recorded.

(Reply not available)

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - SETTING UP

(No. A/164) Mrs Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regards to the project for the setting up of a Symphony Orchestra, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Following consultations with local and foreign resource persons, I have received some proposals for the creation of a Symphonic Orchestra. However, this project is very complex and involves very high financial implications. Furthermore, specialised human resources are not available locally. In the meantime, the Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterand is considering the creation of a model symphonic orchestra from existing local resources through its training programmes. A private promoter is also interested in the project.

BEAU BASSIN - INCINERATOR - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/165) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of an incinerator in Beau Bassin, he will state –

- (a) if a site has been identified therefor, and
- (b) if the contract has been awarded and, if so, indicate
 - (i) to whom;
 - (ii) the value thereof, and
 - (iii) when is it expected to be operational.

Reply: The National Development Unit is undertaking the construction of a Reinforced Concrete Building to house incinerator at Chebel, Beau Bassin.

The construction of the RC Building is awarded to Iswarlall Beeharry Ltd for the sum of Rs3,126,148. Work is in progress.

As regards the supply and installation of the incinerator equipment thereat, tender was launched on 30 May 2012.

The matter has been referred to the Independent Review Panel and a decision is still awaited.

In these circumstances, the date of its operation cannot be finalised.

VALETTA - BUS SHELTERS

(No. A/166) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Valetta, he will state if consideration will be given for shelters to be installed at the bus stops found thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: The installation of bus shelters at Valetta will be considered after the road works are completed thereat.

PONT CLERAN - L'ASSURANCE, DAGOTIÈRE - PUBLIC SAFETY

(No. A/167) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Pont Cleran, at L'Assurance, Dagotière, he will state if urgent measures will be taken to avert risks to public safety, in view of the fact that it is on the point of collapsing, and if so, when.

(Reply not available)

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION AUTHORITY, HRDC, MGI, MES, MIE,
MITD & MQA – DIRECTORS/AG. DIRECTORS/OFFICERS IN CHARGE –
QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

(No. A/168) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Directors/Ag. Directors/Officers in Charge of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, Human Resources Development Council, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, Mauritius Institute of Education, Mauritius Institute of Training and Development and Mauritius Qualifications Authority respectively, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the qualifications held and prior working experience possessed, giving details thereof.

Reply: The information on qualifications and working experience of the Directors/Ag. Directors/Officer in Charge of the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority, Human Resources Development Council, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, Mauritius Institute of Education, Mauritius Institute of Training and Development and Mauritius Qualifications Authority is at appendix.

CHAMP DE MARS - BOULEVARD VICTORIA/MAHATMA GANDHI STREET

- TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(No. A/169) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Boulevard Victoria and the Mahatma Gandhi Road, in Port Louis, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of traffic signal lights along same to alleviate traffic congestion, and if so, when and if not, why not.

Reply: I have been informed that the junction Boulevard Victoria/Mahatma Gandhi St is cross-junction (4-arm junction). The other arms in the junction are formed by Felix De Valois St. It is located in the Champ de Mars region.

There are two colleges (GMD Atchia SSS & Port Louis SSS), located very near to the junction. These two colleges attract significant school traffic.

Congestion on a particular road occurs when vehicles speed is considerably reduced due the high volume of traffic and this normally occurs during the peak hours or to a lesser extent during the business hours. The congestion referred to in the Parliamentary Question is a localised congestion resulting only from local factors. The congestion is mainly due to school traffic and occurs at specific

period during the morning when school resumes and in the afternoon when students are released. Except for the two periods mentioned, the traffic flows relatively smoothly at the junction.

A signalised pedestrians crossing has been installed on Boulevard Victoria near GMD Atchia SSS. The road is also provided with footpath and handrails near the school up to the junction Boulevard Victoria/Mahatma Gandhi St.

The junction is, in fact, busier on horse race days, as Boulevard Victoria and Mahatma Gandhi St are main access routes to the Champ de Mars. Traffic volumes are accordingly higher on the roads, with also more co-street parkings. However a special traffic scheme is set up and managed by the Police in Champ de Mars on horse race days.

The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will carry out a traffic study to ascertain the need for the installation of traffic lights at the junction of Boulevard Victoria/Mahatma Gandhi St. In the light of the findings, appropriate action will be taken.

DR. JEETOO HOSPITAL - INCINERATOR

(No. A/170) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the incinerator of the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed remedial measures that were to be taken by his Ministry in relation to the thick smoke emanating therefrom.

Reply: The contractor was requested to investigate into the possibilities of minimising the smoke emission. In this context, a tuning and calibration of the burner was effected on 21 May 2013.

No incineration is allowed on Sundays, Public Holidays and Saturdays and after 1500 hrs during weekdays.

There is no over accumulation of Healthcare waste since the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has set up a Waste Management Committee in all hospitals. Regional Health Directors, Medical Superintendents, Regional Health Services Administrators, Hospital Administrators, Hospital Executive Assistants, Regional Nursing Administrators, Nursing Administrators and Ward Managers are strictly monitoring the segregation of waste in all the hospitals of Mauritius.

A Healthcare waste disposal system has been implemented where all yellow plastic bags are properly labelled in each ward prior to be transferred to the incinerator.

Furthermore, the Ag. Chief Hospital Administrator and a Hospital Administrator from the Ministry carry out weekly site visits to monitor the system closely.

Arrangements have been made for the plastic bottles and other plastic waste which are more likely to cause dark smoke to be incinerated at another incinerator which is located further away from built up areas.

The adoption of these practices has resulted into a reduction of around 40% of clinical waste generated by Dr. A. G. Jeetoo hospital since April 2013.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT, LAND TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING – PROJECTS - SINO HYDRO LTD -

(No. A/171) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects implemented by his Ministry, since 2005 to date, he will state the number thereof awarded to SINO Hydro Ltd., indicating in each case, the –

- (a) date the contract was signed;
- (b) the value thereof;
- (c) contractual completion date thereof, indicating the delay, if any, and the additional cost involved in connection therewith.

(Withdrawn)

LAUREATE SCHEME – SCHOLARSHIPS - BOND

(No. A/172) Mr K. C. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the scholarships awarded for the purpose of pursuing studies at the expense of the Government of Mauritius under the Laureate Scheme, he will state if consideration will be given for a waiver of the bond of Rs500,000 applicable to the former beneficiaries thereof, following the implementation of the scheme which is presently applicable.

Reply: The matter is still under consideration.

**CITÉ DE ROSNAY & VUILLEMIN – BEAU BASSIN –
WASTEWATER PIPE SYSTEM**

(No. A/173) Mr K. C. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Cité de Rosnay and Vuillemin, in Beau Bassin, he will state if urgent measures will be taken to remedy the defective wastewater pipe system thereat which is overflowing and if so, when.

(Reply not available)

SUGAR - IMPORTATION

(No. A/174) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the sugar which is being imported, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if tests are carried out to ascertain the quantity of starch and bleaching agents contained therein and to ensure that the standard international norms in relation thereto are satisfied before they are put on the local market and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am advised by the State Trading Corporation that it does not import sugar.

However, I am informed that it is the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (MCIA) that issues the necessary clearances for the importation of sugar. Every importer of sugar has to submit a certificate of analysis to enable the Authority to issue the necessary clearances to allow the importer to proceed with the clearing of the consignment from Customs.

The certificate of analysis indicates, *inter-alia*, the quality analysis giving details on the polarisation, moisture and colour of the imported consignment.

The MCIA does not request the importer to submit the quantity of starch and bleaching agents contained in the imported consignment.

Furthermore, I am also informed that the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate (MSS) imports white refined sugar of EEC Grade 2 quality. The EEC Grade 2 is recognised as a standard international norm for sugar and widely used across global markets.

For each consignment unloaded in Port Louis, the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate is required to submit to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, prior to customs clearances being obtained, the following documents -

- (i) a certificate of analysis of the sugar issued by the shipper including the physico-chemical characteristics of the sugar as well as the microorganisms and heavy metals; and
- (ii) a health certificate issued by the manufacturer testifying that the sugar is fit for direct human consumption.

Besides, in order to ascertain the quality and food safety of the sugar it imports, the Mauritius Sugar Syndicate appoints a Certified Surveyor at port of loading to ensure that the sugar shipped is compliant with the required EEC Grade 2 norms and standards.

I am further informed that samples are taken at random by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for analysis to certify that the imported sugar complies with standards set out in the Food Regulations 1999 and is fit for human consumption. All samples, taken so far, have complied with the Food Regulations.

Test for starch is not carried out. However, test is carried out to ascertain sucrose content. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has advised that no bleaching agent has been detected from samples taken.

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION -
ADVISERS/PRESS ATTACHÉS - CONTRACT**

(No. A/175) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Advisers/Press Attachés and/or persons appointed on a contract basis by his Ministry, he will give a list thereof, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) date of appointment;
- (b) qualifications;
- (c) terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (d) position held.

Reply: The information is currently being compiled and same would be laid in the Library of the National Assembly, as soon as it is ready.

SUGAR INDUSTRY LABOUR WELFARE FUND - VACANCIES

(No. A/176) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of vacancies that presently exist thereat, indicating –

- (a) the grades thereof, and
- (b) if same will be filled and, if so, when.

Reply: The information is being compiled.

MILITARY ROAD, PORT LOUIS - STRAY DOGS

(No. A/177) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Military Road, Crown Land, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, information as to if the presence of stray dogs has been reported thereat, near the residence of one Mr M. T. C. and, if so, indicate if urgent measures will be taken in relation thereto for the health and safety of the people of the vicinity thereof.

Reply: The Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) did receive a complaint from one Mr M.T.C. regarding presence of a large number of stray dogs near his residence at Military Road, Port Louis.

The MSPCA has informed that one old lady, neighbour to Mr M.T.C. feeds and keep a lot of stray dogs in her house. Several visits have been effected by the MSPCA at the locus for control of stray dogs.

The last visit was effected on Friday 07 June 2013 and a total of 18 stray dogs have been captured. The MSPCA will continue to service the area.

CITÉ LAVAL STREET, PORT LOUIS - BUS STOP

(No. A/178) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Cité Laval Street, in Port Louis, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of a bus stop thereat to allow the lighting and alighting of passengers to avoid the causing of traffic jams which presently occur due to buses along that route stopping some 20 metres after the Ambroisine street therefor and if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I have been informed that procedures for setting up a proper bus stop in Cité Laval street have been initiated. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit will shortly carry out a joint site visit with the National Transport Authority to identify a suitable location for a bus stop along Cité Laval Street.

Cité Laval Street is a one-way connecting St Francois Xavier St and Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed St (ex-Route des Pamplemousses) and passing through a junction with Ambroisine street. Buses run through St Francois Xavier Street, Cité Laval Street, Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Street towards their respective destinations. The buses stop randomly on Cité Laval St to embark/disembark passengers and sometimes drivers do not pull properly near the border of the road. Such situations could cause traffic obstruction and if recurrent, can become a matter of great concern. The provision of a proper bus stop should resolve the problem of road obstruction, if any.

Cité Laval Street is served by the following bus routes and operators -

Route	Itinerary	Operator
88/89A	Port Louis – Camp La Boue	Mauritian Bus Transport
110	Port Louis – Congomah	Luna Transport

152	Cité Vallijee – Le Goulet	United Bus Service
159	St Antoine – Port Louis	Bus Owners Cooperative Society (North)
251	Calebasses – Port Louis	United Bus Service
		Bus Owners Cooperative Society (Port Louis)

SIR EDGAR LAURENT STREET, PORT LOUIS - HANDRAILS

(No. A/179) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Sir Edgar Laurent Street, in Port Louis, he will state if consideration will be given for the urgent installation of handrails thereat, at the level of the Tabagie Islamic up to the traffic lights, to reinforce public safety and security, especially having regard to the number of students attending the Islamic Cultural College and, if so, when and if not, why not.

Reply: I have been informed that a survey has been carried out along Sir Edgar Laurent Street in the region of the Islamic Cultural College. It has been found out that there are dense commercial developments between Islamic Cultural College and the signalised junction of Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Street various a number of accesses. Accordingly, it will not be possible to install continuous handrails between the college and the junction of Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed Street as gaps have to be provided at the accesses.

Any handrail would be efficient if it is installed continuously over a certain length without any gap. The presence of gaps in handrails renders them inefficient as pedestrians tend to go through the gaps, to cross or walk along the road. This becomes more dangerous as the risk of pedestrians being crushed by vehicles against the handrails arises. There have been cases of fatal accidents where pedestrians walking along roads with handrails were hit by passing vehicles.

Students are very casual in their behaviour and tend to be careless very often. It is a certainty that the students of the college will not walk towards crossing point some 50 m away from the college entrance, but will instead go through any gap in the handrails or even jump over the handrails.

Handrails are perceived (very often wrongly) as being a safe infrastructure, but sometimes they become a very serious danger if installed inappropriately. In the present case handrails will create more safety problems than they are expected to solve.

Name of Institution: Early Childhood Care and Education Authority

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Mrs Soonita Kumari Kistamah, Director	School Certificate Higher School Certificate Diploma in Education Degree of Bachelor in Education Masters in Education Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management	1981-2007- Education Officer/ Head of Department – Eden College/ MEDCO Cassis 16th August 2004- 1st October 2004 Examination Officer – Mauritius Examination Syndicate 2007- 2009- Officer-in-Charge ECCE Authority 2009 – to date- Director ECCE Authority

Name of Institution: Human Resource Development Council

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Mr Rajcoomar Auckloo, Director	School Certificate Higher School Certificate GCE O & A Level (London) Diploma in Accountancy (University of Mauritius) BSc (Hons) Accounting (University of Mauritius) MBA (University of Mauritius) MSc Information Technology (University of Mauritius) Fellow Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA UK)	Joined service in Public Sector in 1981 1981-1986 Clerical Officer at the National Transport Authority 1986 – 1989 Executive Officer – Customs & Excise Office & NTA 1989 – 1995 Road Transport Inspector - NTA 1995 – 2005 Senior Financial & Management Analyst at the Management Audit Bureau, Ministry of Finance & Economic Development 2000 -2005 Programme Coordinator/ Financial Controller – IFAD Community Development Programme and Micro Finance/ Micro Credit Development Programme (Seconded for duty to Ministry of Women's Rights, FW & CD) 2005 – 2009 Manager Corporate, Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) 2009 to date- Director of the HRDC

Name of Institution: Mauritius Examinations Syndicate

Name of Head of Organisation	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Professor Lucien Finette, G.O.S.K, Director	<p>Licence ès Lettres – Lettres Classiques - Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence, France</p> <p>Maitrise ès Lettres - Littérature et Civilisation Latines - Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence, France</p> <p>Diplôme d'études audio-visuelles: Enseignement du français langue étrangère(CRÉDIF)</p> <p>Stage de recherche-École Francaise de Rome</p> <p>Doctorat (3^{ème} cycle - Université de Provence,Aix-en-Provence, France</p>	<p>1967-1969-Teacher in different colleges in Mauritius</p> <p>1972-1977-Assistant Librarian and Archivist at the Bibliothèque de Lettres Classiques and l'Institut d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne, Université de Provence, France</p> <p>1977-1978-Education Officer, Queen's College, Vacoas, Mauritius</p> <p>1978-1981-Education Officer at Royal College de Port Louis, Mauritius</p> <p>1977-1981-Lecturer at Université Française de l'Océan Indien, Mauritius</p> <p>1981-2005-, Lecturer, Université Laval, Québec, Canada</p> <p>1999-Sept 2000-Chief Coordinator/Special Adviser au Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius</p> <p>2006- Director, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate,</p>

Name of Institution: Mauritius Institute of Education

Name of Head of Organisation	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Mr Oomandra Nath Varma, Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.A (Special) with Honours- Bombay University - PGCE – Social Studies with History - MA – Sociology (Bombay University) 	<p>1980- 1991- Education Officer- New Eton College, Rose Hill.</p> <p>1991- 1998- Lecturer- MIE</p> <p>1998- 2005- Senior Lecturer, MIE</p> <p>2005- 2010- Associate Professor, MIE</p> <p>1995-2007- Programme Coordinator at MIE</p> <p>2003 to 2010- Head of Department- Education Studies Department,MIE</p> <p>2010- 2013- (February)- Deputy Director , MIE</p> <p>February 2013 to date- Director, MIE</p>

Name of Institution: Mauritius Institute of Training and Development

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Mr Pradeep Kumar Joosery, Officer in Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - B.A(Hons). Economics – University of Delhi - M.A Economics, University of Bombay 	<p>1985-1990 - Economist, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development</p> <p>1990-1996 - Part-Time Lecturer – University of Mauritius</p> <p>1990-1993 - Assistant Manager, IVTB</p> <p>1993-2004 - Divisional Manager, IVTB</p> <p>July 2004-Dec 2004 - Ag. Director, IVTB</p> <p>2005-March 2009 - Deputy Director, IVTB</p> <p>March 2009-March 2010 - Skills Development Expert, International Labour Organization</p> <p>March 2010-Sept 2012 - Deputy Director, MITD</p> <p>Sept 2012-to date - Officer in Charge, MITD</p>

Name of Institution: Mauritius Qualifications Authority

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Dr. Kaylash Dwarkasing Allgoo, Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diploma in Management Studies University of Mauritius - Diploma in Education, Mauritius Institute of Education - BCom ,Meerut University - MBA specialization Marketing,University of Technology Mauritius - PhD Management, University of Central Nicaragua 	<p>1984-1989 - Teacher, International College</p> <p>1990-1991 - Deputy General Manager, Island View Club Hotel</p> <p>1994-1999 - General Manager, Island View Club Hotel</p> <p>2000 - Group Consultant, Veranda Marketing and Management Ltd</p> <p>2001-2004 - General Manager, Continental Breweries Ltd</p> <p>2005-2006 - General Manager, Halo Services Ltd</p> <p>Feb 2006-Jul 2006 - Administrative Manager, MALEM</p> <p>September 2006-to date - Director MQA</p>

Name of Institution: Mahatma Gandhi Institute

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
<p>Mr Bijaye Coomar Madhou</p> <p>Director General</p> <p>Mahatma Gandhi Institute & Rabindranath Tagore Institute</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BA Hons English, Delhi University - Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism, Rajendra Prasad College of Mass Communication, Bombay - Diploma in Labour, Cooperative Studies, Tel Aviv, Israel - Advanced Management Programme, University of Mauritius 	<p>Experience in Academic Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder Trustee SSR Medical College, Belle Rive • Board Member of Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) for 5 years. The Institution is responsible for distance learning at tertiary level. • Responsible for the setting up of the Knowledge Channel at Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) dealing with institutions like Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for connecting media programming for education, health and cross-cultural communication. <p>Experience in Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adviser to the Minister of Finance -1984 to 1991 • Chairman and General Manager (Part time), Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) - 1986 to 1991 • General Manager (Full time), Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) - 1991 to 1995 • Director General MBC - 1995 to 1996 • Director General MBC - 2005 to 2009 • Director General (MGI & RTI) - 16 March 2012

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
<p>Dr. (Mrs) Veedotma Dalmond Koonjal Director Mahatma Gandhi Institute</p>	<p>1. School Certificate - 1984 2. 2 'A' Level - 1987 3. Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration - November 2003 - Preston University 4. Master of Business Administration - 1998 - University of Wales 5. Associate of Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators - July 1995</p> <p>Others</p> <p>1. Uttama - Hindi (Equivalent to Diploma in Hindi) – 1985 2. Diploma in Personnel Management & Industrial Relations - 1993 (The College of Professional Management) 3. Diploma in Principles of Modern Management - 1993 (The College of Professional Management) 4. Diploma in Sales Management and Marketing - 1993 (The College of Professional Management) 5. Group Diploma on Management Studies - 1993 (The College of Professional Management) 6. Course in Computer Programming - Softech – 1989 7. Course in Education in Human Values - Mauritius Academy of Education in Human Values – 1988 8. Teacher's Certificate (Primary) (Hindi) Mauritius Institute of Education- 1988 – 1989 9. Certificate in Training Management - JT Frank Management Centre – 2000 10. Attended Certificate of Completion on Leadership and Team Building at MEF – 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 1990 - June 1992 - Teacher/Senior Teacher - Ministry of Education June 1992 - July 1994 - Clerical Officer/Higher Clerical Officer - Ministry of Civil Service December 1993 - August 1994 - Secretary - Trust Fund for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts August 1994 - November 1998 - Administrative Secretary at SMIDO (Small and Medium Industries Development Organisation) November 1998 - January 2001 - Assistant Manager at IVTB July 2001 - November 2002 - Secretary at the PSSA November 2002 - July 2009 - Registrar MGI November 2006 - March 2008 – Ag Secretary/Registrar March 2008 -March 2012 - Officer-in-Charge (MGI & RTI) July 2009 till date - Director (MGI)

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Mr Thavarajen Mauree Ag Director Schooling (MGI & RTI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Certificate - 1972 - Higher School Certificate - 1974 - BSC (Hons) Mathematics Council for National Academic Awards, the Hatfield Polytechnic - July 1979 - Certificate in Computer based Information Systems - University of Mauritius - October 1999 - Diploma in Computer based information systems - University of Mauritius - November 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education Officer - 1980 – 2002 - Deputy Administrator - 2002 – 2005 - Rector - 10 May 2005 - Ag Director Schooling (MGI & RTI) - 09 January 2013 to date

Name of Head of Organization	Qualifications	Experience Possessed
Dr. Gorayah Reddy Luthmoodoo Officer-in-Charge Rabindranath Tagore Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Certificate – Cambridge University (1970) - GCE – London University (1971) - BA General – Osmania University (1974 – 1977) - MA Telugu – Andhra University, India (2000) - PhD – P S Telugu University, Hyderabad (30 November 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecturer –February 1984 to August 1990 – MGI - Senior Lecturer (Telugu) – September 1990 till date – MGI