



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 09 JULY 2013

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Members

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 15 of 2013

Sitting of 09 July 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 –

Prime Minister's Office –

A.

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XVII of 2013).
- (b) The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Allowances and Privileges) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No.171 of 2013).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Federal Republic of Nigeria) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No.169 of 2013).

C. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment –

The Annual Report of the Export Processing Zone Labour Welfare Fund for period July 2009 to December 2010 and January to December 2011.

D. Attorney General's Office –

The Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies (Course Fee for Prospective Barristers) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No.168 of 2013).

E. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection –

The Bread (Control of Manufacture and Sale) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No.170 of 2013).

F. Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment –

The National Economic and Social Council Report 23 of June 2013 on Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NTC - BUSES - PROCUREMENT EXERCISE

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the procurement of 65 buses by the National Transport Corporation, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Procurement Board, information as to if it has endorsed the recommendations of the Bid Evaluation Committee not to approve any award and to cancel the bid exercise, and
- (b) state if he is aware that the Chairperson of the Board of the National Transport Corporation has publicly made allegations of interference by the Central Procurement Board in the ongoing procurement exercise therefor and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, taken in relation thereto, and
- (c) state the composition of the Central Procurement Board and the Procurement Policy Office which have dealt therewith.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, first, I would like to mention that the PNQ as provided to me, was radically changed at about 9.30 this morning and with the final draft only available before quarter to ten. Nevertheless, I will do my best to answer the question despite the very limited time given to obtain the facts from the Central Procurement Board.

I wish to clarify, for the benefit of hon. Members of the House and the public in general, the respective roles of the Procurement Policy Office (PPO), Central Procurement Board (CPB), the Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) and the Independent Review Panel (IRP) in a procurement process.

As per section 6 of the Public Procurement Act (PPA) 2006, the Procurement Policy Office serves as an independent procurement policy making and monitoring body. It is responsible amongst others to issue standard bidding documents and provide guidance to Public Bodies with a view to ensuring consistency in the public procurement legislation. The PPO is not involved in operational matters relating to the conduct of procurement as well as resolution of disputes.

As per section 11 of the PPA, the Central Procurement Board (CPB) has overall responsibility for the vetting of bidding documents, receiving and evaluation of bids and approval of award of major contracts. In discharging this responsibility, the CPB appoints a Bid Evaluation Committee from a list of qualified evaluators maintained by the Board as per section 12 of the Act, the Board is given very wide

powers including the power to call for such information and documents it may require from any public body etc. and to do all such things and acts as it may consider incidental or conducive to the exercise of its functions.

I also wish to draw attention to section 37(12) of the Public Procurement Act which provides that

-

“In the exercise of its function, the bid evaluation Committee shall act without fear or favour and shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority”.

The Act also provides under section (44) for appeals by aggrieved bidders to be dealt with by the Independent Review Panel.

As the House may be aware, I am not in a position to know what is going on at the CPB since the Central Procurement Board is an independent body that is not answerable to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) nor to any other part of the Executive, and rightly so, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Moreover, my Ministry is not involved in the appointments which are made by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

It is only for administrative convenience that the CPB is placed under MOFED for budget purposes.

I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, however, been able to obtain the required information from the CPB as follows and in line with the information issued by the CPB in a communiqué dated on 03 July 2013.

It would appear that the CPB has acted within the law and in defence of the public interest in the matter at hand.

I am informed that the CPB endorsed the recommendations of the Bid Evaluation Committee. The Committee noted that the bid price of the only compliant bidder was substantially higher than the estimated cost by a staggering 45 percent. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that a fresh bidding exercise be resorted to.

In the face of such a large deviation from the estimated price which seems to arise from the nature of the tender, the CPB had to act to defend the public interest and in line with the provisions of the law, did not approve the award and recommended to the National Transport Corporation (NTC) to consider taking appropriate action as per section 39(1) (b) and 39(2) of the Public Procurement Act 2006, that is to cancel the tender.

The CPB also informs me that the tender exercise for the purchase of the 65 buses was launched on 20 July 2012 with a closing date for submission of bids fixed for 30 August 2012. At the time of

vetting the tender documents, as called for by law, the CPB did draw the attention of the NTC to certain specifications which appeared overly restrictive with the risk that there would be insufficient competition to achieve value for money. Accordingly, the CPB recommended that these provisions be reviewed. However, the NTC took on board only those proposals it deemed appropriate.

Nevertheless, once the tender was launched, there were representations from three bidders that as formulated the tender was too restrictive and would not allow them to comply with the requirements and specifications. Such representations are permissible under the Public Procurement Act to ensure that tenders are competitive and value for money is secured by maximising the number of compliant bids received.

Accordingly, in line with the provisions of the law, a meeting was held on 17 August 2012 by the CPB with the representatives of the NTC to look into these representations. At the meeting it was agreed to bring some amendments to the bidding documents with a view to ensuring value for money through a wider participation. Consequently, it was also agreed to postpone the closing date for submission of bids to 21 September 2012 so as to allow wide competition by giving the necessary time for bidders to prepare their submission.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendments proposed at the meeting are fully compliant with the provisions not only of the law, but also of the bidding documents. The bidding document explicitly states that -

“At any time prior to the deadline for submission of bids the Purchaser may amend the bidding documents by issuing addendum. Any Addendum issued shall be part of the bidding documents and shall be communicated in writing to all those who have obtained the bidding documents directly from the Purchaser.”

Notwithstanding the agreement at the meeting, once reviewed at the NTC, a decision was made by the NTC to maintain the original tender documents including the initial closing date.

In view of the failure of the NTC to act on the agreements reached at the meeting of 17 August 2012, only 1 compliant bid was received as I explained earlier.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is noteworthy, as explained in the Communiqué of 03 July 2013 by the CPB that one bidder failed to comply because his buses had an engine capacity of 184 HP instead of the required 180 HP required and a gear box of 5 forward speed as against 6 forward speed. Another bidder could not comply due to having buses of engine capacity of 210 HP. Yet another bidder wrote to complain that he did not bid because of the restrictions that would make his bid non-compliant. I wish to inform the House that both bids in respect of large buses were substantially lower from Rs31 m. to Rs37 m. compared to the compliant bid.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the above information supplied by the CPB provides the appropriate context to evaluate the comments made by the Chairman of the Board of the NTC alleging interference by the CPB. According to the information from the CPB that I have provided to the House, there has been no attempt by the CPB to impose any changes to the tender documents. All that the CPB did was to follow the provisions of the law and make recommendations to the NTC that would have defended the public interest by ensuring value for money through more competition.

As events clearly show, it was entirely up to the NTC to accept or reject the recommendations made by the CPB. In fact, had the CPB intervened to impose its views, the outcome of the tender would most likely have resulted in the purchase of the required buses at a price within expectations.

Since the CPB has acted properly, in defence of the public interest and within the law, there is no call for any action to be taken in relation to the CPB other than to encourage it to continue its good work. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is yet another demonstration of the commitment of this Government to let institutions function and work independently.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may also wish to note that section 58 of the Public Procurement Act spells out quite clearly that - I quote -

“Any person who directly or indirectly, in any manner, influences, or attempts to influence any member or public official or any member of the Policy Office, the Board, the Review Panel or a Public Body in the performance of his duties under this Act, shall commit an offence.”

(Interruptions)

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that at the time of the procurement of the 65 buses by the National Transport Corporation...

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: ...in 2012, the Central Procurement Board was composed of Mr P. C. Beeharry as Chairperson, Mr D. R. Kundasamy and Mr M. Wan Bok Nale as Vice Chairpersons, and Mr H. L. Rosemond and Mrs L. Suteeram as members.

I am also informed that during the said procurement exercise, the Public Procurement Office did not deal with the matter.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly to the remark made by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, I must inform the House that I did send my PNQ as I do every Tuesday, long before 09.00 o'clock, and since it contained a few elements which the Clerk thought should not be admissible in the PNQ, we had to discuss

about what should be the final draft of the PNQ. As far as I am concerned, I did what had to be done in time.

Having said this, Mr Speaker, Sir, I come to the PNQ. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what were the cost estimates and the price quoted by the only compliant bidder?

Mr Duval: I understand that the original cost estimate was something like Rs181 m. and the actual compliant bidder bid Rs262 m., if my memory says me right.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has stated that the increase supposedly higher than the estimated cost amounts to 45%. This is the third figure, in fact, which Government is giving. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure last time, in the House, said it was 46%. As far as I remember in the communiqué, the Central Procurement Board talked about 44%. So, we have three figures: 44 %, 45 %, 46%.

(Interruptions)

Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance whether the supposedly higher cost than the estimated cost includes also the cost of maintenance which should not have been taken into account in determining the offer of the compliant bidder?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, 262 divided by 181, the hon. Leader of the Opposition can get the increase himself. But, obviously, it is rounding at this time. It is around 44% which I have quoted as 45%. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the maintenance cost was taken into account in both figures.

Mr Ganoo: This is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. The offer of the sole compliant bidder was, in fact, Rs201 m., and it was only an increase of 11% as compared to the estimated cost. It is when the cost of maintenance is included in the total price that the amount comes to 44%, 45% or 46%.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the CPB that we have to compare the 181 with the 262, not with the 201 because the 181 also included an estimate for the maintenance. Is that clear? The 181 should be compared to 262 because both included, in fact, maintenance. This is what I am informed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: May I inform the hon. Vice-Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo: ...in the case of other departments like the Police Department when the procurement of vehicles is done, services and maintenance are not computed in the evaluation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, what pertains to other bids is irrelevant to this issue.

(Interruptions)

Here, I am provided with information that it is inclusive. It is a fact or it is not a fact, and I am told that it is a fact that it is inclusive. That is a fact that is not open to discussion. This is the information that is provided; the fact is that the 181 includes maintenance, therefore, it should be compared with the 262.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister why in this case...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say no interruption, now!

Mr Ganoo: ...the Central Procurement Board did not have recourse to negotiation with the lowest bidder, as the regulations promulgated under the law do allow negotiations in that case?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as correctly explained by the CPB, the whole issue here was to obtain a proper tender with a number of responsive bids. According to the CPB they had raised the matter of the NTC to say that the way that the tender had been structured would not give rise to such a competitive bid. That is exactly what happened! This is exactly what happened, we only got the one bid substantially higher than the estimated price. So, obviously, Mr Speaker, Sir, the CPB was right, they had raised the issue. The issue had been taken up. The people at the NTC who had attended the various meetings had agreed to the change in the tender documents. However, at the lowest moment, no change was made, as I explained in my answer, and, therefore, we ended up with this one bid which was totally above the estimated amount, and all the other bidders had, one way or the other, been excluded from the bid - all the other suppliers.

Mr Ganoo: Yes, but the hon. Vice-Prime Minister does not want to admit the fact that the costs were inflated; the total value was inflated because, I repeat, the cost of maintenance was introduced in the value, in the costs.

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very serious allegation that the Leader of the Opposition is making against the CPB! I presume that he has the facts, and he will lay on the Table of the Assembly the facts that he has, because this is the opposite information that I have. The gentlemen from the CPB are here, and it is a very serious matter if that is so. Nevertheless, even with the 11% - which is not the case, because we are talking about 44% rounded to 45%, we are talking about only one compliant bidder and no other compliant bidder. I will also mention, Mr Speaker, Sir, that looking at the financial offers of

the non-compliant bidders, these people had offers substantially less by Rs31 m. to Rs37 m. for only the large buses. We don't have for the smaller buses. For these non-compliant bidders, the amounts quoted were substantially less than the compliant bidder. I think I am clear.

Mr Ganoo: I am clear also, Mr Speaker, Sir. The increase,...

(Interruptions)

...the estimated cost was Rs180 m.; the cost offered by the compliant bidder was Rs201 m. It is an increase of 11%. The law says that negotiations can be conducted with the lowest evaluated substantially responsive bid if the bid exceeds the cost of the works by more than 15%. This is the third time that the regulations were amended to provide precisely the possibility of negotiations. Why was it not done in this case? And, if this was done, we could have reached a solution and these buses would have been on our routes.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition again to submit the information that he has. I presume he must have seen some sort of documents. He has not come round just by hearsay to tell us that it includes maintenance or not. I will ask him formally to submit the information that he has, otherwise we will take as if it is a joke, and I hope he is not making jokes here...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to explain.

Mr Duval: As far as the cancellation of the bid, the CPB informs that where it is substantially - and we will agree that 45% is substantial we are talking about many, many millions of rupees which would have to be passed on to the user - where it is substantially above, then it should be cancelled, and I also understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I have just received some information from the CPB that negotiations are only in case of work contracts. So, again, the hon. Leader of the Opposition must get his facts right.

Mr Ganoo: Does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister know that, in fact, the specifications were prepared by the Management of the NTC in consultation with the high-ranking officers of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, and it is the very specifications which were to be amended when one of the bidders had protested that the bid was *taillé sur mesure apparemment* for the other bidder?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, let us look at the facts. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition telling us that, instead of 180 HP, this bid would have been 184 HP, but because the bid was so prepared that 184

HP bid was non-compliant, therefore, costing the user of the public transport something like Rs37 m. more? Is that what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is defending now? This is not the thing, I think, Mr Speaker, Sir. He is taking the wrong line. As far as the specifications are concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand from my colleague that his Ministry was agreeable to change the specifications, and in fact, the new documents which had been submitted recently to the CPB do include the various changes and specifications. So, it proves that it could be done and, at the end of the day; it shows that the CPB was right after all, because the NTC has agreed to change the specifications.

Mr Ganoo: So, if there is anybody to be blamed, it is also the Ministry of Public Infrastructure because they decided upon the specifications. They were instrumental to the drafting of the specifications. They suggested amendments at a Board of the CNT...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Ganoo: Nearly 15 amendments were brought to the specifications. Is the hon. Minister aware of that?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, let us look at it in time. We have the original tender prepared, and we agree there was the MPI also there. They were flexible, but apparently the NTC was not. Then, we have a meeting at the CPB, the tender has already been launched, but the closing date has not yet been reached. In the middle of that process, the CPB meets with the NTC and the engineers of the NTC agree with the CPB to change the specifications. They agree there in that meeting; we have the Minutes. These are then sent to the Board for approval. The Board is not even called. The Board does not approve. So, the Board, in fact, disowns its own people who had gone to the CPB. That is the issue. The decision to amend the tender rested with the Board, and the Board did not support the agreement reached between the CPB and its own people a few days before.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that, in fact, the Board even agreed to the extension of the bid up to 21 of September - and I have a letter in my possession? Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell the House when, in fact, was the closing date, and when was the bid opened?

Mr Duval: The closing date was sometime in August; 30 August. I don't know when the bid was opened, I can ask for the information. I don't know when the bid was opened, but we maintain...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said no interruption!

Mr Duval: I have no information whatsoever as to whether the Board had agreed to postpone, but it was not only a question of postponing; it was postponing because we would change substantially the bid documents that firstly, we would have a greater horsepower and the number of gears – the specific has to be six gears. So, it's not just a question of postponing the opening, but also including these two major changes and specifications.

Mr Ganoo: I put it to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister that the closing of the bids was to take place on 30 August of last year, and after 30 August, the evaluation process was to start, and on 03 September, at a meeting of the NTC Board, the representative of the Ministry, Mrs S., I quote: 'proposed that the bidding process be annulled'; that is, during the evaluation process the Minister's representative moved that the bidding process be annulled. Is the hon. Minister aware of this?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not Minister for the NTC. I don't know what happened at the NTC, but however, Mr Speaker, Sir, decently...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I want some silence please!

(Interruptions)

I want some order. I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun, do you want me to warn you? Okay, proceed!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned we looked at the whole procedure since this morning, and we fully conquer with what the CPB has done. Now, what the Member of the Board of the NTC or whatever or the MPI has done is not within my knowledge. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition has some information, he submits it now, and we will look at it. Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say this is very important. I draw the attention of the hon. Leader of the Opposition to section 58 of the Public Procurement Act. If, in any way, shape or form, he believes that there has been *maldonne* in this issue, I not only invite him, I say it is his duty, Mr Speaker, Sir, to go to the Authority, to go to the Police, to ICAC...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please! I say order!

Mr Duval: It is his duty to raise the issue and go to the Police for a proper investigation; it will do all of us a lot of good.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order!

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Ganoo: I don't have to take orders or lessons...

(Interruptions)

I am doing my job. The PNQ is the prerogative of the Leader of the Opposition. I will not shut my mouth, and I will speak out! I am paid for that!

Mr Speaker: Alright put your question!

Mr Ganoo: Does not, therefore, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Ganoo: Does not, therefore, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister think that when the representative of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure moved that the bid process be annulled, this was an interference in the bidding process, since the matter was during evaluation process, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no information as to whether the information of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is true or not, as to whether it's moved or not, because, firstly, it is not my responsibility.

Secondly, I presume we would need notice of a question as detailed as that, which we don't have. I will come, Mr Speaker, Sir, to section 58 of the Act. There are now very stringent conditions and very stringent penalties for anyone messing around with a procurement process. Again, I will invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition - and I think that it is his duty - if he has information, not just to listen to hearsay, but to go and provide the information to the Police.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the minutes of the meeting where the representative of the Ministry said - and I am going to quote because the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is imputing motives that I don't have any documentary evidence -

"Mrs S..."

(Interruptions)

These are the minutes of the proceedings, Mr Speaker, Sir. I table them.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Ganoo: I am going to table the minutes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Wait a minute, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: In these minutes, Mrs S. moved that the bidding process be annulled, and this was on 03 September of last year, Mr Speaker, Sir. Regarding the new tender exercise for the purchases of the 65 buses, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm whether a meeting was held at the CPB office, the Chairman of the CPB being present and representatives of the NTC, to discuss policy issues relating to the procurement of the 65 buses? I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister: is this within the parameters, the functions and the role of the CPB to discuss about policy issues, or isn't it up to the Ministry to propose what should be policy issues, and this is not the role of the CPB?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, on the question of a member of the Board asking for the annulment of the tender, at the end of the day, this is what has been done. Obviously, if you look at it, it was what ought to have been done. So, I don't know what the details are, but, obviously, she must have had foresight as to what should be done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the powers of the CPB are concerned, I refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to section 12 of the Act, which gives very extensive powers. I must say that the role of the CPB is to vet and invite the purchaser, the public body to listen to its recommendations. That is what it has done. Even now, this is what it is doing. It is obviously concerned with the situation; certain types of buses which have been procured have difficulty in terms of spare parts, have difficulty in terms of reliability, etc. So, it is rightly inviting the public body to take note of this and to react in that line.

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

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware that, at a meeting which was held on 04 July of this year, that is, a few days ago, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure stated, and I quote -

“In view of the urgency, this Ministry is proposing as a policy guideline to split the purchase of 65 buses into 20 fully built buses from abroad and 45 fully built buses locally to be considered by the (...)”

I table this letter, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I ask...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

I want some order, please! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, are you tabling it?

(Interruptions)

Silence! Silence!

Mr Ganoo: I have not...

Mr Speaker: Yes, table your document.

Mr Ganoo: Yes, Mr Speaker. Also, is the hon. Minister aware that a meeting was held on 27 June at the CPB Office where, in fact...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Ganoo: ...emergency procedures, emergency procurement was suggested by the CPB as an option?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition keeps trying to build a mountain out of a molehill. Firstly, what is the rationale for splitting and buying some fully built, and buying some locally? Because obviously...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody! Allow the Minister to answer!

Mr Duval: ...there is a restricted capacity for local body building firms to supply. So, if we are in a hurry, let them supply - I don't know whether it is two or three a month that they can supply - and the rest would come fully built, so that it would actually help the procurement time; what would take twice as long would take half as long. There is nothing, I would say, wrong with that.

The second issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, concerns emergency procedures. It is not to say that if you are adopting emergency procedures, you are not going into a competitive bid - that is not to say. It allows you to choose a number of those bidders that you wish because the CPB has, from the start, wished to have as many responsive bidders as possible. That would mean, therefore, that of these reliable buses that could be bought, as large a number as possible of suppliers would be invited to bid competitively under emergency procedures. I wanted to stress that. It is not the fact that CPB wanted to suggest no bidding

exercise. It wanted to suggest a bidding exercise restricted to certain types of buses, but a proper and fully compliant bidding exercise nevertheless.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Time is over! The Table has been advised...

(Interruptions)

I said you had a last question!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet now! I said time is over! It is over!

(Interruptions)

Since long it is over! Since 12.07 p.m. it is over! You were given five minutes more! I am not going to accept! The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/644, now to be replied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, has been withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

AUTO/MOTORCYCLES - MODIFIED SILENCERS

(No. B/634) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the auto-cycles and motorcycles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof which have been checked, in the Metropolitan (North) Division, over the past two years, indicating the number thereof which have been found to be equipped with modified silencers and emitting loud noises and the number thereof which have been –

- (a) booked for contraventions, and
- (b) issued with –
 - (i) fixed penalty notices, and
 - (ii) prohibition orders.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, over the past two years, the number of auto/motorcycles checked by the Metropolitan Division (North) Police is as follows –

PERIOD	NUMBER OF AUTO/MOTOR VEHICLES CHECKED
From 04 July 2011 to 03 July 2012	5,260
From 04 July 2012 to 03 July 2013	7,615

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Metropolitan Division (North) Police have established contraventions against riders of auto/motorcycles for altered silencers in accordance with section 83 (3) (b) of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010 as follows –

PERIOD	NUMBER OF CONTRAVENTIONS ESTABLISHED
From 04 July 2011 to 03 July 2012	309
From 04 July 2012 to 03 July 2013	429

In regard to part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that, out of the contraventions established, fixed penalty notices have been issued by the Police for excessive noise emanating from the auto/motorcycles as follows –

PERIOD	NUMBER OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES ISSUED
From 04 July 2011 to 03 July 2012	21
From 04 July 2012 to 03 July 2013	35

The status of the other cases is as follows –

PERIOD	PENDING ENQUIRY	PENDING TRIAL	FINED	DISMISSED
From 04 July 2011 to 03 July 2012	32	93	155	8
From 04 July 2012 to 03 July 2013	220	108	66	-

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, no prohibition notice has been served on any driver by the Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that during the regular checks on autocycles and motorcycles, a few cases of larceny of autocycles/motorcycles as well as some cases of fake number plates have also been detected.

Mr Ameer Meea: I, myself, have raised this issue of modified silencers in this House since 2012 and 2013 through Parliamentary Questions Nos. A/9 and B/6 and, as at now, no replies have been made available. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is aware that this issue of modified exhaust tubes is causing a lot of nuisance and discomfort to the whole population of Mauritius, especially in densely populated residential areas?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I am well aware of it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, this issue has been severely criticised by the Director of Audit in his last Report and, among one of its observations, it has been stated that the Police Department has actually requested the Ministry of Environment to set up a Technical Committee to look into the matter for proper follow-up. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is aware of this Technical Committee and if he can inform the House where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the Technical Committee has met. They have agreed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there were two problems. In fact, one was on the sound level meters themselves and, secondly, they have decided that it can be, in fact, addressed by a modification in the law, which is being done.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, on the last part of what the hon. Prime Minister just stated, the reply of the Police Department concerning the law and regulation was that there are legal discrepancies regarding the authorised level of sound emission in the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 and the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - this has been made public in the Report since December 2011 - why, up to now, nothing has been done in order to change those regulations?

The Prime Minister: Because they have not finished the work, Mr Speaker, Sir. Even though they have made these things, they had several meetings further to that date the hon. Member is mentioning, where a series of new recommendations have been made in a report which was sent to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure only this year. One of the recommendations of the Technical Committee was to measure - using the already procured equipment - the noise emitted at a specified RPM, irrespective of make and model. These recommendations have been based on legal advice and also what is pertaining in certain countries.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether these modified engines have been reported to be involved in illegal rallies?

The Prime Minister: I suppose the hon. Member means the modified silencers?

Mr Fakeemeeah: Silencers.

The Prime Minister: I do not believe that the engines themselves have been modified. Yes, there is a law already, but one cannot actually modify the silencers.

Mr Baloomoody: One of the main problems with this issue is that the Police are not properly equipped with the decibel meter. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will ensure that the Police are properly equipped with these decibel meters, especially when they are on the road, not the *Police de l'Environnement*, but those Police Officers who are in the Traffic Department?

The Prime Minister: They had procured these sound meters – I am speaking out of memory. I think it was in late 2011 that they had procured ten such sound meters, but then, there was this incompatibility with certain of these regulations, and that is what is being adhered to.

Mr Ameer Meea: A last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. As the hon. Prime Minister just stated, the Police have procured ten of those meters. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if more of those sound meters could be purchased by the Police so as to cover the whole island with special regard to densely populated residential areas?

The Prime Minister: It is my understanding that they will be procuring new sound meters, but not of the same type.

FOOTBALL - WORLD CUP 2014 - BROADCAST

(No. B/635) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Football Association Carling Cup, the European Cup and the World Cup 2014 which will be held in Brazil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if the football matches thereof will be broadcast and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to Parliamentary Question No. B/405 on 03 July 2012, where I had indicated that the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation has not been broadcasting football matches of the Football Association Carling Cup since 2009. The FA Carling Cup is a less important football competition organised by the Football Association in UK and should not be confused with the FA Cup which is a major football competition.

I am informed by the Director General of the MBC that the Corporation does not propose to resume the live broadcast of the football matches of the FA Carling Cup.

However, I am further informed by the Director General of the MBC that the Corporation intends to broadcast live, as in the past, the football matches of the Union of European Football Association (UEFA) Champions League, formerly known as European Cup. Negotiations for broadcast rights to that effect are under way.

Regarding the World Cup 2014, the Director General has informed and subsequently confirmed that the Corporation has already signed the contract providing for the rights for the live broadcast of all the 64 matches of that competition.

I have again impressed upon the Director General to arrange for the live broadcast of all football matches simultaneously on MBC Analogue Channel 3 and Digital Sports Channel 11, pending the complete digitalisation of television transmission.

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that the MBC has not yet settled its bill with Trans Image Communication for telecasting the football matches in the past, can the hon. Prime Minister give the House the guarantee that this will not be an issue with the AUB and MBC, as he just mentioned the contract has been signed? Therefore, can I know whether this issue had been raised before signing the contract?

The Prime Minister: I am not quite sure what is the issue that the hon. Member would have liked to be raised. If he could just give me some clarification.

Mr Jhugroo: The non-payment of the bill to Trans Image Communication which telecasted previous football matches before 2009, which had been informed to FIFA and UEFA.

The Prime Minister: I understand that there are negotiations on that, as I have explained last time, Mr Speaker, Sir. Far from that, this contract has been signed.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Prime Minister has made mention of the FA Carling Cup. Can he inform the House about the Barclays Premier League, and whether the MBC has made arrangements for the retransmission of its matches?

The Prime Minister: This was not in the question; I am not sure. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will ask about Barclays.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why, since the actual Director General of the MBC took office in 2009, the Mauritian fans of football are deprived of live matches of FA Cup, Premier League and the European League?

The Prime Minister: As far as I see, for the FA Cup, all the 21 matches were broadcast for the period 2012-2013, and as I explained, for the English Premier League teams, they were also broadcast as well as the European Cup.

Mr François: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, with regard to football broadcast and other sports, he is agreeable that Rodrigues be provided with a permanent Sports Channel 11 so that it is at par with Mauritius, being given the recurrent and untimely swapping of Channel 3 to BBC and TV5?

The Prime Minister: I think the reason is that there is a technical problem, and they are trying to see how they can overcome it.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can request the Director General of the MBC to table a copy of the contract which he signed between the MBC and the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), which is the agent appointed by FIFA for Sub Sahara Region, to telecast the 32 matches of FIFA World Cup 2013?

The Prime Minister: I will have to see whether that is compliant with the law, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would find no reason why it can't be, but I will have to see whether it is legally permissible because there are different countries which signed these contracts, and I do not know whether different treatment, different rates are being given, and that might not be the possibility then.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the Director General of the MBC *a sali l'image de la* MBC by not paying the bad debt of the MBC towards Trans Image Communication...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: This question is not allowed!

(Interruptions)

Mr Issack: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how much will it cost to the MBC to broadcast the 64 matches of the World Cup?

The Prime Minister: I think I have the cost here, if I am not mistaken; it will cost USD135,000.

MBC - DIRECTOR OF NEWS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/636) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Director of News of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the -

- (a) name of the incumbent thereof, indicating his terms and conditions of appointment, and

- (b) reasons why Mr D.R., former incumbent thereof, has left, indicating the terms and conditions on which he had been appointed.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that, in terms of the provisions of section 15 of the MBC Act, the Board of the MBC has appointed Mr S. A., as Director of News, on a contract basis.

I am further informed by the Director General of the Corporation that, the terms and conditions of appointment of Mr S. A. are in line with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau of 2013.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the Director General has pointed out that Mr D. R., former holder of the post of Director of News, is still serving at the Corporation.

In view of his long years of experience in the broadcasting field, his competence is being utilised in the Radio Services which are being completely restructured to make them more responsive to the needs of the audience.

The information relating to the terms and conditions of appointment of Mr D. R., as Director of News, has already been tabled in reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/822 on 24 July 2007, except that the terms and conditions have been modified in the light of the PRB Reports 2008 and 2013.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House why this vacant post has not been advertised and what criteria had been used for this recruitment and the qualification required?

The Prime Minister: Mr S. A. has long experience also at the MBC; he has over 25 years' service in the News Department of the MBC, which he joined in 1988. He retired on 01 February 2013, and at the time of his retirement he was already the Chief News Editor and he is well qualified to do the job. So, they prefer to take people who have done the job before.

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that he has retired as Senior Chief News Editor. May I know since when, and whether he is receiving a pension out of this?

The Prime Minister: No, what I said is that he was News Editor in January 1988 and eventually he retired from that post. But I am sure he must have had his pension rights; if he is entitled to it, he must have had.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether his forecasted tsunami *a balayé* Mr D. R., the former Director of News of the MBC for his incompetency?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You must put your question, hon. Member.

Mr Jhugroo: It is a question!

Mr Speaker: You must be fair; what is that...

Mr Jhugroo: No, because it was mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister that there will be a tsunami in the future. So, my question today is whether the tsunami forecasted has hit Mr D. R.

Mr Speaker: I say no, I won't allow this question. Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Being given that the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation is a national entity, doesn't the hon. Prime Minister agree that it would make more sense to have an open advertisement for the post so that the best brain, the best qualified people in Mauritius and outside Mauritius can apply and uplift the news broadcasting services which is appalling at this moment?

The Prime Minister: I know the hon. Member is new in Parliament, but perhaps he does not know that has been the practice all the time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has given clear directives to the Chairperson of the MBC/TV, at least, now with the reorganisation which has been made, that the MBC will give news in a fair and independent manner...

(Interruptions)

... as per the provisions...

(Interruptions)

Ki tapaz to pé faire!

Mr Speaker: Carry on with your question, please!

Mr Bhagwan: *Taler to pou en plis!*

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, your comment is most unwarranted!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking the hon. Prime Minister whether he will give directives to the Chairperson of the MBC to give directives to the new Director of News not to follow the path of the Director General, to give news in a fair and independent manner, not as per the directives of Mr Hitler.

The Prime Minister: I can't really understand. Is the hon. Member saying that the former person, that is, Mr D. R. was not giving proper - that is why he was...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

You are smiling; it seems you are happy! Don't use the word "Hitler"! You should not!

(Interruptions)

I said you should not! You refrain from it!

(Interruptions)

I have ruled; you should not do it.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister give us a guarantee today that the new Director of News of the MBC will not distort information and diffuse false news regarding to the Opposition Members?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I can't see how the distortion has taken place; if he has substantial facts...

(Interruptions)

SRI LANKA - COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

(No. B/637) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second 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 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting which will be held in Sri Lanka this year, he will state if he is proposing to send a delegation thereto in advance thereof and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) reasons therefor;
- (b) composition thereof, and
- (c) expected outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House will appreciate, CHOGM 2015 will be an exceptionally high level event, in terms of attendance, that Mauritius will have ever hosted. In any

CHOGM event, apart from the Heads of State and Heads of Government the minimum number of attendees, including delegates, the press, the civil society representatives, youths and business representatives, among others, can total anything between 5,000 to 7,000. One can easily, Mr Speaker, Sir, imagine the organisational challenges of an event of such magnitude and complexity. It is therefore important for us to ensure that this event takes place in the best conditions possible as this event will showcase Mauritius as a vibrant, multi-racial and dynamic regional business hub.

It is also important to understand the security aspect of any CHOGM. Apart from the 54 Heads of State and Government, it is also customary for a Member of the Royal family to make a State visit to the host country before the beginning of CHOGM. It is therefore important that we make the necessary arrangements for ensuring the security of all these dignitaries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the *Guidance Notes on the organisation of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings*, the host country is required to organise an “Advance Visit” to CHOGM venues for member country officials and security services.

Accordingly, the Government of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, is organising the “Advance Visit” next month and Mauritius has been invited to attend.

The purpose of organising such Advance Visits is to provide participating countries with an opportunity to discuss and finalise various logistical arrangements for the delegations who will attend CHOGM.

Since Mauritius will be hosting CHOGM 2015, it is imperative that we send an Advance Team to familiarise itself with all the organisational and logistics aspects of hosting such an event.

As a matter of fact, during my meeting with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London last month, the latter mentioned that it is indeed imperative for Mauritius, as host for CHOGM 2015, to send a multi-disciplinary delegation to Sri Lanka as Advance Team to understudy the organisational arrangements being made by the current CHOGM organisers. In this regard, the Commonwealth Secretariat will facilitate meetings between the Mauritian team and the Sri Lankan Organising Committee.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the guidelines issued by the Commonwealth Secretariat, preparatory work for CHOGM should start prior to the next CHOGM Summit. The guidelines also highlight the fact that the early preparations are key to delivering a successful CHOGM, and it has therefore been recommended that the next host Government, that is, us, should establish a core group of senior officials at decision making level to undertake preliminary planning work about two years in advance of the Meeting.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Mauritius Advance Visit Team will be headed by the Secretary of the Cabinet and the Head of the Civil Service, who is also the Chairperson of the Taskforce for CHOGM 2015. The full composition of the Advance Team is being finalised.

Regarding part (c) of the question, as I explained earlier, the expected outcome of our participation in the Advance Team is to enable the national Taskforce to familiarise with the various organisational arrangements and to get better informed on the constraints and the challenges that the host country has to face in this process.

In reply to PQ B/497 from the same hon. Member on 18 June last, I indicated that since the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka in 2009, the only province which had not held elections is the Northern Province which has a Tamil majority. In the course of my meeting with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat last month - and I did say that in the last PQ - I stressed that the Sri Lankan Government must show by its actions that it is moving in the right direction and we should ensure that these elections are held before CHOGM 2013.

I have now been informed that the Government of Sri Lanka proposes to hold these elections in September this year, that is, it will be for the first time in 25 years that the elections will be held there.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the fact that our country is known to have perfected the organisation of big events including summits of such organisations as *Francophonie*, SADC and COMESA, even at UN level, is not it a paradox that Government should send an advanced team to look into the organisational aspect of a conference to be held in 2015?

The Prime Minister: Well, I hope the hon. Member knows how many members there are in SADC, how many members there are in other organisations. This is one of the biggest ones; it has 54 members.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No interruption!

The Prime Minister: As I said, we will have the visit of a member of the Royal family prior to that visit. That is why it has been in the convention. That is what has happened every time. So, why do the hon. Member want me to depart from that convention?

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister is talking about an advanced visit to Sri Lanka and he also made reference to the political situation there. Is he aware that respectable institutions in human rights are still concerned about the situation in human rights and today itself, there is a delegation of the

IPU Human Rights Committee landing in Sri Lanka? They will be there from 09 to 11 to investigate unresolved cases of two other Tamil MPs killed in the country and an attempt on another Tamil MP recently. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Mauritius has been invited to form part of that delegation or, at least, he has proposed that Mauritius be invited in that delegation to investigate the issue of human rights, the more so that we are members of the IPU, and Government intends to go there headed by the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth did mention to me that this is an ongoing process, that there are still investigations going on, that we must ensure that Sri Lanka respects the agreements that were made, and that progress is made on the human rights issue, including the holding of the elections. That is why this group has been there. This group has gone there, and it's good. I think that they go and have a look, and can report.

(Interruptions)

There is no need for Mauritius itself to be there. Does the hon. Member mean if we are not there, the report is not going to be good? They are independent people.

(Interruptions)

But I don't invite myself! If I am invited there; but I can't invite myself!

Mr Issack: Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether, apart from Canada, there are any other Commonwealth States which have expressed their intention of not attending that meeting?

The Prime Minister: I must tell the hon. Member that I am referring to what the Secretary General has told me - even Canada is going to be represented. As to whether it would be at Prime ministerial level or not, he is not sure yet, but he thinks it will be.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister has just informed the House that the Sri Lankan President or his Government have given the go-ahead for the elections in the Tamilian Northern Area in September of this year. But is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the main Tamil party has called for international observers for these elections and that the President has not only not responded, but has also announced that he will remove Police security from the North, and the Tamil and the Muslim minorities are objecting to this amendment of the President as, according to them, these measures violate the terms of the accord? The purpose of this question is to ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it that, in fact, the Sri Lankan authorities do not continue to violate human rights as they have been doing in an unabated way during the past months in spite of the commitments they have taken.

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the reasons, because we were not sure whether we would attend or not, is that provided we are satisfied that things have been done. Now, if that is the case and if the Sri Lankan Government persists in going outside the accord, then we will have to review our situation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that on the crucial issues of an international independent report on the events of the final months of the civil war in Sri Lanka, there has been no progress on the issue of the independence of the Judiciary after the sacking of the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka and his replacement by a Presidential Adviser, there has been no progress, and will he, therefore, say if he has been made aware of the recent statement of the Canadian Foreign Minister to the effect that there has been no real progress on the issue of accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka and that Canada strongly condemns Sri Lanka and will not attend?

The Prime Minister: I have just said, Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Sri Lankan Government - and I said that last time - persists in going outside, not respecting the agreements that they have made and what the hon. Leader of the Opposition just mentioned, we will, of course, review our position. But I am also aware that everything is going to the Secretariat of the Commonwealth. Perhaps they are not aware, even India has protested just now about this. So, we are following this very carefully. My commitment is that if they abuse the situation and they do not agree on the agreements that they themselves had agreed, then we will review our position.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is prepared to intervene vis-à-vis the Commonwealth so that, at least, the Commonwealth can send an election observation team for that election which is scheduled for September in the North of Sri Lanka?

The Prime Minister: I personally think it is crucial that there is an observer team there.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister said that if the Sri Lankan Government does not do what has to be done, we will review our decision. I think there is a matter of urgency. Is there any deadline for a final decision to be taken by the Commonwealth Secretariat as to whether the conference is going to be held in Sri Lanka or not?

The Prime Minister: One of the reasons why the Secretary General wanted to meet me is because there is a deadline. If we want to host the CHOGM Summit, then there is a deadline for us to say 'yes' or 'no' because they have to know. That is why I wanted to ensure that we can hold; we will agree because one of the problems is to host it. Apparently it would be unprecedented. The future host country has to be present at Prime ministerial level. So, that is why I wanted to have some clarification as to the progress that has been taking place. We know the progress has been not enough; in fact, as the Canadian

Prime Minister has rightly said. That is why I wanted to ensure because we are not going to be a party to something that we don't agree to, and that is precisely what we have been doing.

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

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister has rightly cited the case of India. The Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Republic of India has objected to the move of the Sri Lankan Government when they have decided to remove the Police from the Northern part of the country. And this has gone unheeded by the Sri Lankan authorities. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if Mauritius also should not follow suit, just as India has done, to record our protest?

The Prime Minister: The Secretary General of the Commonwealth is in touch with our Embassy in London. We are following the matter very closely, and as I have said, this will be completely unacceptable.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with us that however important the holding of the Summit in Mauritius in 2015, the priority should be a principal stand by Mauritius to uphold democratic principles of governance and defence of human rights and solidarity with oppressed people in Sri Lanka within the Commonwealth in general?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member had looked at my record, he would have seen that so many times I have taken a principle approach to that. The last example is at the Tokyo Conference that we had. In 2009, in spite of the fact that we are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, in spite of the fact that the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs had protests from members of the Non-Aligned Movement, I decided I will not vote in the same way and I will vote against North Korea for Japan because of the abuse of human rights. That has been my principle...

(Interruptions)

RADIOACTIVE WASTE MATERIALS - DUMPING

(No. B/644) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to radioactive waste materials, he will state the measures taken, if any, to prevent any case of dumping thereof, indicating if the matter was raised and discussed during the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers now. Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

SINGAPORE - MAURITIUS TROCHETIA – DRY-DOCKED

(No. B/647) **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 Mauritius Trochetia, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd, information as to if it was recently dry-docked in Singapore and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) cost incurred in relation thereto.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd that the Mauritius Trochetia proceeded to Singapore in May 2013 for necessary repairs and dry-docking at the DDW-PAXOcean Shipyard Pte. Ltd Singapore.

I am further informed that the dry-docking was carried out in Singapore following an Expression of Interest issued locally and internationally. The contract for repairs and dry-docking of Mauritius Trochetia was awarded to Singaporean firm which had made the most competitive responsive offer.

With regard to part (a), the vessel had to be dry-docked, for necessary repairs, in order to renew its passenger certificates for safety reasons as it is involved in the transportation of passengers.

With regard to part (b), I have to inform the House that the award for the dry-docking of the vessel to DDW-PAXOcean Shipyard Pte. Ltd Singapore was Rs12,453,500 and the actual amount incurred was Rs13,125,000. The difference of Rs671,500 was incurred due to additional repairs required to renew the passenger certificate of the vessel.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House who took the decision to have the ship to be dry-docked in Singapore? Was it a close relative of him amongst others who are employed at the Shipping Department? If the answer is no, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister dare to table, by afternoon, the organigram of this department, which is readily available from the Shipping Department?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would refuse to answer this question, being given that the hon. Member is trying to refer to my relatives.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

LEGAL AID - SUCCESSION AFFIDAVIT

(No. B/648) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the affidavit of succession, he will state if consideration will be given for legal aid to be extended to the families who do not have the means to meet the cost thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government Programme 2012-2015, at paragraph 35 of Chapter IV, reads as follows -

“The Legal Aid Act will be reviewed in the coming year to broaden the scope for legal assistance.”

With the enactment of the Legal Aid (Amendment) Act 2012, inspired by the Mackay report as well as a Green paper on “Equal Access to Justice: Reform on Legal Aid in Mauritius” prepared by Professor Ved Prakash Torul, Government has fulfilled its stated objectives and now we have a Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act which *inter alia* –

- (i) extends legal assistance at police enquiry and bail stages;
- (ii) it also provides for a Means test and a Merit test wherever applicable. However, I have to highlight that the scope of legal aid under the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act is limited to parties in civil and criminal proceedings.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is clear affidavits of succession are at present not covered by the scope of the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act. Whether the cost of an affidavit of succession is prohibitive is a matter which has yet to be determined as the contents of an affidavit of succession are standard, being prescribed by law under section 4 of the Transcription and Mortgage Act. Section 4 of the Transcription and Mortgage Act was amended by Act 20 of 2011, the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011, and this has contributed to simplify the drawing up of an affidavit of succession. As such, there does not seem to be a justification for an alleged prohibitive cost for such a document.

I shall nevertheless refer the matter to the Mauritius Law Society and the Chamber of Notaries for such action as may be deemed appropriate. In particular, I intend to invite the President of the Mauritius Law Society and also the Chamber of Notaries to consider setting up a pro-bono scheme among its members, which may, *inter-alia*, allow persons who do not have the means to enlist the services of an Attorney or Notary to have an affidavit of succession drawn up.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the light of what the hon. Minister just said, my concern is the poor people who are already suffering from many existing disadvantages. Can the hon. Minister tell us if he will consider bringing equal benefit of the justice system to all Mauritian citizens, including those affected by socioeconomic status?

Mr Faugoo: This has very large implications, Mr Speaker, Sir, especially financial. So, I cannot, as Attorney General, pronounce on this issue.

Mr Obeegadoo: I must confess that I was a bit surprised by the answer of the hon. Minister. He is a Member of Parliament like all of us. Is he not aware that regularly, poor, very poor people come to us with issues that require an affidavit of succession, and that they simply cannot afford the cost thereof? Will the hon. Minister not agree that this is a policy decision that Government must take and not an issue just to be referred to the law society?

Mr Faugoo: I agree, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is why I said, in the first place, that I am going to invite the law society and also the Chamber of Notaries to look into this. But over and above, as I said, it has large implications, especially financial, and I cannot, as Attorney General, on my own, pronounce on this issue in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to insist. Can the hon. Minister tell us from his own experience, as hon. Obeegadoo just said, how can an individual living in poverty afford an affidavit of succession as compared to individuals who earn a decent salary, and if this is not enough compelling for his Government to improve access to the justice system to all citizens?

Mr Faugoo: It depends on how you look at it, Mr Speaker, Sir - justice system. This is an affidavit of succession which does not form part of a legal proceeding, neither civil nor criminal. It is a document which has to be drawn up for private use. We have to make a distinction, as I said. We consider this one. There are so many cases where we have to consider. Government revised the law in relation to legal aid last year, 2012, and we have sort of increased the ambit of legal aid. We have extended the ambit of legal aid to so many cases which were not covered by the 1974 Act, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, as I said, I will take up the matter with the Council, and also I can take up the matter with my colleague, the hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Attorney General has referred this not being part of the proceedings, but it is a requirement of law, as he properly knows, to get this affidavit of succession. So, may I ask the hon. Attorney General if he could talk to the hon. Minister of Social Security and make it a possibility for anyone who cannot afford to pay an Attorney to get one? He can be an officer from the State Law Office who is based on a temporary basis, but at least for those who are the poorest and cannot

afford, I think it is a policy decision of the Government and not something to be put on the back of law society.

Mr Faugoo: I will surely do that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: In fact, there are two components which make the burden so heavy for these people. They have to pay the Attorney's fees and on top of that, if luckily or unluckily the deceased is the owner of a small *cit * house, then registration duties have to be imposed on because he is the owner of the property, and this is what makes the sum become very onerous. Today, it is in the region of Rs8,000 that an Attorney charges the poor man, including his own fee and the fees he has to pay the Registrar General. So, having said that, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Attorney General to see to it that at least one of these components can be done away with like the proposals which have been made by my friend, in terms of Attorney fees, liaising with the State Law Office so that one State Law Attorney or young State Law Attorney's desk would be set up to look after these cases when poor people have to make an affidavit of succession and also exempting, having a means test for those who are very poor? The hon. Minister of Finance has the power to exempt people not to pay certain registration fee and to probe into that possibility also.

Mr Faugoo: Most of these issues which have been raised fall under the purview of the Minister of Finance, as the Leader of the Opposition rightly stated. He has the power already, according to the law, to exempt certain applicants from payment of fees, especially on the basis of being poor; those people who cannot afford, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, I am going to have a word with my colleagues, the Minister of Finance and also the Minister of Social Security, to see how far we can extend help to this category of people.

Mr Speaker: Last question, but don't repeat the same question you asked earlier.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have our Constitution, and we have the human rights signed and ratified in Mauritius. Does the hon. Minister agree that failure to provide legal aid to the individual living in poverty violates his or her right to access the court services and his or her dignity? Will he take positive action of what he just said right now, to extend the legal aid not to exclude any individual on ground of his socioeconomic status?

Mr Faugoo: I do not agree, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

LE MORNE - SQUATTERS

(No. B/649) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the squatters who are occupying land, at the level of Avenue Lila to Dilo Pourri, in Le Morne, he will state if consideration will be given for the provision of leases thereto and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish in the first instance to refer the hon. Member to the replies and supplementary information I provided to Parliamentary Questions B/221, B/588 and B/281 of 05 June 2012, 23 October 2012 and 14 May 2013 respectively and to my reply to the intervention of hon. Leader of the Opposition at Adjournment on the 10 July 2012 in respect of squatters in the Constituency Number 14 including those at Dilo Pourri.

I wish to reiterate that, as a caring Government, we cannot look at the problem of squatters at Dilo Pourri, Le Morne in isolation. The problem of squatting is scattered all over the island. Moreover, the systematic regularisation of squatters may favour those who do not comply with the law. As such, my Ministry is committed to regularise only the genuine cases.

In respect to the village of Dilo Pourri, Le Morne, some 46 cases have already been regularised in 2005. However, as regards the specific squatters referred to by the hon. Member, the site, which has been squatted since 2007, forms part of land leased to Baie du Cap Estate Deer Farming Ltd, and has many physical and planning constraints and a hostile environment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a topographical study is presently underway as we have to be extremely cautious in view of the recent flash floods which affected the country and the risk of landslide. So far, the survey has revealed the presence of more than 50 families residing in C.I.S structures on the land. I am informed that some of them are serviced with electricity and water supply through inter-house connections. A final decision as regard the relocation of the occupiers will be taken after completion of the survey exercise and the availability of State land in the region.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Is the Minister aware of the inhumane conditions in which some of these squatters are living and as the Minister, himself, has rightly pointed out, some of the squatters are provided with water and electricity? Can the Minister consider looking into this and pending the regularisation of the situation of these squatters provide them, at least, with water?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem there, as I have said. They are on the sloping side of this terrain which is very rough and rugged. We cannot go and supply water to each and every one. Some people think they can come at one's place and squat. We have provided water to many squatters, but there is a limit to what we can do without endangering even the squatters. We will not encourage them

to squat on a sloping land where there may easily be landslide. Some of them have been provided, but it is not proper to connect illegally electricity and water.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the Minister whether he does not think that water is a basic necessity, and in whatever conditions people are living, at least, they need water?

Dr. Kasenally: As a doctor, I know perfectly well what is the need as far as water is concerned. It is one of the basic human rights, but there is a limit to what you can do. You tell me somebody sits in the middle of a road; I go and provide him water. It is exactly where it is for some of them. We have already regularised 45, and others are coming; some are being encouraged, and it is creating problems. I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he was Minister of Housing, knows perfectly how the problems are and whatever you do you always get criticisms. But let me tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is doing everything. I will have to move them from there, but I also have to ensure that wherever I will move them they get water and electricity, and also sewerage and garbage collection.

Mr Ganoo: In fact, I am reiterating my appeal and my question to the hon. Minister. In the report made by the Truth and Justice Commission, the inhabitants of Le Morne had a special place in the heart of those Commissioners who came up with that report. They made an appeal to the authorities to see to it that the people in Le Morne should be granted land free for cultivation and for habitation also. In view of the fact that these squatters have been here so long and in case the hon. Minister or his Ministry has decided ultimately to regularise them - we know that this is a long process - and not to evict them from where they are, doesn't the hon. Minister think that, on an humanitarian level, the needful should be done for them to be provided with water and electricity please?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are problems to bring water and electricity there because people are on a sloppy and dangerous land. There are high tension lines. We are trying to do as much as we can to regularise squatters. I hold this personally to my heart and the heart of this Government. For his information, I must tell that recently, a couple of weeks ago, my colleague, the Minister of Local Government, and I went around and saw a lot of squatters. People of Petit Case Noyale and Carreau Eucalyptus are being moved to Comtesse de Lamarque at Coteau Raffin and those at Rivière Noire as well. We are taking it globally. These people from Dilo Pourri may well have to be moved from where they are to somewhere else. Also I will ask hon. Members not to encourage people to squat as they had done at Riambel...

(Interruptions)

...where people are squatting on marshy land, which is dangerous to their health and their safety.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to remind the hon. Minister, that when I asked the question on squatters in Constituency No. 14, I received the same reply: due to specific location of the site being occupied by 45 squatters at Dilo Pourri...

Mr Speaker: I am afraid I have to interrupt. The hon. Member has to consider that this question deals with Avenue Lila to Dilo Pourri.

Mr Issack: May I know from the hon. Minister if he has an idea about the number of families concerned with the squatting problems throughout the island?

Mr Speaker: No!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ...since there are people who have been there for more than 12 years and are living in inhumane conditions without electricity and without water, can the hon. Minister consider, at least, giving some priority to the regularisation of these people, taking into consideration that this Government says it is a caring Government, that this Government says it puts people first?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Let us listen to the answer of the hon. Minister!

Dr. Kasenally: ...as the hon. Member has said, over 12 years they have been squatting. But this Government has not been there for 12 years. Others too are responsible. However, I must say that this Government is making an effort. In fact, there is Cité la Cure. I think we have to be humane, and we are humane; and we are trying. I give a solemn promise to this House that this Government is doing the best, and I will try to ensure that people must be living in decent conditions. I take the hon. Member's point.

Mr Speaker: This question has been sufficiently aired. It is a proper time to break for one and a half hours.

At 1.06 p.m. the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.42 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

ZEP SCHOOLS – HOT MEALS

(No. B/650) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the schools in the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire*, he will state if consideration will be given for the reintroduction of the scheme for the provision of daily hot meals to the students thereof and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ B/22 on 26 March 2013, I had outlined the measures taken by my Ministry for the implementation of the ZEP Hot Meal Project following the Budget Speech 2013. The project started at the beginning of the first term, and the pupils of ZEP schools were provided with a daily hot meal.

However, following a case of food poisoning at Bambous 'A' Government School on 07 February 2013, where pupils fell sick after having consumed the hot meals provided during that day, the contract of the caterer was cancelled forthwith. Subsequently, upon visits of the Inspectors of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in other ZEP schools and testing of food samples consumed, it was found that in some cases, the food served was not in compliance with the sanitary norms of the Food Act. As such, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life had detected a high level of E.Coli which was beyond sanitary norms. As a result, the provision of hot meals in all ZEP schools was suspended with effect from Saturday 16 February 2013.

I wish to inform the House that, in the immediate term, alternative arrangements had been made to provide a meal to pupils with bread/butter/cheese, a fruit and water as from Monday 18 February 2013, and this is still ongoing.

However, in May 2013, following discussions with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, it has been decided to further supplement the meal with plain biscuits, dried fruits and more fresh fruits. Advanced notice had to be provided to potential suppliers for this arrangement. Steps have already been taken to ensure that as from the third term, the meal being provided is supplemented.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the medium-term, it is proposed to invest schools with the proper facilities so that they may resume provision of hot meal in salubrious conditions. In this context, a survey has been carried out at the level of my Ministry to identify schools where a kitchen with the basic requirements can be put in place so that daily hot meal can be provided to the pupils. One ZEP school in each of the four Zones has already been identified for the construction of a kitchen on a pilot basis.

With a view to resuming the provision of hot meals in ZEP schools, several avenues are being explored, *inter alia*, for provision of hot meals by well established food caterers holding the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) certificates. It is also proposed that the caterers should have

a *Plan de Maîtrise Sanitaire* which gives the norms and standards to be adopted right from procurement of ingredients to production of food items to transport and delivery to schools and pupils as per the norms of the European Union. The caterers will need to have the required facilities and will be called upon to abide strictly to all sanitary norms for the production, transport and handling of food items.

In the long term, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is proposed to have eating areas annexed to the school kitchens to promote 'Eating Together' - a Project which is very close to my heart - and to strengthen the community of learning and sharing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to add that all necessary precautions are being taken to prevent recurrence of the incident involving food poisoning. Several options have been studied at the level of my Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life prior to re-introducing the ZEP Hot Meal Project. In this context, a plan is being worked out to resume the Hot Meal Project. However, as highlighted earlier, this will necessitate provision of appropriate infrastructure facilities and proper handling and distribution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it should be stressed that the health and security of our pupils are indeed of utmost importance to us.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state if any implementation plan *visant à organiser de bout en bout le bon déroulement du projet* has been prepared before introducing the free hot meals in the ZEP schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, as I mentioned in my reply itself today, we had an implementation plan. But, I must admit that it is a plan which did not work.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister, in the light of past experience, agree that the most cost-effective and safest way to approach this issue is by the provision of cooking and refrigeration facilities in each of the schools concerned, and, if so, will he undertake that the next Budget will provide for such an initiative in the ZEP schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: It is exactly what I mentioned in my reply!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that before the introduction by his Ministry of the project of hot meals, there were schools which had volunteers who prepared hot meals for the students, namely at Reverend Espitalier Noël, where, for example, there was a group of women who prepared hot meals for the children? It is the case for one or two other schools too.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether he has considered this option? Because it worked well, and nobody got poisoned, etc. Has he considered this as one among the different options?

Dr. Bunwaree: This option was, in fact, applied partially, I must say, in certain cases. As I mentioned in my reply, there were Health Inspectors who went to certain places where such food was prepared and it was, in fact, found that the food was not up to standard. So, we have reviewed the whole situation, and we are coming with a very structured way insofar as the hot meals are concerned. But, we are presently continuing with meals in those schools.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to remove this confusion, that some people think that because we have stopped the hot meals there is no food at all. *Ce n'est pas du tout le cas! Il y a un repas que j'ai mentionné et qu'on va d'ailleurs améliorer l'autre trimestre. On a déjà donné des directives aux responsables pour aller de l'avant et diversifier le repas davantage.*

Ms Anquetil: Can the hon. Minister reveal the figures and the names of the caterers for the 30 ZEP schools, and can he state if the distribution of hot meals will be restricted to a maximum of 300 meals per day per caterer, as mentioned *dans son communiqué de presse*?

Dr. Bunwaree: The figure of 300 which was mentioned was for hot meals, not for the present type of meals being given. But, I will circulate the list of all these caterers; I have no problem with that.

Mr François: Pending the construction of a kitchen and being given that there is only one ZEP school in Rodrigues at *Rivière Coco*, the *Ste Thérèse de L'Enfant Jésus*, with only 224 students, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will consider a discussion with the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to proceed with the hot meal scheme in the meantime?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we can always consider this, as there is only one school with 250 pupils approximately.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Minister why all the norms that he is mentioning now were not taken into consideration in February? After so many problems, I get the impression that this Government deals after management by crisis!

Mr Speaker: Leave your impression, put the question!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: Sir, I have already replied to many questions in this House and I did mention once that when we came forward with the implementation of the project, we did also take into consideration what was done in the past. In fact, I mentioned that there had been problems in the past as well - not to blame anybody...

(Interruptions)

Justement, on a essayé de ne pas faire ce qui avait été fait avant et qui avait causé des problèmes! Mais malgré cela, on a des problèmes, et je l'admets. On est en train de prendre toutes les précautions nécessaires...

(Interruptions)

We are doing according to what happens in other countries. I have myself visited some countries. In fact, I was surprised to learn that even in Reunion Island - which is not far from us - *depuis dix ans ils sont en train de...*

(Interruptions)

Ils ont trouvé la formule depuis dix ans, et ils sont en train de faire un travail qui est pas mal. Donc, nous allons nous inspirer de tout ce qui est bien fait ailleurs.

Mr Jugnauth: Le ministre vient de nous dire que son *implementation plan* n'a pas marché dans le cas de Bambous. Peut-il nous dire spécifiquement ce qui n'a pas marché, et, à ce jour, qui est ou qui sont les responsables à ce manquement?

Dr. Bunwaree: On ne peut pas parler de responsable en tant que tel, M. le président. D'après les *surveys* qui ont été faits après, il se trouve que l'école n'était pas prête pour la distribution de ces aliments dans les meilleures conditions - aliments qui étaient transportés d'ailleurs. *This is why I said we need infrastructure.* Dans aucune école cela n'existe aujourd'hui. J'ai dit dans ma réponse qu'on est en train de travailler, on a déjà sélectionné quatre écoles ZEP, et on ne va pas tarder à démarrer dans ces écoles. Mais je voudrais que ce soit dans toutes les écoles ZEP, y compris peut-être dans d'autres écoles aussi.

Mrs Ribot: M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre s'il est au courant, valeur du jour, qu'en attendant l'arrivée du nouveau projet, les étudiants reçoivent du pain rassis ou moisi, et qu'ils le jettent. Y a-t-il eu une étude faite sur le nombre de pains jetés dans la cour des écoles ZEP par jour?

Dr. Bunwaree: Ce qui est en train d'être avancé par l'honorable membre, je ne suis pas au courant. Mais, maintenant qu'elle est en train de me le dire, je lui demanderai de me donner le nom de l'école concernée car ce n'est pas acceptable, parce que nous sommes en train de dépenser gros pour les enfants. On ne voudrait pas que ce soit comme ça et je demanderai à l'honorable membre de revoir ce que moi j'ai dit. Mais si ce projet n'est pas en train d'être réalisé comme je l'ai prévu, on va à ce moment-là *take the bull by the horns*, on va prendre des sanctions contre les responsables.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister state if school caterers have been made aware of pupils with food allergies, and if they provide food in accordance to pupils' beliefs?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, this is, in fact, done everywhere in all schools, and not only food allergies, but there are children who are vegetarians, for example. *Tout cela a été pris en compte, et la responsabilité incombe à l'école et au Parent-Teacher's Association pour que cela se passe dans l'ordre.*

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister saying that in his medium plan he is constantly discussing with the Ministry of Health. Doesn't the hon. Minister think it appropriate at this juncture to have an involvement of the community as well through the PTAs?

Dr. Bunwaree: They are already involved; they are not left behind. I said Ministry of Health because they have got expertise there. I meant the expertise that has to be tapped, but no decision is taken in the back of the PTAs; they are working together.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister agree that until we have provision of hot meals, the priorities not to provide any food or meal but a balanced and nutritious meal, and if so, will he agree that white bread, butter and processed cheese or biscuits that, of course, traditionally contain a lot of saturated fat and salt, do not foot the bill?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, he is speaking to a doctor who is aware of all this, and I must say...

(Interruptions)

C'est bon, il faut le dire. I will say that we go according to the norms; all that is provided to the children are, in fact, in conjunction with what is mentioned in the papers, in the documents which are sent by the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education, and of course, with meetings carried out regularly. Not only meetings, but the Health Inspectors are going as and when to visit the schools to see that what is done is according to the norms.

Mr Issack: Est-ce qu'on peut avoir une idée de ce que coûtent ces repas par jour au gouvernement?

Dr. Bunwaree: Oui, on peut vous donner une idée ; c'est R 75 par *meal*, mais on n'est pas arrivé à R 75 *for hot meal*. Le repas qui est offert pour l'instant est dans les alentours de R 35 à R 40 par tête, par enfant. En ce qui concerne le nombre d'élèves dans les ZEP *schools*, on peut faire le calcul et vous donner.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, the hon. Minister mentioned that inspections were made, and it was seen that the standards were below, but I don't think it was when the parents were preparing. My question is, Mr Speaker, Sir: does not the hon. Minister think it is also an opportunity to empower the community? Because it would be the mothers of some kids at the schools

who will prepare, where it is possible, where there is this opportunity. Is it not to be considered? Not only the kids will be better cared for, but also it is an opportunity to empower the community.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, empower the community to provide the food you mean. Well, of course, but then the community will have to agree to all the conditions that the Minister of Education spelt out *avec le concours du ministère de la Santé*, and then, as I said, the food caterers will have to hold the certificate of hazard analysis. We are not going to take any risk at all. Will the parents be able to do that? *Le plan de maîtrise sanitaire d'après les normes de l'Union européenne*. So, we are going in another direction. I wish the House to be aware of that.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Minister whether there are still some private firms which are offering fruits to ZEP schools, whether this project by certain firms is still on, and whether this can be encouraged to other ZEP schools island-wide?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, there are. I am going to circulate the list, and the hon. Member will see all ZEP schools that are providing the food.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Minister has said that all the time he is discussing with the Ministry of Health, but I still find it strange as to why, up to now, white bread is being distributed.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member must put a question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has been advised by the Ministry of Health to serve brown bread instead of white bread?

Dr. Bunwaree: I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there is a balanced diet that is proposed by the Ministry of Health. So, this can be brown bread, it can also be white bread because the children are not diabetic already. So, it is a question of balance, of equilibrium. All this is taken care of by the Ministry of Health, and they provide the diet balanced meal to the schools.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister started to answer the question by reminding the House about what happened in Bambous school, when hundreds of children approximately were food poisoned. This question was raised some months back in this House by myself, and I think my friend, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has provided the necessary services to these children? Because their parents, in fact, went to school, most of them were on bed in hospital for a few days afterwards; traumatised, and some of them are still suffering from the sequel of this food poisoning. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the needful has been done to compensate these children or their parents materially, or in some other way?

Dr. Bunwaree: Compensation; the point did not arise as such. But, then, the children have been followed up, and are still being followed up until now. This has been done jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

Mr Speaker: Last question hon. Ms Anquetil.

Ms Anquetil: Merci, M. le président. Dans un communiqué de presse du ministère de l'Éducation, il est indiqué que si le projet de repas chaud est maintenu, l'inspectorat sanitaire aura à adopter le système HACCP, comme indiqué par le ministre tout à l'heure. Est-ce que le ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre s'il aurait vérifié auprès de son collègue, le ministre de la Santé, quand cette formation sera dispensée, et si la commande des équipements a été faite ? Merci.

Dr. Bunwaree: C'est une affaire de technicité. Les techniciens sont en train de considérer ce problème, mais je dois dire qu'il y a des compagnies dans le pays qui le font déjà, et qui ont déjà le certificat. Mais ceux qui vont coter pour le travail quand le moment viendra, pour les *tenders*, tout le monde doit avoir ce certificat.

SAMU - LATE MRS L. D. B. - ASSISTANCE

(No. B/651) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to late Mrs L. D. B., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the *Service d'Aide Médicale d'Urgence* (SAMU), information as to if it had received a request for assistance therefor, on 06 April 2013 and, if so, indicate the time at which the -

- (a) said request was received, and
- (b) assistance was given, if any.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that our SAMU Service is based on the French model and that the procedure outlined is the same as that in France.

I am informed that all calls made on telephone number "114", which is the SAMU emergency line are received at the SAMU Control Room, located at Victoria Hospital. The process is as follows, briefly –

- (i) Once a call is received on telephone number "114", a pre-taped generic message of 14 second duration is heard, as follows which I am quoting very briefly and quickly –

"Bonjour,

Vous avez appelé le SAMU, ne quittez pas, nous allons donner suite à votre appel.

Soyez prêt à nous donner -

- *vosre nom;*
- *prénom;*
- *adresse;*
- *le motif de votre appel.*

Merci.”

It is generic.

- (ii) Mr Speaker, Sir, after the generic message, there is a pause of 3 seconds. The call is then automatically transmitted to the “*permanencier*”, a trained paramedical personnel who answers the call, records the particulars of the caller and performs a preliminary triage.
- (iii) The “*permanencier*” then relays the call to the “*Médecin Régulateur*” who is an Emergency Physician posted in the SAMU Control Room, and
- (iv) the “*Médecin Régulateur*”, after taking cognizance of all clinical details given by the caller, decides whether to send a SAMU ambulance or otherwise. If a SAMU ambulance is required, arrangements are made to send same from the nearest regional hospital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, in the case of late Mrs L. D. B., according to the recording system at the Control Room 114 at Victoria Hospital, on 06 April 2013 at 12:33:04, a male caller said “ALLO” followed by a pre-taped generic message of 14 seconds of the SAMU. While the pre-taped message was on, a female voice was heard in the background: “*Pas amène moi clinique, amène moi l’hôpital.*” There was then the pause of 3 seconds after which the call ended before reaching the “*permanencier*” and subsequent transfer, if needed, to the “*Médecin Régulateur*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that in view of the circumstances mentioned above, the request for any assistance by SAMU was not made.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the person calling not only gave his name, but also mentioned that his wife was a Charge Nurse, Ag. Ward Manager, at the Victoria Hospital?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to say one thing. The SAMU has got a system which is foolproof. I have been told about that. I have got four versions. One version from what I have been told by the SAMU; another version from what I have read in the newspaper; another version from the husband of the late lady who passed away, and now I am having a fourth version in the National Assembly.

It is quite difficult for me, as Minister, to be able to tell you which of these four versions is the correct one. In the process, a lady who has served for 38 years in the hospital - at Victoria Hospital - as

Charge Nurse and Ag. Ward Manager, has passed away. This is a serious issue, and I am prepared to open an enquiry and to seek legal advice from the Attorney General's Office for *la marche à suivre*.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister also aware that not only this lady has been serving for long years, but till the eve of her death, on 06 April, she was still in service? Is the hon. Minister also aware that they arrived some minutes late at the hospital, and it is some minutes after their arrival that this lady passed away? Is he aware that this gentleman who has just lost his wife did not get any help? Even when he asked for help to transport the corpse to the house, he was refused? It is not in the protocol to carry corpse, but the way this was treated!

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the main question is not actually what the hon. lady has just asked me. I have read, what she is telling me, through the press as well. But, at the same time, I must say that when the person was brought in the hospital, I have seen in the report the issue is whether she was brought in dead or not. And then, she was issued with a certificate of heart failure. But, as hon. Mrs Labelle rightly said, it is not the policy of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to make arrangements for the return of the dead body to the place where there are going to be the funerals.

REHABILITATION YOUTH CENTRE - INMATES

(No. B/652) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the inmates undergoing sentence and on remand respectively at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre, she will, for the benefit of the House, in each case, obtain information as to the number thereof, gender-wise, who are -

- (a) involved in -
 - (i) serious offences, and
 - (ii) minor offences, and
- (b) categorised as Child Beyond Control.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 2 Rehabilitation Youth Centres, that is 1 for boys and 1 for girls, that cater for young offenders under 18 years who are either convicted for crimes or are children beyond control and also those who are on remand.

Currently, the 33 girls are housed at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre (Girls).

The details of the girls undergoing sentence are as follows -

Number sentenced:	26
Number involved in serious offence:	1

Number involved in minor offence:	NIL
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Number of children beyond control:	25
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Seven girls are on remand. Out of them, one is involved in a serious offence and six are children beyond control.

Currently, 15 boys are housed at the Rehabilitation Youth Centre (Boys).

The details of the boys undergoing sentence are as follows -

Number sentenced:	8
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Number involved in serious offence:	NIL
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Number involved in minor offence:	NIL
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Number of children beyond control:	8
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Seven boys are on remand. Out of them, two are involved in serious offences, and five are children beyond control.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that for serious offences the girls are at the RYC. Has she mentioned that the boys who have committed serious offences are not there because they are at the CYC, that is, the Correctional Youth Centre?

Mrs Bappoo: I mean, Mr Speaker, Sir, as there is no CYC for girls. So, girls with serious offences – fortunately, there is one girl with serious offence and that girl is admitted at the RYC. But, at the RYC Boys, even there, there is one boy under serious offence, not to the extent of a serious offence to be admitted in a CYC, but to the RYC for rehabilitation.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the figures just given by the hon. Minister show that most of the children who are at RYC are being categorised as child beyond control. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a survey to see whether it is the children who are beyond control, or the parents cannot control the kids; they do not have any control? Where is the fault, I would say?

Mrs Bappoo: But here, Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot challenge the Court's decision. It is the Court which refers the child to the rehabilitation centre due to a problem of child beyond control. It is not a matter of survey, in spite it can also be done, yes. But the child is referred to the RYC under a Court Order, which is a judgement from Court.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, maybe the word 'survey' is not the right one; whether there has been an enquiry regarding the parents to evaluate the capacity of the parents. Because categorising the children beyond control and putting them in a centre as if to punish them, where maybe the fault stays

with the parents. So, with regard to that kind of study regarding the parents, is there something being done regarding that issue?

Mrs Bappoo: But, before the child, Mr Speaker, Sir, is being referred under Court Order to the RYC, there is lot of mediations and consultations going on by the Probation Office, where the parents are also involved. Those children with minor offences do not even come to the RYC. They go to the Probation Home. We have other centres which are the Probation Home for girls, and the boys' hostel with minor offences. But the Probation Service takes charge of meeting the parents, and counselling them on the problems affecting that particular child.

Mrs Ribot: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir de l'honorable ministre si ces enfants qui sont au RYC sont scolarisés.

Mrs Bappoo: Of course, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is a programme which has been put up at the level of the RYCs. Some children are being accompanied by the Rehabilitation Officers, and they attend courses at the MITD. For another group, there is a teacher from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources who is posted to the RYC for the programme. And then, there are also other NGOs and resource persons who are involved for the functional education programme of these children.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned about education. Is she aware that the teachers who are being sent by the Ministry have a lot of difficulties, and they barely work with the children? Will the hon. Minister liaise with her colleague to see to it that a full-fledged special education needs teacher be sent there because the other teachers just can't cope?

Mrs Bappoo: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have just said; there are various programmes for academic and functional education for the inmates at the RYC. For example, there is only one teacher who comes from the Ministry of Education to give the functional education and vocational training to some of the children. Others, as I have just said, are three boys and two girls who have been enrolled on a foundation course, and they attend Colonel Maingard MITD, Beau Bassin. There are another three boys and five girls who have a tailor-made course for them because they are children coming from various walks of life. All of them are not of the same level. So, there are programmes which are being tailor-made for them at the MITD, and there are three boys and five girls there. Moreover, there are another five girls who are going to be enrolled for the next year programme. Another two boys and four girls attend CEDEM, which put up an exam-oriented programme for them, and then they take part in the CPE. So, it is not one programme as such for catering for their education. They are divided into groups according to their level of knowledge and education.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are talking about Rehabilitation Youth Centre. May I ask the hon. Minister what is the mechanism, if any, to monitor the rehabilitation of these adolescents?

Mrs Bappoo: Not the adults, the minors! Adolescents, okay! Mr Speaker, Sir, when I assumed duty at the Ministry of Social Security in 2005, there was none as capacity building programmes for the officers, and even the RYC girls. The staff who were involved there were only Prison Officers seconded for rehabilitation work, and I could not understand that situation. Then, we took relevant action at the level of the Ministry. We got the post funded in the Budget, and we recruited staff also for the rehabilitation work at the girls' centre. On top of this, I sought the collaboration from French authorities, and in 2007 we had a delegation from Reunion Island who came to assess the situation, and they made their report. Accordingly, the delegation sent another team coming from *La Direction Départementale de la Protection Judiciaire de la Jeunesse de Paris (Ministère de la Justice)* who came over, made a survey, and submitted their recommendations. The first priority from the plan of action that was worked out was training of the staff. So, for two consecutive years, we had put up training programme for the rehabilitation officers, because rehabilitation needs to be understood. It is not just as if what is going on in the Prison Department. I am fully satisfied with the training that has been given, that the girls and boys are having good rehabilitation programme, and during my last mission to Reunion Island, I pursued further collaboration. There is another resource person who will be coming to give more training to the staff, and also it has been agreed that there will be, under Regional Cooperation Programme, exchange programmes for the staff to go to Reunion Island and see how the work is being done there, gain knowledge and come back, so that they can thereafter implement new strategies. So, I am confident about the new rehabilitation programme carried out by the officers, which has never been there before.

Dr. S. Boolell: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether, among those children in both institutions, there are some who could have been bailed out, and there is no procedure for bailing them out, and they stay there.

Mrs Bappoo: This is not at my level, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is at the level of the Court, but I have said that there are five who are referred on remand, and they are being referred to the institution pending the final Court Order.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are three cases of sexually and physically child abuse from my own constituency, by the parents, to the Police Station, on the basis of 'child beyond control'. My concern is the categorisation of 'child beyond control'. Does the hon. Minister not consider it as controversy for parents having abused their children and proceed a case against their own children as 'child beyond control'?

Mrs Bappoo: These are two different aspects of opinions which are being mentioned by the hon. Member. There are many cases, I should say, which are being involved at the level of the CDU, the Child Protection Unit, involving the parents, etc., but these are those undergoing Probation Service. Probation Service submits its report to the Court; the Court action comes in. The Magistrate's decision is being given, and then the child is being sent to our rehabilitation centre. This is one part, and the other is for the Ministry of Gender to take care.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there are not any children in the Rehabilitation Youth Centres who could leave those Centres to go to any other shelter instead of remaining in the Rehabilitation Centres, and they are remaining there because no one is ready to take care of them.

Mrs Bappoo: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is the Court's decision. I cannot advise or give orders to the Court not to send them to the RYC, and send them to a shelter! It is the Court's decision.

Mr Obeegadoo: It is the Court's decision, but the hon. Minister has the power to propose legislation. According to the Reform Institutions Act 1988, there should exist distinct Correctional Youth Centres for offences that do not involve imprisonment, and Rehabilitation Youth Centres for more – should we say – serious offences; and there is the category of 'children beyond control'. Are we to understand that, at least, for girls, everybody is lumped under one single centre, and if so, is it not the responsibility of the hon. Minister to take appropriate steps and propose legislation, if necessary, so that these children can be afforded the appropriate care?

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, I do agree with the hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir, because actually we are reviewing the Young Offenders Act, and when the Young Offenders Bill will come to the House, I am sure that this aspect will be taken. Fortunately, there is only one girl with serious offence, and for that one inmate we have to keep one officer in attendance 24 hours, so that she does not mix with the other girls with mild offences. It is a problem, but the fact that there is no CYC for girls, that one girl gets admission to the RYC, which is the Rehabilitation Youth Centre. But I am sure that the reviewing of the Young Offenders Act will take care of this aspect.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister saying that courses that are CPE-oriented are provided to these children. May we know how many of these children sat for the CPE exams for the last five years, and how many of them passed successfully these exams?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, frankly speaking, I do not have the figures with me. I do remember, last year, there were two who were successful in the CPE, but I can check and submit the details.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the case of adults, prison inmates, we know that surveys by NGOs or even official agencies have shown that, at least, 80% reoffend after having been released from jail. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any survey of the RYC - whether for boys or girls - to assess the effectiveness of the rehabilitation, be it those having been convicted of criminal offences or those with behavioural problems according to parents.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no survey as such, but till now there is a sort of follow-up mechanism to follow these children once they leave the RYC, and we have also put up one new project with an NGO, which is the 'Half Way Home', so that we can follow up the case of these inmates released from the RYC, *et que d'autres rechutes ne soient pas envisagées*. It is a good idea. We do take note of it. Maybe, a sort of survey will be, indeed, helpful for future strategies.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister mentioned that when she assumed office, there has been recruitment of staff for rehabilitation. I would like to know in which grade the staff were recruited, and whether a behavioural psychologist or any other psychologist was recruited particularly, because we have so many children categorised as beyond control, and whether these children categorised as beyond control have been diagnosed with a particular psychological or behavioural problem.

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, we have recruited psychologists for the Probation Service, and we give psychological support and psychological counselling, which is on for the inmates. I do not have exactly the scheme of service and the qualification, but it is the Ministry of Civil Service that has worked out on the scheme of service and qualification. The PSC has done the interview, and this is how we have got new Rehabilitation Officers for the girls' section. The boys' Centre had their staff recruited already before.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

(No. B/653) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to poverty, he will state if any survey has been carried out to identify pockets thereof and, if so, indicate –

- (a) out of the total number thereof, the number thereof located in the region of Savanne and Black River, and
- (b) the measures taken, if any, for the alleviation thereof.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the mandate of my Ministry is to cater for vulnerable families whose combined household income does not exceed Rs6,200 a month excluding social aid.

Mr Speaker, Sir, tackling poverty is an ongoing and relentless battle. Poverty is not something that is peculiar to Mauritius only. In fact, we have poor people all over the world, even in the so-called rich democracies.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that surveys across the island are being carried out on a regular basis in view of updating its existing database as well as identifying new cases of poverty. And this is a continuous exercise. Some 15 and 25 pockets of poverty are located in the districts of Savanne and Black River respectively.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, I have on several occasions informed the House that the poverty alleviation strategy of my Ministry is based on three main pillars, namely -

- (i) Social Housing and Community Empowerment;
- (ii) Child Welfare and Family Development, and
- (iii) Placement and Training.

For the districts of Savanne and Black River, I am tabling a list of projects that have been implemented by the Foundation as well as those which are in the pipeline.

With your permission, however, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to mention a few of them -

- (i) construction of a Day Care Centre;
- (ii) upgrading of Children Playground;
- (iii) running of remedial classes for students of Standards V and VI;
- (iv) distribution of school materials;
- (v) setting up of a Music and Art Academy;
- (vi) provision of '*accompagnement scolaire*', meals, transport, fees to Pre-Primary and Primary Students up to Std. II;
- (vii) setting up of Learning Corners;
- (viii) construction of Toilet Blocks;
- (ix) Life Skills Training Programmes;

- (x) junior life skill and Adult Literacy;
- (xi) project for Cooperative Development by NICE;
- (xii) construction of Corrugated Iron Sheets housing units and concrete houses with CIS roof and Integrated Housing Projects;
- (xiii) construction of Drains and resurfacing of access roads.

The list is not exhaustive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as part of the vision of the Government regarding poverty alleviation. I wish to reassure the House that my Ministry is leaving no stone unturned to improve the plight of the vulnerable families in Mauritius as well as to facilitate their inclusive integration in the mainstream of our society.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us, out of the poverty pockets identified in these regions, the districts of Savanne and Black River, how many poverty pockets have been insistent poor, and new poverty pockets identified?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can table a list. As I said, in Savanne, we have got 15 pockets of poverty, and in Black River 25. I will circulate the list for the benefit of the hon. Member.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the Government talking about a list of measures or intervention programmes in the region. I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware - yes, the life skill management programmes are being distributed in my own region - that there is no logistic, no blackboard, no resources to help these people to promote the life skill management programme that he has implemented in the region.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the manual, which is a working document, we have already a full-fledged manual for life skills, and about what the hon. Member is mentioning regarding equipment, blackboards, I will check and inform the House.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, surely there has been a list mentioned, but still I would like to insist. Can the hon. Minister inform the House, since poverty is ongoing, what specific device intervention his Ministry has in place to reduce the incidence of poverty within a poverty pocket in the country as a whole in the short run, medium run and long run, and how he intends to monitor this trend?

Mr Dayal: I thank the hon. Member for this question. Mr Speaker, Sir, for the purpose of a better reach out, the activities of NEF have been reorganised, have been regrouped under three specific zones, with each zone catering for three districts. Each zone is under the direct responsibility of a Programme Manager who is fully in charge of the timely implementation of projects in his or her zone.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in this regard, an integrated approach is being adopted with respect to each pocket of poverty. This approach is fully encapsulated in a consolidated strategy document, which contains information on the specific nature of the projects, the objectives, the number of beneficiaries in each pocket of poverty. I have got with me the tools for each zone that we want to reach out in order to empower those who are really vulnerable, but this is a tool. I can invite the Member to consult them.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened carefully to the hon. Minister who has, therefore, informed the House that, for the districts of Savanne and Black River, there are about 40 pockets of poverty. When hon. Sithanen came a few years ago with this concept of absolute poverty, at that time he identified 23 pockets of poverty in these two districts. It would seem, therefore, that the pockets have increased in number. The hon. Minister has given us a long explanation of his plan to combat poverty alleviation. Some two weeks ago, in *l'Express*, it was mentioned that in La Gaulette JSS there are 25 students in Forms I and II residing in the vicinity of that area, that is, Coteau Raffin, one of these pockets of poverty precisely where these 25 kids had stopped going to school to follow classes because they had no bread, no food to bring to school. Can I ask the hon. Minister, in the face of such a situation, what can the Ministry propose to help these children, to allow them to go back to school because they cannot afford? Of course, private NGOs have already tried to help – I know some of them – but, in that case, on a sustainable basis. Can the Ministry help?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I am aware of the situation, and I already sent my Programme Manager to look into the matter. We do have a programme, which we call the PS, that is, the Primary School, and the PPS, the Pre-Primary School, whereby we offer meals, we offer *accompagnement*, we offer transport, fees, etc. I am aware of the situation, and this is being looked into.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in his plan, he has made a difference between poverty and absolute poverty, as was described by Dr. Sithanen, when...

Mr Speaker: You are asking the Minister for a definition of poverty. Put a proper question in line with the original question!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sorry! I am asking for a reply, because that term of absolute poverty...

Mr Speaker: I have ruled. Next question, hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his Budget, the former Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance mentioned 7,000 cases of families in absolute poverty. The last statistics say that we have 11,600 families living in absolute poverty. So, we move from 7,000 to 11,000 families. May I ask the hon.

Minister whether he will agree with me that we are losing the battle against poverty in spite of all the funds that we have been putting every year in our Budgets?

Mr Speaker: That's a proper question.

Mr Dayal: Definitely not, Mr Speaker, Sir. When he was talking about the 7,000 families, the poverty line was Rs4,000. Today, the poverty line has been increased. The income threshold is Rs6,200. Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Dayal: There was a Nobel Prize winner who came to this island, namely Mr Joseph Stiglitz. He was stunned by what this country is doing, despite the fact...

(Interruptions)

Because the question is this way, I think that I have to answer it the way the hon. Member put the question. Despite the fact that we do not have gold, silver, petroleum products sprouting from the soil of Mauritius, we've got an extensive Welfare State and, on top of that, we've got a Ministry of Social Integration to empower those who are vulnerable...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, I have to stop you.

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Silence! The question of hon. Bodha is quite clear. Therefore, you may answer, if you wish, the question of hon. Bodha, as put to you.

Mr Dayal: Absolutely not true!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines has asked for the number of poor in the districts of Savanne and Black River. Could the hon. Minister explain to us how is it that, three months after the publication of the Household Budget Survey, we still do not have disaggregated data to tell us how many poor there are in the district of Black River-Savanne, and will he tell us whatever happened to the Policy Unit set up by his predecessor, precisely for research and analysis?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is confusing between absolute poverty and relative poverty.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister talking about the Rs6,200 for a family to live today. Can the hon. Minister tell us, from his own experience, how can a family of three, four, six, seven, live on Rs6,200 to buy food, to pay the rent - some families in my own constituency have a rent of Rs3,000, or a rent of Rs1,200 to pay, and have to send their children to school or the hospital - and every basic human rights can be respected with Rs6,200?

Mr Dayal: Definitely, Mr Speaker, Sir, the poverty line is going to be reviewed shortly.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the hon. Minister mentioned that surveys on poverty are carried out on a regular basis. Could the hon. Minister state to the House when was the last survey carried out island-wide, what are the findings, and whether he is prepared to lay on the Table of the Assembly the findings of the last survey carried out?

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, this is an ongoing exercise. The survey started in July last year, and ended in December last year. As I said, we got a definite programme established - I just mentioned. This is a working tool...

(Interruptions)

I am going to tell you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Dayal: I can tell the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, according to the survey, we have got 152 pockets of poverty island-wise, involving some 12,839 families.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to ask my question again very clearly. The hon. Minister's predecessor, the now Minister of Finance, in his wisdom, set up a Policy Unit, when he was at that Ministry, to research poverty issues and analyse data available. I would like to know whether that Policy Unit still exists, and if not, why not.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, for this one, I am going to thank the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Yes. As I said, poverty alleviation is an ongoing battle. We have almost completed a very comprehensive exercise in regard to monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment of our programme. We are now embarking on a very complex framework for the setting up of a Poverty Observatory, which demands lots of research and analysis. We have had consultations with the World Bank.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! If I have understood the hon. Member, the question is focused on a Policy Unit; whether it exists or not.

Mr Dayal: There was a Policy Unit that existed. Now an exercise is being undertaken, and we are coming with the setting up of a Poverty Observatory with the collaboration of the World Bank.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a question?

Mr Ganoo: Did I understand the hon. Minister to say, in his last but one answer, that there are now about 12,000 families living in absolute poverty? *D'après le dernier rapport du Bureau des statistiques, le Bureau central des statistiques avait chiffré les familles mauriciennes touchées par la pauvreté absolue au nombre de 11,600. Donc, le ministre est en train de confirmer que la pauvreté gagne du terrain à Maurice!*

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, again the difference has to be made regarding relative poverty and absolute poverty. I am telling about household, and what has been mentioned is individual.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Some silence! Last question hon. Mrs Radegonde-Haines!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Henry!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: ...in reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, talking about individual and household. May I ask the hon. Minister, when he talked about absolute and relative...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Some silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Henry!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister, in reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, talking about the difference between individual and household relative. When we talk about poverty, the hon. Minister already defines poverty for his own Ministry at 6.2. But we are talking about the statistics that he gave; only about household income-based. He is talking about income-based. But, in Mauritius, unfortunately, we do not have a bench to measure poverty. We measure the income

test. Will the hon. Minister consider the relative and absolute poverty to be able to really combat poverty in Mauritius? Because if we always go about the income test, there will be no...

Mr Speaker: No, you are making a speech, hon. Member! Your question is understood!

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned that the mandate of my Ministry is clear. I deal with households with less than Rs6,200, with three definite programmes to address the problem of absolute poverty.

NATIONAL HERITAGE TRUST FUND – DIRECTOR – TRAINING PROGRAMME

(No. B/654) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floréal)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Director of the National Heritage Trust Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust Fund, information as to if she has -

- (a) allegedly received money for a course in Delhi which she did not attend, and
- (b) been overpaid in connection with her stay in the United Kingdom for attending a training program and, if so, indicate the –
 - (i) disciplinary measures taken against her in connection therewith, if any, and
 - (ii) if money has been refunded and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ No. B/192 I stated that the ICAC carried out an enquiry regarding alleged malpractices by the Director of the National Heritage Fund. I am informed that the issue raised at parts (a) and (b) were included in the enquiry.

After enquiry, the ICAC referred the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions who advised that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge and recommended that disciplinary proceedings be preferred in the matter.

As regards disciplinary proceedings, I am further informed by the Board of the National Heritage Fund that the matter is in process after consultations with its legal adviser.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will confirm to the House that this lady took money to attend a course from the University of Birmingham, and she never attended, as per a mail from that University, and a sum of £3,896 as *per diem* for some eight days were paid? I am not talking about the cost of the course, which is some £2,925, and also the air ticket. This lady never attended, as per the letter from the University of Birmingham!

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has some privileged information. An enquiry is on. If she has such information, she could please hand over to those who are enquiring.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to hand over to anyone. I am in Parliament, and I am going to table a copy of the mail - sent by this University to the lady - stating that she has not attended the course. I am sure that the hon. Minister - there is an Audit Report that was asked by the Ministry of Arts and Culture - has a copy of an Audit Report at his Ministry. I am surprised that he does not have the information which is laid at his Ministry! I am going to table a copy of this mail because it seems that the Minister does not have the copy laid at his Ministry.

The second question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is regarding the mission to Delhi. Is the hon. Minister aware that the same lady took some £3,400 as *per diem* to attend a course in Delhi, which course was cancelled prior to the supposed date of departure of this lady?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, ICAC conducted an enquiry. The Police were taking the lead at a point in time, but before that the hon. Member mentioned that there was an internal audit enquiry being held by the Ministry. They did not want to have in parallel two enquiries. When ICAC took over...

(Interruptions)

...it enquired, and finally ICAC sent its report to the Police. After enquiry, ICAC referred the matter to the DPP, who has advised that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am really surprised when the Minister is talking about evidence! May I ask him what evidence was submitted either to ICAC or to the Police? What information, and on what issues ICAC was requested to enquire? Because there are a lot of malpractices in the Audit Report concerning this lady. A lot; some dozen! I do not know which issues were sent either to the ICAC or to the Police to enquire. May I ask the Minister which issues were sent to ICAC for enquiry?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry and the NHTF Board collaborated totally with ICAC. If the hon. Member wants to collaborate with ICAC, she goes ahead!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, last time, when the question was put, the same answer was that there will be an enquiry. My question was: has the Minister sought information from his officers to know which issues, among the dozen, in the Audit Report, were submitted to ICAC for enquiry?

Mr Choonee: I believe ICAC, as an independent organisation, did what it had to do, and we collaborated fully; all the information needed was provided to ICAC.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he will, for the benefit of the House, seek information from his Ministry to see which issues were sent to ICAC for enquiry?

Mr Choonee: I can't understand what exactly the hon. Member wants to know from me!

(Interruptions)

I have said that the Ministry has collaborated fully, the Board has collaborated fully, and now we have reached the stage...

(Interruptions)

...where the DPP requested for disciplinary proceedings to be preferred in the matter. We have informed the Board. It has now taken up the matter, and they have consulted their legal adviser to see what is the way forward.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure you are as shocked as all of us here, listening to the answer of the hon. Minister regarding such a serious allegation!

Mr Speaker: No, No! I am insured against shock!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

...now that the Board intends to initiate proceedings against that lady, whether she is still in office, and if so, whether the Ministry will recommend that she be suspended, pending the disciplinary proceedings?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not take the decision; it is for the Board to decide.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: I did not hear the...

(Interruptions)

I did not hear the hon. Minister answer the second part; whether this lady has refunded all the money which she took as *per diem* for courses which she has not attended. Mr Speaker, Sir, surely his Ministry is aware whether this lady has refunded the money!

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have all this information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: From what we have heard and from what we know, this lady benefited from highly political backing! Can the hon. Minister inform the House - as the Prime Minister stated, nobody is above the law - that he will see to it that there will not be any interference in whatever enquiry is going on?

(Interruptions)

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree that there will be no political interference, and whatever action deemed necessary will be taken.

Mr Roopun: Surely, the Ministry of Arts and Culture has a member on this Board. Can the hon. Minister give the guarantee to this House that the representative of his Ministry will see to it and move that the issue be raised at the level of the Board, so that this person be suspended, pending disciplinary proceedings?

(Interruptions)

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

...this is a Board...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Choonee: This is a Board where we have at least nine Ministries which are represented.

(Interruptions)

At least nine, plus some other institutions! The Chairperson is nominated by the hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

They are doing...

(Interruptions)

I am mentioning about the Chairperson, not the Director. I am saying that they have their total independence. They have to take the decision! And they will come up with something solid.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Being given that many issues have been raised in this House today, will the hon. Minister consider sending this case again to the Police and reopening an enquiry?

Mr Choonee: No, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister table the recommendation that disciplinary action be taken against that lady, and may we know also what are the charges that will be laid?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I said that the Board is now having consultations with its legal adviser. Once they finish the job, if we are in a position to deposit that recommendation, we will do it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I heard the hon. Minister repeating that now the Board is in contact with the legal adviser, and so on. May I ask him whether there is any particular reason why it is only after two years? Because the Audit Report is dated August 2011; it was the second report. There was another report dated July 2011. So, why it is only after two years that now this action is being initiated? Is there any particular reason why the Board did not contact the legal adviser to do what they are doing now?

Mr Choonee: The legal adviser will do what he has to do on the recommendation of the Board, but prior to that, the enquiry was conducted by ICAC; they took their own time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Alright! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/669 and B/680 have been withdrawn. Next question, hon. Ms Anquetil!

REUNION ISLAND – UNWTO - CONFERENCE

(No. B/655) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floréal) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Conference on Sustainable Development of Tourism in Islands, jointly organised by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the French Government, in Reunion Island, to be held from 11 to 13 September 2013, he will state if his Ministry

will participate therein and, if so, indicate if he is proposing to invite the UNWTO to undertake missions and projects in Mauritius.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry will participate in the forthcoming Conference on Sustainable Development of Tourism in Islands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that during my last meeting with the Secretary General of the UNWTO in Dubai in May 2013, I have invited him to visit Mauritius so as to discuss avenues of cooperation and projects that could be implemented in collaboration with the UNWTO in Mauritius.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that the presence of UNWTO, the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, will offer a unique opportunity to promote Mauritius worldwide, can the hon. Minister state whether his Ministry will propose Government to invite the UNWTO to celebrate the World Tourism Day in 2014 or 2015 in our country?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we wanted to organise a conference, this year, in 2013. However, we are planning it next year now for the World Tourism Day, and the Conference will be on Youth in Tourism.

ATHLETES - CASH PRIZE SCHEME

(No. B/656) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Cash Prize Scheme of his Ministry, he will state the -

- (a) criteria applied therefor and,
- (b) names of the athletes who have recently obtained prizes thereunder, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) performances thereof, and
 - (ii) quantum of the cash prize received.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Cash Prize Scheme for athletes introduced in 1998 which was reviewed in the year 2007 and again in 2011 is an incentive package awarded by the Government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports to athletes who have achieved excellence in major international competitions at regional, continental, intercontinental and world levels. The last revision in 2011 was marked by an increase from 10% to 150%.

The Cash Prize Scheme aims at providing a financial reward to those athletes who have obtained a medal at major international sports events. Major international sporting events are classified in order of levels of competitions into six groups as follows -

Group A	Olympic Games & Youth Olympic Games
Group B	World Championships
Group C	Paralympics Games
Group D	Commonwealth Games, " <i>Jeux de la Francophonie</i> ", Commonwealth Championships & Youth Commonwealth Games
Group E	All Africa Games, African Championships & Youth African Games
Group F	Indian Ocean Islands Games

Mr Speaker, Sir, the quantum of the reward varies from Rs5,000 to Rs1.5 m. and is determined according to the level of competition and medals obtained.

As I just mentioned, the maximum cash prize that an athlete can obtain with the present scheme is Rs1.5 m., that is, a gold medal at the Olympic Games compared to Rs600,000 in the previous scheme.

The scheme also makes provision to reward the coach of the medalist as well. The coach is rewarded at a rate of 40% of the amount received by the athlete having recorded the best performances.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling a document of 12 pages giving details of the criteria, conditions, procedures for allocation of cash and quantum of cash awarded under the scheme.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling a document giving the names of the athletes who have recently obtained prizes, their performances and the quantum of the cash prize awarded.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that 41 persons have been rewarded with prizes at the recent Cash Prize Ceremony organised by my Ministry on Saturday 15 June 2013 at Le Caudan Waterfront, Port Louis. The details are as follows -

18 Athletes and 4 Coaches were rewarded with cash for a total sum of Rs958,300 as per the Cash Prize Scheme, while 13 Athletes and 6 Coaches were each rewarded with a shield.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il expliquer à la Chambre, ce que je considère comme une disparité, le fait que récemment, comme il vient de nous le dire, R 144,000 ont été offertes à un tireur de boxe française pour une médaille de bronze dans une phase qualificative des championnats du monde, alors que deux tireurs de *kickboxing*, pourtant médaillés d'or lors de la récente

Coupe du monde en Hongrie, n'ont reçu eux que R 100,000 chacun ? Le ministre peut-il donc nous expliquer cette disparité?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for, at least, giving me the opportunity to explain to hon. Members the issue. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware of representations made by the Kickboxing Federation in that respect. Presently, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Cash Prize Scheme does not cover the World Cup tournaments in kickboxing. Being given that - and this the hon. Member should note it down - several World Cups are organised in the same year, it is unbelievable. At the world level events, only World Kickboxing Championship, *c'est-à-dire Championnat du monde de kickboxing*, is covered under the present scheme.

However, as has been the case in the recent past, my Ministry has awarded a cash prize to medalists of the last World Cup Kickboxing Championship held in Hungary from 16 to 19 November 2013, in order to motivate them. Gold medalists were awarded Rs100,000; Silver medalists Rs60,000, and Bronze medalists Rs35,000. My attention has been drawn to the fact that cash prize has unintentionally been missed out in the case of the coach. I have given instructions to catch up with the mishap, and the matter has already been settled.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, as sports and competitions are dynamic, my Ministry proposes to review the Cash Prize Scheme to take on board competitions which have the merit to be included therein. I have already given instructions in that respect.

Regarding the allegations in the case of *boxe française*, the competition in which two Mauritian athletes have participated is the *Championnat du monde de la boxe française*. The qualifying stage was held from 07 to 09 June 2013 in France. The men's finals in the different categories are scheduled at Clermont-Ferrand, France, on 16 November, and the women's finals are scheduled in China.

Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, none of our athletes has qualified for the finals, which only regroup the two best boxers in each category. However, Azie Jean Nael won a bronze medal in the men's 85 kg, as attested by a certificate issued by the concerned international federation. On the basis of his performance at these world championships, *Championnat du monde*, the athlete was rewarded Rs144,000, while his coach was awarded Rs57,600.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out that the bronze medal obtained by athlete Jean Azie is the official third position of one and the same championship which is listed in the Cash Prize Scheme.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous dise s'il a bien reconnu qu'il y a eu maldonne en ce qui concerne la récompense offerte au coach du *kickboxing*. Dans sa réponse, il a fait mention de 40% de la somme qui est offerte à l'athlète; 40% de cette somme doit revenir comme

récompense à l'entraîneur. Mais en ce qui concerne le *kickboxing*, l'entraîneur en question n'a reçu qu'un *shield* en récompense. Peut-il nous expliquer, encore une fois, ce qui s'est passé?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should listen at least to the answer. I just stated that my attention has been drawn to the fact that the cash prize has unintentionally been missed out in the case of the coach. I have already given instruction to catch up with this mishap, and the matter has already been settled.

Mr Quirin: C'est ce que je demande, M. le président. Je demande au ministre s'il reconnaît qu'il y a eu maldonne.

Mr Ritoo: *Pas ine dire dans réponse là ?*

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

FOOTBALL - REORGANISATION

(No. B/657) **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 how he proposes to achieve the proposed objective of the reorganisation thereof with a view to reviving public interest and fostering cohesion through the introduction of a new Sports Bill.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I stated in my previous reply to PQ B/559, two weeks ago, that my Ministry is coming up with a reorganisation of sports and this will be incorporated in the proposed Sports Bill which will be debated here soon. The question of the hon. Member is, in fact, one of the objectives of the new Bill.

Accordingly, Mr Speaker, Sir, it will not be proper for me to start a debate on this issue at this point.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, la réorganisation du football à Maurice est un dossier qui intéresse toute la population. Et c'est pour cela que j'aimerais que le ministre, malgré ce qu'il vient d'affirmer, nous dise s'il a déjà rencontré tous ceux concernés par l'organisation du football concernant ce dossier, et de nous préciser quels sont les points qui ont été discutés, malgré le fait qu'il viendra prochainement avec le *Sports Bill*, on ne sait quand. Mais, en ce qui concerne l'organisation du football, je pense qu'il n'y a rien à cacher ; il peut très bien nous en parler dans cette Chambre.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think, you cannot put the cart before the horse. I stated that I am coming shortly, at the sitting of the next session of the Assembly, with the Sports Bill. So, all these will

be incorporated in the Sports Bill, and I have already started negotiations with our main stakeholder, the Mauritius Football Association.

Mr Quirin: Malgré cela, M. le président, j'insiste, et je demande au ministre s'il peut nous indiquer si, dans la nouvelle loi, il fera provision pour un changement d'appellation des clubs de football.

Mr Speaker: The Bill is not yet before the House. How can the hon. Minister answer? You have to wait for the Bill.

(Interruptions)

Do you have a question?

Mr Quirin: No.

Mr Speaker: Well, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair for the next question!

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

NTC – TATA & BLUE LINE BUSES

(No. B/658) 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 80 Tata and 20 Blue Line buses purchased in 2007, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to when same started to have mechanical problems, indicating the nature thereof in each case.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Transport Corporation that as soon as the first batch of buses were delivered to the NTC in early June 2007 and put in operation, some defects were noted, in four Tata buses as follows -

- (a) Bus No 2666 JU 07 - Rust water emanating from Pax door frame.
 - Screw at Pax door loosening and falling off
 - Defective temperature gauge.
- (b) Bus No 2664 JU 07 - Defective oil switch
 - Stopper bolt at power steering box lock nut missing.
 - Roof vent and air extractor damage
- (c) Bus No 2665 JU 07 - Accelerator spring broke while bus was in operation

- (d) Bus No. 2829 JU 07 - abnormal noise in the brakes excessive vibration of body and instability.

It should be stressed that out of 80 buses, minor problems were noted on only on four buses, and this cannot be referred as a general rule and benchmark to jump to the conclusion that the batch of 80 buses were defective.

With regard to the 20 Ashok Leyland buses, the following mechanical defects were noted on only a few buses. This is considered as acceptable for the following reasons -

- (a) Leakage of a radiator can be caused by flying pebbles while in motion.
- (b) An injection pipe can break at the ends where it is welded to the fittings mounted on the fuel injection pump and injector.
- (c) In 2007, diesel fuel with 2500 P.P.M, the exhaust black emission was high. This was why the fuel injection pump had to be recalibrated in order to minimize the black smoke emission.

Following representations made by the NTC, I requested a local investigating team constituting of Mechanical Engineers of my Ministry to be set up under the supervision of the Chief Engineer of the Mechanical Division to carry out a thorough examination of the Tata buses in October 2008.

All the buses were thoroughly examined and the team concluded as follows -

- (a) the common problems noted could be explained by the fact that the buses had run an average of 90,000 kms over 15 months which is considered as a severe conditions of operation and this led to high wear and tear of the engines. The steering mechanism and the braking system of the buses were overall satisfactory, except that, heavy bumps could be experienced in all the buses, which was a source of discomfort for passengers. The braking system was noisy because of the implementation of the Dangerous Chemical Control Act in 2004. Asbestos was eliminated in brake linings and was replaced by metallic fibres, which was the result of unpleasant squeeks while braking when vehicle has remained unutilised for a long period. However, this problem occurred worldwide and the local representative agreed to review the brake linings as per request of the NTC.
 - (b) This bus is designed to carry 70 passengers and has a maximum gross weight of 16000 kg
-
- It is obvious that heavy duty suspension has to be used.

- When the bus is used fully loaded (i.e. 70 passengers on board), there was absolutely no complaints on such bus.
- However, when the bus was empty or semi loaded, bumps were noticed because the bus had to travel a trip at a scheduled time set by the National Transport Authority.

(c) The buses were being operated very intensively.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there were some weaknesses as far as maintenance was concerned, these weaknesses were attended to as per the recommendations of the team.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got three supplementary questions. If you allow me, I will go one by one.

The Deputy Speaker: One by one.

Dr. Sorefan: Of course, one by one. The hon. Minister has mentioned many problems, and most of the problems happened within one year of delivery of these buses. Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether, after signing the contract with ACC Ltd and Ashok Leyland, there were many specifications changed and approved on inspection during construction stages in India by a delegation from NTC? I give an example: seat capacity was reduced, passivated galvanized steel was changed to mild steel, wheelbase was changed from 5900 mm to 6200 mm, and many others.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, there is a substantive question which has been asked by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, which I am going to answer when it comes.

Mr Jugnauth: The opening of the bids for the tenders, which were launched in June 2005, were scheduled for 06 September 2005. Can the hon. Minister say why were the bids not opened on that day after having obtained the consent and the approval of the CPB?

Mr Bachoo: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is long back, about six to seven years ago. I will definitely have to check the information. But one information that I have is that Tata had to pay liquidated damages of approximately Rs12 m. to Rs13 m. That is what I can say from memory.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the then General Manager, Mr D., and others who were members of the Tender Evaluation Committee, went as delegation on several occasions: in November 2006, January 2007 and April 2007. The cost of air tickets were met by ACC Ltd, and transfer and lodging by Tata Motors. Is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister aware, and can he inform the House what action has been taken, as I think this a corruptive mechanism?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if, for example, according to the conditions of the contract, those officers were supposed to go there at the cost of the company. Those were the days when the CTB was looking after contracts. If these were contained in the contract documents - I am not in possession of those documents - they do not have any problems. Secondly, it is a fact that the General Manager - again I am talking from memory - formed part of the delegation which went to India, but as far as the Evaluation Committee, whether the General Manager participated in it, I need notice of that, because I am not sure about it. As far as the Chief Engineer and the Engineer of the NTC are concerned, both of them participated in the evaluation bid.

Mr Bhagwan: I would like to know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether, at any particular period in time, when defects were discovered on these buses, the attention of the suppliers, Tata or Leyland, was drawn to that effect.

Mr Bachoo: In both cases the attention of the suppliers was drawn. For example, Tata sent two top Engineers to NTC, at their own cost, in order to look at all those buses, and they had even submitted a report, which was submitted to the House few years back, where that report was countersigned by the Chief Engineer and also by the Engineer of NTC. As far as Ashock Leyland is concerned, even in that case also there was a resident Manager who was himself an Engineer; he was looking after those complaints which were registered.

Mr Ganoo: Since the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has made reference to the team of Ashock Leyland which came to Mauritius and made a report, which he produced in the House, can he confirm whether these experts also said that the problem was the failure of the NTC to carry out regular servicing to our buses, and this is why there were a lot of problems; they broke down regularly on the roads?

Mr Bachoo: Well, we have to admit that in one of the reports they had mentioned that regular maintenance was required, but according to the Road Manual itself, after 75,000 kms the buses had to undergo maintenance; that is already mentioned in the report which they had submitted. Even in the report which was submitted by the technicians of my Ministry, it was mentioned that regular maintenance of high quality was required, and that is why we reverted back to the best type of maintenance we had been providing to those Tata buses.

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister said he is not aware whether the General Manager formed part in the Evaluation Committee, but I can say that I got document that he did form part. He went to India...

(Interruptions)

...to change specifications.

(Interruptions)

May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister regarding Blue line...

(Interruptions)

You, shut up! *To les dents là, personne pas envi guété!*

Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether the General Manager and others left for India on July 2007 to approve the modification and alteration on site, at the construction stage for the Blue Line?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if, according to the contract specifications, they were given that right to go and have those buses checked, we do not have any problem. But, as I have just mentioned, I am not aware of those who form part of that delegation. I am going to have a look at it, but if that is contained in the document, then we have no problem. They cannot pick up anybody from outside to go and check the buses. The group must be selected from the NTC itself. It must be the officers of NTC who will have to go, or from NTA, and Engineers from my Ministry.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister also confirm that these eight Tata buses are prototype ones, and they are buses which are found only in the NTC garage at the moment? These are the buses which are mostly *en panne*, and form part of the 100 buses which the hon. Vice-Prime Minister referred to as being the 100 out of our 519 buses which are at the moment parked in the garage.

Mr Bachoo: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, out of the 80 Tata buses, 78 are in good working conditions. Two of them had problems, and they are almost on the verge of total loss. We have, in fact, written to SICOM in order to pay for the insurance, and at the same time they are not prototype buses; prototype can be one. Here they are not prototype buses because there are about 4,000 similar buses running in other countries like Kuwait, UAE, Nigeria and other African countries. Even in Mauritius, UBS has 20 such buses with only one difference; it has manual transmission, whereas the NTC buses have got automatic transmission. Therefore, it is not true to say that they are prototype buses.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Jugnauth! Last question because time is up already!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware...

(Interruptions)

...of a report that has been drawn by the NTC, and has been submitted to his Ministry? Since time is limited, I can only put it to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the NTC has concluded, and I read at paragraph 6.1 –

“The NTC could not have made a worse deal than it did with the Tata 1618 buses”

In fact, it gives all the reasons why the deal is worse, because there have been not only major deviations from the specifications of the award of the contract. The buses that have been sent here are in many ways defective. It is all in this report.

(Interruptions)

May the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Put your question!

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister tell us, in the light of this report, what he intends to do?

Mr Bachoo: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the hon. Member knows more than me, because this report was not submitted to me. I do not know who compel whom to submit such a report, and I am going by the report which was submitted in due form by the committee which was set up under the Chief Engineer of the MPI. They submitted the report. I have got a second report which was prepared by two top Engineers of Tata together with two top Engineers of NTC; both reports are with me.

(Interruptions)

They have not made mention of those details. So, from those reports, I am answering the question. I am not answering on any type of report which was deliberately prepared, or I don't know what was the reason.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is up! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos B/661, B/662, B/670, B/674 and B/675 have been withdrawn.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

(4.08 p.m.)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

EBENE - INFINITY TOWER

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement in response to queries raised regarding the alleged high proportion of unoccupied space at Infinity Tower, Ebène. I wish to inform the House that the National Real Estate Ltd, a subsidiary of State Investment Corporation Ltd, purchased on the Sale and Leaseback Scheme the Infinity Tower on 30 May 2010, for a total price of Rs375 m. The total floor space of this building is 86,909 sq feet, and comprises ground plus eight floors. Presently, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, around 74,000 sq feet are already occupied representing an occupancy rate of 87%. NREL is currently under negotiations with potential tenants for the lease of the remaining space.

(4.09 p.m.)

EDUCATION FOR ALL – CHILDREN & YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions (Mrs S. Bappoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement on the matter raised by the hon. Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands on the urgent need to address the situation of children and youths with disabilities within the perspective of education for all.

Firstly, the NGO Trust Fund was set up under the aegis of my Ministry in 1999 for the provision of grant-in-aid to NGOs including those dealing with the disabled children.

With regard to the payment of a Carer's Allowance to children with disabilities, I must point out that there are two categories: one concerning children with mild to moderate disability, and the other concerning children with severe and multiple disabilities.

Regarding the children with mild to moderate disability, the income ceiling is presently Rs150,000, and as for those with severe and multiple disabilities, the ceiling which was Rs200,000 in 2000 was raised to Rs250,000 in 2006.

We are conscious of the fact that both of these ceilings need to be revised in the light of the on-going developments and, in this connection, a committee has been set up in my Ministry to work on concrete proposals to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance in the context of the next budget exercise.

In addition, I would like to mention that, since 2007, we are providing new and additional allowances for bed-ridden children, children who have severe problems and those who are incontinent. Most of them benefit from all the three allowances of Rs408 each, and this amounts to Rs1224 which is paid on top of their social aid.

Furthermore, this year we are paying an additional allowance of Rs750 for a child with disability whose parents' income does not exceed Rs6,200 monthly, and who registers a 75% attendance at school.

We have also extended free domiciliary medical visits to these children, that is, children with severe disabilities since 2010.

Lastly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the refund of transport costs for disabled children, despite the fact that transport is free for such children since 2005, but in a spirit of solidarity, my Ministry refunds the cost of full bus-fare to accompanying parents of severely disabled children also. This policy enables parents to meet the cost of travelling expenses by van for the children up to around 90% of their budget.

The above measures clearly show, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we effectively care for the well-being of disabled children, and we are committed to enhancing their access to education as a matter of right.

Thank you.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I also wish to make a statement on the issue raised by the hon. Third Member of Curepipe/Midlands, regarding the urgent need to address the situation of children and youth with disabilities within the perspective of education for all, subsequent to my reply on 02 July 2013, as Members will recall.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I highlighted some of the measures taken, which revolve around the four major thrust areas that guides SEN policy – Special Education Need policy. These are -

- (i) increased and improved access to schools;
- (ii) partnership with NGOs;
- (iii) capacity building and support services, and

(iv) the adoption of international best practices.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I spoke on measures taken by both my Ministry and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Reform Institutions regarding the issue of increasing and improving access. I need to emphasise some additional measures in this issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that I am providing the information to indicate that we, at the Education Ministry, are going the extra mile so as to capture all the learners, such that they are given the same opportunities for quality education.

I must highlight that there exists a database for SEN Children at my Ministry. This is being constantly updated in view of the emergence of new cases. In a concrete manner, my Ministry carried out a survey in all primary, secondary and SEN schools last year and the data are being cleared.

The House will appreciate that it is not an easy task to capture all children with disabilities as it is a constant struggle to encourage parents not to see a disability as a stigma. We have to put in a big effort to bring the disabled away from their cloistered existence that had been their fate for a long time. We must also work on societal mindset change: without this, we will only further condemn children with disabilities to remain within four walls.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government has always worked in collaboration with NGOs operating in the SEN Sector, and my Ministry will continue to seek the support of these NGOs as privileged partners. Indeed, caring for those with disabilities is a national concern, and I am the first to recognise the contribution of our partners.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our goal is to move towards a situation that is almost normative in highly developed countries. There, children with serious disabilities are also mainstreamed instead of finding themselves in special schools. I concur that we are not there yet, but the determination is there. The movement has already started and is on, but this takes time; it requires resources - financial, human and otherwise. But, then, this is where we recognise that, while it is the cardinal responsibility for the State to provide education for all, it is also true that this country has a history of partnership with private providers for Special Education.

Let me put the record straight. It is common knowledge that all SEN Schools run by NGOs registered with my Ministry are benefiting from a Grant-in-Aid. The review of the grant-in-aid formula last year by the Office of the Public Sector Governance (OPSG) has resulted in an increase in the budget from Rs26.4 in financial year 2011 to Rs30.4m for financial year 2013.

The NGOs also benefit from assistance from the NGO Trust Fund in the form of an annual grant-in-aid. The total grant-in-aid provided by the Trust Fund amounts to some Rs12 m. annually. It also funds micro-projects of these NGOs with a view to strengthening their capacity.

As regards APEIM, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that it caters for some 257 children with disabilities. These children are mostly accommodated in Government Integrated Units. APEIM is not the only NGO engaged in the education of children with special education needs. There are 37 others that are equally active and registered with my Ministry. While reviewing the grant-in-aid, the concerns of all these 38 NGOs are being looked into.

Recently, representations have been received regarding the insufficiency of the amount of assistance provided under the Grant-in-Aid scheme. On 03 May 2013, my Ministry approached the Office of Public Sector Governance (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, 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 it will provide assistance as member to that Committee.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has accordingly set up a Committee to review the Grant-in-Aid formula with a view to catering to the differentiated needs of children with disabilities.

All the NGOs have already been invited to submit their proposals and are being invited to depone before the Committee. As at date, 24 proposals have been received and five NGOs including APEIM have already deponed before the Committee. The financial situation of all the NGOs is not in the red zone. Many NGOs have expressed satisfaction both verbally and in writing regarding initiatives taken by my Ministry to address this issue.

Let me also inform the House that the same Committee will also look at the norms and standards and quality assurance in SEN schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I consider it equally important to also inform the House that my Ministry has approached the National Remuneration Board through the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment to regulate and prescribe the salaries and conditions of service of all staff working in NGOs running SEN schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to the third policy thrust: Capacity Building and Support services for SEN Sector - It is understood that SEN is a sector that necessitates a building and strengthening of capacity for efficient and effective intervention actions. It is in this context that the MIE, the training arm of my Ministry, has run and is running various courses for different categories of officers from the level of Lecturers, Educational Psychologists, Educational Social Workers, Teachers, Educators, and also courses for parents and carers.

I will spell out some of these ongoing courses -

- (i) Post graduate Diploma in Special Education for lecturers of MIE, educational psychologists and educational social workers;
- (ii) Certificate in Special Education for teachers working in the SEN Sector, including NGOs;
- (iii) Teachers' Diploma in SEN for primary school teachers;
- (iv) Teachers' Licence in SEN for teachers already working in SEN schools.

In order to ensure sustainability, the MIE will continue providing the appropriate courses, after constantly enriching them. Yet another innovation brought to the Diploma Course being dispensed by the MIE to all trainee teachers for the mainstream is a module on SEN, which empowers them to profile the children for an early identification of impairment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are adapting the curriculum of the mainstream to cater for children with hearing and visual impairment.

The Mauritius Institute of Education is reviewing the curriculum and they will take on board, as usual, our partners, the specialist NGOs, with a view to benefiting from their expertise.

For such other types of impairments, as autism, dyslexia, intellectual and physical impairment, the MIE has been requested to develop and adapt curricula, so that at the end of their education cycle, these learners are in presence of a certificate which will raise their self-esteem and eventually help them become independent in life.

On another note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to respond to the different learning needs of children with disabilities. In fact, we have to ensure that the right kind of equipment is provided to them for their overall development. Assistive devices and, as far as possible, state-of-the-art technology have to be placed at their disposal.

True, this will require some investment; but because even children with disabilities have to learn in a modern way, we simply have to make this investment, and we are already moving in the right direction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here, let me inform the House that, as per the Government Programme, all children with visual impairment will soon be provided with a Braille PC. Tenders have already been launched and if everything goes smoothly by the end of October 2013, this measure will be implemented.

I must also inform the House that the new grant-in-aid formula, which was revised last year, provision is made for the grant of 5% of the total grant-in-aid for specialised equipment and furniture.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has embarked on the setting up of five Resource and Development Centres at Ferney, Beau Bassin, Plaine des Papayes, Flacq and Rivière des Anguilles. These centres will provide proximate services to children with disabilities according to their needs. The main objective of SEN Resource and Development Centres is to reach out to children who require Special Education Needs, especially children living in areas where there are no such facilities, and to operate as a one-stop-shop to provide specialised and relevant services and support to SEN children.

Let me inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, with effect from 10 June 2013, the SEN Resource and Development Centre at Ferney has had a soft take off with the active collaboration of APDA and *Lizié dan la main*.

Two other SEN Resource Development Centres at Beau Bassin and Plaines des Papayes will be operational as from the third term of this year, with the collaboration of NGOs registered with my Ministry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to profitably gain from the experience and good practices already taking place in some countries, my Ministry has sought the assistance of other countries.

In this context, a study visit by officers working in the SEN sector of my Ministry was effected in Norway in June 2011 to gain exposure to the state of play of SEN in that country, and for deeper insight into the operation of Resource and Development Centre for Special Needs.

Equally, a Consultancy Assignment was conducted by the European Union on the organisational set-up and functioning of the SEN Sector. With the assistance of the European Union, a Train the Trainers Workshop was organised for some 37 professionals with the objective of enhancing capacity building in the SEN sector, with focus on visual impairment, hearing impairment and dyslexia.

My Ministry is also working with the EU for further training in other areas, namely autism, physical and intellectual impairment.

The French authorities - Reunion essentially - have been approached to share their expertise in the field of SEN. An *Avenant* setting the modalities of the cooperation framework between Reunion and Mauritius was signed in December 2011. I must say that a team of three officials was in Reunion Island week before last week to benefit from the French expertise in the running of SEN Resource Development Centres.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that I am appreciative of the hon. Member having spoken on this issue. Certainly, it was also an opportunity for our fellow countrymen and women to know what are the several actions already undertaken and/or targeted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, true it is that in 2010 I stated that, I quote -

“There is still much to be done”.

True also it is that lots have been done since 2010, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And that will continue to be the case because this is a sector that poses new challenges on a daily basis.

Children with special needs demand an approach that is both humane and guided by goodwill. It cuts across all barriers, and I couldn't agree more...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, don't interrupt the Minister!

Dr. Bunwaree: And I am speaking of children requiring special education needs.

(Interruptions)

It cuts across all barriers, and I couldn't agree more that it certainly is a non-partisan issue. It behooves us, therefore, to ensure that the interests of these children prime above any other consideration.

Inclusion and integration to facilitate adaptation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should become the bywords that should – and do guide us, in fact – our commitment to those children who will become the full-fledged citizens of tomorrow.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe nobody can possibly gainsay the fact that our country has made a big leap ahead in the endeavour to make of children with disabilities full-fledged citizens of the country. In our genuine conviction to provide education, and specially quality education for all, we are unflinching in our doing to ensure that no child with a disability of any kind is left behind.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs M. Martin): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a statement on the matter raised in the National Assembly by the hon. Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands on Tuesday 02 July 2013 on the urgent need to address the situation of the “Children and youth with disabilities” within the perspective of “Education for All”.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Republic of Mauritius acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 26 July 1990. Government, as a body, is highly committed to protecting and upholding the rights of all children. And they also include children with disabilities.

Article 23 of the CRC provides, *inter alia*, for the disabled child to have the right to special care and services, education, assistance and training, to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity, and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration.

In line with the Articles of the CRC, Government adopts a child-centred approach with a view to enable stakeholders to bridge the gap in services and activities for the welfare of children. My Ministry works with actors fostering a common vision of the Mauritian child. The actions of THE CDU are based on the five themes of the CRC which are: Survival, Protection, Participation, Development and Welfare of Children. Our programmes and projects are geared towards ensuring that resources are directed towards the attainment of this common vision. All children of Mauritius, irrespective of whether they are disabled or not, are children of our Republic, and we endeavour to provide them with support, as appropriate.

Children with disabilities are a cross-cutting issue which is considered in policies, plans of actions, programmes and activities of my Ministry. Education, more so for children with disabilities, is viewed as multipronged and wide encompassing, not only academic. For example, the Early Childhood Development Policy Paper, prepared by my Ministry in collaboration with UNICEF as far back as in 1998, is geared towards enhancing the development of children of the age cohort of 3 months to 3 years. This Policy Paper provides for the integration of children with special needs into regular institutions. This is also mentioned in the Institutions for the Welfare and Protection of Children, Regulations 2000, under the Child Protection Act, whereby Managers have to ensure that adequate facilities are available for children with disabilities.

It is easier in the early years of development of a child to detect forms of disability and initiate corrective measures, if any. My Ministry is currently consolidating a database on institutions providing child care services that will also include details on children with disabilities. This information will form the basis for the formulation of appropriate policies as regards these children.

It is to be pointed out that at the time of registration of Child Day Care Centres, my Ministry ensures that the norms and standards are respected and that the carers are equipped with the required skills to identify and cater for children with slight disabilities. The training is provided by para public and private institutions.

More specifically, as regards the aspect of protection, the National Children's Policy and its Plan of Action, elaborated by my Ministry in 2003 and 2004 respectively, cater for all reported cases of children victims of violence as well as disabled children removed from their immediate environment and placed under Court Order in alternative care, be it foster families or shelters or Child Residential Institutions. The protection services offered to all children victims of violence, including disabled ones, comprise counselling, medical, psycho-social and legal assistance as well as family rehabilitation programmes. Presently, there are 516 children placed under Court Order in 19 Child Residential

Institutions. Out of which, 11 institutions are accommodating 41 children, 17 boys and 24 girls with disabilities.

It is to be pointed out that Child Residential Institutions, by virtue of their concept and philosophy are meant to be temporary shelters, for *a priori*, the main objective of the Ministry is to reunify these children with their rehabilitated families.

I would like to reassure hon. Obeegadoo that my Ministry endeavours to provide a sense of normalcy to all children in distress, including children with disabilities. For example, we take into account the nature of disability of the child under our care when making arrangements for their schooling. The degree of the disability is also considered when decision is taken, whether to integrate the child in mainstream education or institutions with specialised care.

There are 38 children who attend nine specialised schools. All efforts are made for the children to attend schools nearest to their residential institutions. Regarding those with heavy impairments, necessary arrangements are made with the institutions to provide for in-house rehabilitative activities.

My Ministry undertakes follow-up in those institutions with a view to ensuring that the needs of these children are met. To strengthen the monitoring mechanism at the level of both, Child Day Care Institutions and Child Residential Institutions, my Ministry is proposing to set up an Enforcement Unit staffed with Enforcement Officers who will carry out regular inspections to ensure that norms and standards are met, including those related to disabled children. The scheme of service of the Enforcement Officer has been worked out and the clearance of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms will be sought soon.

In addition to educational measures, the overall development of the disabled child is also looked into. My Ministry collaborates with various stakeholders to ensure access to recreational and leisure activities to these children.

My Ministry promotes the social integration of children with disabilities in the 22 children's clubs across the island. At the Mahebourg Creativity Centre, children actively participate in creative, social and recreational activities, thereby enhancing their overall development.

The Child Protection (Amendment) Act 2005 provides for higher penalties, to the tune of Rs100,000 for sexual offences committed on victims with intellectual impairment and penal servitude not exceeding 30 years. The forthcoming Children's Bill will also make provision for protection and development of disabled children, including higher penalties for perpetrators of violence against these children who are particularly vulnerable.

Furthermore, I would like to inform the hon. Member, that under the Special Collaborative Programme for Support to Women and Children in Distress put in place since 2009 at my Ministry, NGOs providing services to children with severe disabilities have received funding. This is done with a view to enhancing the livelihoods of children and integrating them into mainstream development. For the period 2010-2013, 20 such projects have been approved for a total sum of Rs16.8 m. Twenty NGOs supporting 900 children with all forms of disabilities have benefitted from this Programme. I thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the Sitting for half an hour for tea.

At 4.50 p.m. the Sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XVII of 2013) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL

(NO. XVII OF 2013)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XVII of 2013) be read a second time.

The main object of the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to bring amendments to the National Identity Card Act, the Civil Status (Amendment) Act 2001, and the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No. 2) Act of 2009 in the context of the implementation of the Mauritius National Identity Scheme (MNIS) Project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the existing National Identity Card (NIC) was introduced in 1986 whereby every citizen of the age of 18 years should apply and be issued with an Identity Card valid for a period of 10 years. Subsequently, the validity of the card has been extended on numerous occasions by way of regulations. Although the NIC has served its purpose, it is now outdated and has many flaws. The actual NIC card is paper-based laminated in plastic. This is a major flaw, as it can be tampered with and easily tampered with.

It also lacks security features, which is a major setback, both for national security purposes and also for citizen identity management. Furthermore, this type of card does not allow for its use for additional purposes. That is also why it is no longer used across the world.

With the fast development in Information and Communication Technology, where security identifications and business transactions are done online, it has become of utmost importance to replace the National Identity Card by a smart version. In the Budget Speech 2007-2008, it was announced by the Government that it will introduce a new National Identity Smart Card, and efforts have since been pursued with a view to bringing this national project to fruition. Amendments to the National Identity Card Act to allow for fingerprints and other biometric information to be incorporated in the new smart card was debated and passed in the Finance Bill of 2009. Consequently, following my visit to Singapore in 2010, the project was initiated under a Government-to-Government configuration, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between this Government and the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, which I must add, Mr Speaker, Sir, is an entity of the Government of Singapore. It has been set up to respond effectively to foreign requests to tap into Singapore's development experience. Following an advisory phase conducted by Singaporean experts, a Contract Agreement was signed in October 2012 between my Office and the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, which was designated by the Government of Singapore for the implementation of the MNIS Project. In this connection, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise has formed a Consortium with CrimsonLogic Pte Ltd and NEC Asia Pacific Pte Ltd.

To have an effective implementation of the MNIS Project, a Steering Committee, chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of my Office and comprising of all the major Government stakeholders, as well as the Singaporean counterparts, has been set up. A monthly monitoring meeting is held to follow up on the status of all MNIS Project components. The knowledge transfer and capacity building which we initially sought from the Singapore Government has proved to be very beneficial.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House has been informed on several occasions, the MNIS Project will result in the introduction of a new polycarbonate NIC containing laser-engraved particulars such as the name, NIC number, gender, date of birth, as well as the photograph and signature of the cardholder. It will also feature a contactless electronic chip which will store civil status data, fingerprints in the form of biometric information as well as electronic certificates for security purposes. The security features contained in the smart NIC, such as guilloche printing, offset micro text and rainbow printing will render it tamperproof; and thus visible information, as well as encoded data on the chip, will be securely stored.

Over and above the actual smart card, the Mauritius National Identity Scheme will also consist of new systems and infrastructure to increase information security and convenience of citizens. The new

infrastructure includes a state-of-the-art secure data centre hosted by the Government Online Centre at the CyberCity, Ebène. The current Civil Status systems and the Central Population Database are stored in a single server kept at the office of the Civil Status Division in the Emmanuel Anquetil Building, at Port Louis. The new MNIS systems and the associated components will be stored in a custom-made data centre at the Government Online Centre in Ebène. This is a Government facility, with the proper storage, telecommunications, backup systems, environmental controls and security systems to guarantee the necessary level of service and data protection.

In order to ensure that the photograph of the cardholder and other bio-data printed on the card cannot be tampered with, this information will be engraved into the layers of the polycarbonate ID cards. Six laser-engraving machines to personalise the cards at the Card Personalisation Centre have already been installed in the Card Personalisation Centre in Ebène, where all ID cards will be personalised, and thereafter will be conveyed to the respective National Identity Card Centres for distribution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are a number of areas where Mauritius is benefitting directly from the Singaporean expertise. One of the areas is data governance and policies which are being put in place to ensure that our civil status data are kept clean through a process-based approach of data management and procedures. This will ensure a smooth operation of the Civil Status and reduce inefficiencies in the delivery of services to citizens. Similarly, all the systems and infrastructure set up for this project will deliver medium and long term benefits provided they are supported and maintained to high standards at all times. As part of this project, the Singaporean team will train and coach a team from the Civil Status Division to support and maintain the systems and equipment for a period of at least nine months as part of a handing over process. Singapore is known, Mr Speaker, Sir, for its ease of doing business and effecting project implementation methods. The governance structure for managing this project is such that the Singapore teams are working closely with Government project managers for an effective delivery. The result is a knowledge transfer and capability building exercise on a large scale that will benefit the public sector for implementation of future projects.

In this context, the existing National Identity Card Unit is being restructured with a view to allowing the Unit to be staffed with qualified professionals, including IT personnel, to follow up on the Project after the commissioning. The Unit will be responsible to continue the Project and to ensure that the investment made continues to benefit the citizens and Government agencies.

As part of the MNIS project, the Government is setting up a Certification Authority that will issue digital certificates which will secure electronic information stored on the chip inside each card as well as serve as a guarantee to ensure the reliability of that information.

Mr Speaker, Sir, any project of this magnitude requires proper management and communication.

As part of the implementation plan, the Government has started an internal communication campaign which will soon be followed by a full-blown public communication campaign. The campaign will include details of the conversion exercise which involves the replacement of the current paper-based cards by the new smart card. This exercise will start towards the end of this year.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No. 2) Act 2009 has already brought amendments to the National Identity Card Act providing, *inter alia*, for the recording of fingerprints as biometric information of a cardholder applying for an NIC. The relevant sections of the National Identity Card Act, as amended, will be proclaimed in the context of the implementation of the MNIS Project. Further amendments now have to be brought to the relevant legislation with a view to improving the legal framework for the issue and replacement of the new NICs.

Accordingly, the National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, this Bill that is before the House provides, at clause 2(a)(iii), for the National Identity Card Act to be amended to provide that a person who is not a resident of Mauritius, or who is unable to comply with the requirement under the National Identity Card Act to apply for an NIC within six months of attaining the age of 18 years on account of serious illness or any other compelling and reasonable grounds, may apply for an NIC within such extended period as the Registrar of Civil Status may determine. Any serious illness would have for that purpose to be certified by a medical practitioner in the public service. The provision thus gives some flexibility to the Registrar of Civil Status to deal administratively with genuine cases.

The amendment at clause 2(b) of the Bill aims at increasing the time frame for a cardholder to report a change in his residential address from 14 to 28 days. It is to be emphasised that the information relating to the residential address of the cardholder will henceforth be contained on the chip of the new NIC, and will have to be regularly updated for the NIC database to contain reliable citizen information at all times. This provision of the law will henceforth be systematically enforced. In this respect, for practical reasons and for our citizens' convenience, a more flexible time frame for reporting such change has been adopted by extending same to 28 days instead of 14.

Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 2(c) of the Bill provides for new subsections (1) and (1A) in section 7 of the National Identity Card Act, which impose an obligation on a citizen of Mauritius to produce his NIC when so requested by a person empowered by law to ascertain the identity of that person. This provision will further assist authorities in reliable verification of citizen identity, elimination of potential risks of fraudulent practices as well as the help in the maintenance of law and order.

Clause 2(d) of the Bill deals specifically with lost and mislaid identity cards. Mr Speaker, Sir, presently, the NIC Unit attends to an average of 250 to 300 cases of replacement of lost cards on a daily basis, which is indeed on the high side and this results in the mobilisation of tremendous amount of resources and entails potential security risks. With the new procedure for the issue of NICs, a card reported lost will be suspended in the first instance and subsequently deactivated, if not found. Thus, the risk of persons using more than one NIC is unlikely to arise under the new system.

Furthermore, with a view to decreasing the number of cases of replacement of lost cards, it is proposed to impose a duty on any person to return a found NIC issued in the name of a person unknown to him, or one's personal NIC which had been reported lost and is subsequently found after the issue of a new NIC, to any office designated by the Registrar within a period of seven working days. It is important, in so doing, to inculcate values in the population at large for due consideration to be given to the NIC as a security document. In the same breath, clause 2(e) of the Bill provides for section 9 of the National Identity Card Act to be amended to include a new offence of producing a false document for the purpose of being issued with an NIC. The maximum penalty that may be imposed on a person convicted of an offence under section 9 of the Act will, on proclamation of section 15 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions)(No.2) Act 2009, be a fine not exceeding Rs100,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Clause 2(f) of the Bill provides that, where an office or place is designated by the Registrar under the National Identity Card Act, notice of such designation will have to be gazetted forthwith.

At clause 3(b) of the Bill, the Civil Status (Amendment) Act 2001, which has not yet been proclaimed, is being amended to extend the time limit to notify a change in the civil status particulars of a person to the Registrar of Civil Status from 14 days to 28 days, in line with the proposed amendment at clause 2(b).

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have observed earlier, section 15 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) (No.2) Act 2009 already provides, *inter alia*, for the National Identity Card Act to be amended to provide for a person who applies for an identity card to allow his fingerprints and other information about himself to be taken and recorded, and for related matters. It has not been proclaimed pending the implementation of the MNIS Project and the minor amendments now being brought to that section to allow for better implementation of the project.

With the introduction of smart cards containing biometric information, fingerprints of the cardholder will be stored on the chip. Although there are not many such cases, the law also has to cater for any person who is not able to produce his fingerprints by reason of any permanent infirmity or

permanent disability, and whose NIC would therefore not contain the fingerprint. The permanent infirmity or disability would have to be so certified by a medical practitioner in the public service. Likewise, where the cardholder is unable to sign his name, the NIC of the cardholder will contain a ‘no signature’ remark in the area earmarked for signature. These aspects are provided for at clause 4 of the Bill.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, clause 4(b) (i) (B) of the Bill addresses the case of a person, whether male or female, who appends his spouse’s name to his or her name following marriage, or who otherwise changes his or her name. Provision is being made for replacing the part relating to the “Maiden name” on the NIC by “Surname at birth”, thus introducing a more gender neutral terminology, but this will be in electronic form or otherwise and where applicable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to allay any possible apprehension on the part of members of the public regarding the use that may be made of the biometric information provided, I should emphasise that the National Identity Card Act is being amended to provide expressly that the collection and processing of personal data, including biometric information, under that Act will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

As stated earlier, the abovementioned proposed amendments will improve the legal framework for issue of the new smart cards and result in better management of the Mauritius National Identity Scheme. The MNIS system will ensure that current Civil Status Division citizen data remains error-free through good data governance and policies that are being established. The project will also produce a modern, clean and secure Central Population Database in line with our Data Protection laws. A good set of citizen data is a cornerstone of a good e-government system for bringing greater citizen convenience and services. Along these lines, a modern Government Service Platform will be set-up as part of the MNIS Project to effectively manage the flow of information in order to deliver effective and secure services to our citizens.

Our senior citizens will also be able to use the new card as a bus pass.

Furthermore, the NIC will facilitate many transactions by reducing the number of identification documents needed when you go for such transactions.

The MNIS Project is a key component of the e-government strategy which the Government has developed for implementation. A number of e-government services like for example the e-health will leverage on the data and MNIS systems such as the Government Service Platform to deliver effective and efficient services to our citizens.

Overall, Mr Speaker, Sir, the MNIS Project will enable a more secure and effective authentication and management of the citizen identity, while increasing national security. The implementation of the MNIS Project is progressing smoothly, and a launch event for the new card will be held, I believe, in August 2013, that is, this year. All the infrastructure and systems will be ready to start in September 2013, and it is expected that all resident Mauritians above or at 18 years of age will receive their cards during 2014.

The security dimension built in the new smart card, and the various components of the Mauritius National Identity Scheme will ensure the integrity of our citizen identification system and processes. It is a matter of pride, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, with the implementation of this Project, Mauritius will be benchmarked with a number of European countries having introduced the smart card technology.

All this, Mr Speaker, Sir, fits in our objective towards modernity.

With these remarks, I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

(5.39 p.m.)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, I shall be very brief, but *d'emblée, M. le président*, I would like to express the disapproval of the Opposition that this Bill is being presented with a Certificate of Urgency.

In fact, on Friday afternoon, we were informed by way of the Cabinet decision of 05 July of this year. The Cabinet communiqué which came out informed the people and the nation that Cabinet has agreed to the introduction of this Bill, whose object was to make better provision in relation to matters pertaining to National Identity Cards. So, it was on Friday evening that the Opposition came to know about this decision of Cabinet and the proposals of Government to introduce this Bill.

On Saturday morning, therefore, all of us, MPs of the Opposition, received the Order Paper, and we learnt that this Bill will be coming today and will be voted, since it is going to pass all the stages.

True it is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that when one looks at the Bill which has been circulated, it looks as a very simple Bill. The object of the Bill is to amend different enactments to make better provisions pertaining to National Identity Cards. Six amendments are mentioned in the Explanatory Memorandum. We have been able to go through the Bill, but besides objecting to the fact that the Bill is being presented to the House with a Certificate of Urgency today, we must say also that the Bill is more or less misleading in the sense that we have just listened to the hon. Prime Minister. In fact, the majority of his speech

today, when he has addressed the House, he has spent most time in his speech talking about the MNIS project, the introduction of the multipurpose smart card.

We, on this side of the House, had the possibility in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, of expressing our disagreement with the way this project was introduced. The House will remember how my predecessor, the Leader of the Opposition then, hon. Paul Bérenger, in fact, in this very House expressed, again, the objection and the way in which the whole project had been introduced, had been ushered in with the Singapore authorities. We have not changed our minds since that, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are still on the same wavelength of not agreeing to the way this MNIS project has been introduced. Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the proposal in this Bill, we don't have any quarrel. The reason which the hon. Prime Minister has just expatiated and elaborated on the different amendments that are being brought today to the National Identity Card Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, as the hon. Prime Minister has said, some added measures of flexibility have been introduced in the Bill to cater for new situations. We have no quarrel with these proposals and amendments.

True it is, Mr Speaker, Sir, today, the National Identity Card, since it was introduced by the Bill, which was referred by the hon. Prime Minister, by the Bill which we are amending today, the debates took place in 1985 in this very House. Since then, the Mauritian nation, the culture has grown and fostered. We know today how the NIC is a very important tool for all of us, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is required for various purposes. The average Mauritian carries with him his National Identity Card today. He needs it for his passport, licence, job, for obtaining a medical certificate, and the presentation of this card, in fact, rules our life today.

Of course, with time, Mr Speaker, Sir, with development in technology, the need for a new legal framework was felt. This is why many amendments have been brought since 1985 by way of amendments in this very House, or by way of regulations. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Identity Card is today an essential tool. It is the evidence of authenticity. It is a key document for all of us, and it serves for so many purposes. But, pending the introduction of the multipurpose smartcard - the hon. Prime Minister has referred to that; he has talked about how the NIC which we have today is easily tampered with, indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, - everyday the risk of tampering exists, and it is so easy today, in fact, for somebody, mischievous or for whatever reason, to commit forgery, to get involved in crime, in breach of the law, and to become in possession of an identification card.

Let me explain myself. Today, it is possible for me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to go to the Police Station of any village or faraway distance area, and I give a declaration to the Police to say that I have lost my NIC. The Police will record my declaration, and I can also impersonate somebody else, that is, give a false name. The Police will record my declaration, will give me a copy of this declaration because I have

no NIC, I have lost it, and with a copy of that declaration, I can go to the Civil Status Office under my false name, and I can get a copy of a birth certificate because I have impersonated somebody else, and I get, therefore, the act of birth of that person. With the act of birth of that person, I can go to the Ministry of Social Security, to the Department of National Identity Card, and armed with a copy of the declaration I made at that Police Station, and with the copy of the act of birth, which I have obtained, I can, therefore, be granted a NIC under the name of another person.

Therefore, this is how the chain of events takes place, which enables today somebody to get in possession of the identity card of another person. I can do that more easily with my brother, with somebody I am close with, and therefore, armed with that NIC, which is under a false name, which I have obtained under false pretences, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have lied. This is how the trick is made. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is still today possible for somebody to obtain another identity card, and with this false NIC, that person, of course, can commit many offences.

I am saying that, Mr Speaker, Sir, to illustrate how it is still easy today with our system, although the law provides that there is a Registry - I looked at the law - where records are kept, but as far as we know no photographs are kept, so that when I go to the office of Social Security, which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Security, when I give the name of another person, there is no possibility of counterchecking, or checking, or verifying whether, in fact, I am that person. So, this is a flaw still in our system. This is why, of course, we need the innovation and modernisation of the system, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is why we agree also with the amendments that have been brought to the law today, and of course, there are still lots of grounds that have to be covered. It is only the introduction of a multipurpose smartcard that will address the many problems that we have today with our system, which is clearly *dépassé*, out of date.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to come to one particular clause in this Bill, which I find a bit radical. It concerns clause 2 of the Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, section 7A – Lost or mislaid identity card. The Prime Minister made some comments on this clause of the Bill. It reads as follows -

‘7A. Lost or mislaid identity card

Any person who -

- (a) finds an identity card issued in the name of another person who is unknown to him; or
- (b) after being issued with a new identity card by reason of his identity card being lost, finds the original identity card,

shall, as soon as practicable within 7 working days, return the identity card found to any office designated by the Registrar.’

Therefore, the amendment, which we are bringing in today, which Government is proposing, will make it an offence for somebody who finds an identity card issued in the name of another person unknown to him, or if that person himself is issued with a new identity card because he had lost his previous card, and when he finds the original one, he has within seven days to return it to any office designated by the Registrar. He has seven days to do that, and he should do it as soon as practicable within seven days. If he does not do it, Mr Speaker, Sir, he commits an offence, because there is a penalty section in the law, and the offence is punishable with a maximum fine of Rs10,000.

The point I am making, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would have thought that the seven working days is a very short time frame, is a very short delay which is being given to that person, because for several reasons you can find the identity card of somebody else, and it might not be possible to return it within seven days, or you might find your original card; you might have left the country for some reason or another, you discover your card when you are outside the country. You are somewhere for some reason, and it is not possible within seven working days to return that card.

Therefore, technically, I would have thought that this person would be committing an offence. This is why I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the words ‘as soon as practicable within 7 working days’ should perhaps have been replaced by another more flexible, lenient formula. I saw one formula somewhere in this very Bill - within such reasonable period, for example. I cannot see where I saw it, but it is somewhere in this Bill where a delay is granted, and it is within such reasonable period which, I think, would have been more fair and just in the circumstances to impose a burden on that person to return the card, but it should be within a more flexible period, as I have just said.

This is the specific remark I wanted to make, Mr Speaker, Sir. As for the other provisions of this Bill, the hon. Prime Minister has gone in detail, has elaborated on what are the other provisions in this Bill. We have no quarrel with the other amendments, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We welcome the Bill, the new provisions, the new proposals, the new amendments, although, as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we take very, very strong objection to the fact that this Bill has been introduced with a certificate of urgency. We hope that this does not become a habit, and for the next Bill that will be introduced in this House, the Opposition is given reasonable time *dans le cadre de notre démocratie parlementaire, dans l'esprit de nos* Standing Orders, Mr Speaker, Sir. Urgency certificates mean urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir, and there was no reason for this Bill to have been circulated to the Opposition Members within the delay provided for in our Standing Orders.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his remarks, but let me say one thing; why has it been brought in all stages. The hon. Leader of the Opposition, himself, said: 'we have no quarrel with the Bill'. He agrees with most of the things, except one thing - I think he has said - that he thinks that the 'seven working days' is a bit short. So, there was no real issue that could have been very controversial with this Bill. I have also answered a number of parliamentary questions. We have mentioned that this Bill will be coming very soon, although I didn't give the date; I must agree with that. But the reason is, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we do not want to delay the whole process, because the more delay, the more it will cost us. They are intending to start the process, as I mentioned, I think, in my speech, in August, with a pilot project in September, and then they start issuing the cards. We want to ensure that every Mauritian gets a card. If I don't bring the Bill before the House goes into recess, then, obviously, we will have to wait until whenever time we will resume. We don't want to lose this time, and that is why there was an urgency to bring this Bill to the House.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has, in fact, made a point that it is an essential tool. He gave a very good example. In fact, that is what has happened in the past, where people have stolen a card and got a new identity through it. There are cases where people have a few cards, not one. The hon. Leader of the Opposition did not agree. He said they have objection to the way it has been done, but we have gone for an agreement with the Government of Singapore for two main reasons, Mr Speaker, Sir. They are known for their efficiency. They have a reputation for everything being above board. If we went to a private company, we could have done that; advertising for a private company. You would have seen all sorts of things coming up, this and that. I prefer to deal with the Government that I know, and it has a reputation as being above board.

The second point is that there is an aspect of security. We want to be very sure that these data are not obtained by the people. There is an aspect of security that I would rather not have it handled by other people. I think it is important.

As for the seven working days, I think we looked at this, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir. We think it is reasonable. The hon. Leader of the Opposition said, if I understood him well, somebody might find his card outside the country, while he is travelling, and so why would the card be outside the country.

(Interruptions)

He could well get somebody else to send the card, because if we leave it for a reasonable period, what would happen is that person would say: I have time, I am not going to. We discussed this issue with the

State Law Office, and we decided that seven days, like in other countries, is the norm, and that is why we have adopted this measure, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I think I have answered all the points that were raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and I thank him for his participation.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XVII of 2013) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, The National Identity Card (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XVII of 2013) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday, 16 July 2013, at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(6.17 p.m.)

MATTERS RAISED

MPA – CHAIRPERSON – PROVISIONAL CHARGE

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue about the Mauritius Ports Authority, which falls under the responsibility of the Prime Minister.

M. le président, dans le sillage du scandale connu comme le Varmagate, we have seen that the Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority, Mr Allet, has been charged by the Police under ‘conspiracy

to pervert the course of justice', which is a very serious offence under our Criminal Code, and which entails prison sentence. Up to now, we have not seen any official statement from Government with regard to the office held by the Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority, who is still on duty. So, we consider that somebody at such a level in an institution - and our reputation is at stake - should have by himself submitted his resignation, as it has been the case in the past at the Authority itself, where the previous Chairperson who had been charged and been on bail had resigned. And he is on bail! We take note that some persons holding the office of Attorney General and even that of PPS have resigned.

The Prime Minister, in reply to a PNQ, has even announced that the Attorney General must submit his resignation, and our friend has, on a *question d'honneur*, submitted his resignation. *Je ne sais pas si le Chairman of the Mauritius Ports Authority est un homme d'honneur, comme l'a dit le président du Parti travailliste*, but I consider that he should have resigned in the public interest, in the interest of Government, in the interest of the country and the institution. If he does not resign, the Prime Minister should sack this person as Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority.

The Prime Minister: Let me say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, that the Chairperson has been provisionally charged; not charged. I say 'provisionally charged.'

My understanding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that, on the very day that he was provisionally charged before the District Court of Port Louis, he immediately lodged a motion to have the provisional charge quashed. I have been following matters. The matter is coming before the Court, in fact, on 11 July, that is, in two days' time. So, since the validity of the provisional charge is itself a matter which is being currently considered by the Court, I think any decision pertaining to his continued tenure of office as Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority would, in my view, be more appropriately considered in the light of the outcome of the motion that is coming before the Court on 11 July, that is, in two days' time. I think it would be unwise for me to speculate or try to prejudge what the hon. Magistrate will decide. I would rather let the matter be disposed by the Court in a couple of days, and then I will see from there.

CASCAVELLE, XAVIER & TAMARIN REGIONS - GARBAGE COLLECTION

Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue I am going to raise concerns my constituency and the Minister of Local Government.

The inhabitants and traders in the regions of Cascavelle, Xavier, and especially Tamarin and the surroundings, are complaining that garbage collection used to be done twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. For some time now, this is being done only on Saturdays. The Minister will surely appreciate that, in that region, there has been an increase in the number of restaurants, commercial activities and

even inhabitants. The collection of garbage wastes only once a week is causing immense damage to the environment, *et les chiens errants se font un plaisir de tout répandre dans la rue, avec les poubelles débordantes. C'est un risque pour la santé ; non seulement pour la santé, mais cela gâche aussi l'environnement. Cette région est très fréquentée par des touristes.* And I should not tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the remarks that are being made by tourists on this state of things! So, since the District Councils fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government, can I ask the hon. Minister to look urgently into this state of affairs?

Mr Aimée: Certainement, M. le président. Je vais informer le Black River District Council pour qu'on prenne des mesures appropriées.

CUREPIPE - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - SWITCHBOARD

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may address the hon. Prime Minister on a very straightforward matter, I would think. I am referring to the switchboard of Police Headquarters at Curepipe. This is a matter I have raised here.

As the hon. Prime Minister is aware, Curepipe Police Headquarters is the main Police Headquarters in the Upper Plaines Wilhems. They have a switchboard which does not work properly. Ever since it was installed, there have been problems, I understand, because the company that installed the switchboard is not the one that is supposed to ensure maintenance. The work is not being done. As a result, it is extremely difficult for the public. I know, as a local MP and as a lawyer, it is extremely difficult to get through to Curepipe Police Headquarters. Now, in situations when there is an emergency, one can imagine what disastrous consequences there might be! So, before we have such a disaster, may I seek the intervention of the Minister of Home Affairs urgently, so that for the benefit of all concerned, this matter may be addressed?

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not been told that the switchboard of this Police Station of Curepipe is not working properly. I will certainly look into the matter.

MUSLIM CLERICS – RAMADAN TIME – VISA

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a matter which concerns the hon. Prime Minister, and it relates to Muslim clerics who come to read the special prayers during Ramadan time.

A few months ago, answering a PQ in this very House, the hon. Prime Minister gave the assurance that not only would these Mawlanas be given a 30-day visa, but, on a case by case basis, he will

see to it that this period is extended, so that the clerics can spend Eid as well, because it takes usually more than a month from the day they arrive to the date of celebration of Eid.

Unfortunately, this Sunday, a dozen of clerics coming from Madagascar were stopped at the airport of Mauritius by the Customs, the Passport & Immigration. They stayed there for more than one and a half hours, and it is only after the intervention of certain high-ranking Police Officers that they were allowed to leave the airport, and given only a temporary visa of 15 days.

So, I will ask the hon. Prime Minister to see to it that when these people come to extend and renew the 15-day visa, which is going to expire, all facilities be given so that they can spend Eid as well here.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, normally such problems do not arise unless the procedures have not been followed. I take it that these priests did not follow the procedures, and that they just turned up at the airport. If that is the case, then, obviously, they have to follow the procedures, because today people can pass for you - we were just told by the Leader of the Opposition, hon. A. Ganoo, how people can steal other people's identity. So, they have to go through the procedures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I presume that is what must have happened. But, if they are genuine priests, I am sure we will be able to extend the time.

MONTEBELLO – MOTORWAY- BUS SHELTER

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): I am addressing this issue to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. There is actually on the Motorway at Montebello the construction of a bus shelter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that a nice brick bus shelter is being constructed, there is a request from the inhabitants who live parallel to the Motorway - because now they have to go round on the Motorway and come back to the bus shelter - to have a few steps at the back of that bus shelter so that they do not have to go round on the Motorway to catch the bus. They have made that request, so that they can get easy and direct access to the bus shelter, instead of going round, especially the old people, as they would have to walk on the Motorway – on the path, of course – to come to that bus shelter. While construction is being done, could this slight amendment be made to that shelter, please? Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to look at the security aspect also. I will request the TMRSU to have a look at it, and to see whether it is feasible. Then, I will do it.

FLOREAL SSS - FOOTBALL PLAYING GROUND – LIGHTS

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floréal): I would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports regarding the football playing ground at the State Secondary School at Floréal. The inhabitants of this region who regularly use this football ground have made several requests for the switching on of the existing lights on this football pitch.

On 06 July of last year, nearly one year, there was a meeting between the representatives of the *Forces Vives*, the management of the school, and a representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It was agreed at that meeting that it was a question of replacing the timer, and there were some works to be effected on the ground. The representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports stated that it was a small work, which would be done within one month.

It is now one year, and nothing has been done yet! I think - to encourage the practice of sports - it is a very small work which the inhabitants have been waiting for a long time now.

My request is, if the hon. Minister could look into this matter, so that what was decided by one of his representatives nearly a year back could be attended to.

Thank you.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): I take note of the issue, and I will address it.

QUATRE BORNES – AVENUE OLLIER - ACCESS

Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, je souhaite, ici, soulever un problème de ma circonscription concernant l'énorme difficulté que rencontrent les habitants de la Rue Robert Edward Hart, Résidence Beau Séjour et les régions avoisinantes, pour accéder à l'Avenue Ollier. C'est un problème adressé au vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Infrastructures publiques, de la *National Development Unit*, du Transport routier et de la Marine.

À l'état actuel des choses, les habitants, et surtout les enfants de la région, doivent marcher au moins une distance de 600 mètres, matin et soir, pour accéder à la station de bus la plus proche, ou encore pour avoir accès aux taxis desservant l'Avenue Ollier.

M. le président, bien qu'il existe quelques accès reliant Robert Edward Hart Avenue et l'Avenue Ollier, il est considéré, à tort ou à raison, que ces accès sont privés, et donc inaccessibles aux membres du public. Ma requête au ministre c'est de demander à ses officiers de faire un constat de la situation sur place, et d'explorer la possibilité de recommander un accès à partir de l'Avenue Paille en Queue jusqu'à l'Avenue Ollier, prenant en considération qu'il existe bel et bien des terrains non utilisés, dont une partie

peut faire l'objet d'un achat ou d'un *compulsory acquisition*. La situation est tellement sensible, vu la particularité sociologique de la région, et c'est aussi urgent.

Je demanderais au ministre de considérer, au moins dans un premier temps, un accès piétonnier pour que ces habitants de la région avoisinante puissent accéder à l'Avenue Ollier. Merci.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a site visit was conducted by hon. Ms Deerpalsing together with officers of my Ministry. The matter is being looked into.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

ROUTE DES PAMPLEMOUSSES & ROUTE MILITAIRE JUNCTION – TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue I am raising tonight is in relation to a traffic problem in my constituency, more precisely the junction between Route des Pamplemousses and Militaire Road. The problem is that on this road there is heavy traffic both in the morning and evening, and very often, there are no Police Officers present at those times. There were traffic lights in the past at this place, but I do not know for what reason there are no more traffic lights over there now.

My point tonight is to instruct the Commissioner of Police to place Police Officers at this place in the morning, that is, from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., and in the evening from 4.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., where there is heavy traffic, and also on Saturday mornings, because the Ibrahim Market Abdullah Fair is nearby. There is also a pedestrian crossing near the junction, which is also a danger for pedestrians. So, my appeal is to place Police Officers there.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister: I can certainly not instruct him, but I will inform him if he can do the necessary.

MAHEBOURG - HARRY LATOUR STADIUM – RENOVATION WORKS

Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Je fais un vibrant appel au ministre de la Jeunesse et des Sports concernant ma circonscription, surtout en ce qui concerne le Stade de Harry Latour à Mahebourg.

Mahebourg est considéré comme un enfant pauvre en ce qui concerne les infrastructures sportives. Le stade est dans un état déplorable. Le terrain est mal entretenu. Les gradins ont été démolis par l'ancien ministre depuis 2007 ; les grillages sont rouillés et peuvent tomber à n'importe quel moment, représentant un danger potentiel pour le public. Les vestiaires laissent à désirer. Il y a des pylônes électriques qui servent seulement à décorer le stade, car il n'y a pas de lumière.

Compte tenu de tous ces problèmes, je fais un vibrant appel au ministre afin qu'il relance le football à Maurice, qui a été trop longtemps dans un trou et dans le noir, en réaménageant le stade dans les plus brefs délais.

Merci.

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Ritoo): I am taking note of the renovation works that will be starting very shortly at the Mahebourg Stadium.

BEAU BASSIN – WATER SUPPLY

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the matter that I am raising is addressed to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities who is also a member of my constituency. It has to do with the different regions in Beau Bassin - of which he must be aware - in Maingard, Chebel and Coromandel, where there is running water only during certain restrictive hours, usually between 4.00 a.m. to 7.00 a.m., and from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. So, we have a totally inadequate water supply, as the CWA closes the valve during certain hours during the day, and it is an inconvenience, especially during the weekends, on Saturdays and Sundays.

This is quite unacceptable, as we are not in a drought period, and the inhabitants of Beau Bassin are being unnecessarily penalised. Therefore, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to ensure that there is uninterrupted supply of water in the Beau Bassin region, especially in this period of Ramadan?

Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my attention has been drawn to this matter by hon. R. Issack, and I am taking the necessary action.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Ribot!

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

PSSA – BOARD OF DISCIPLINE

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue I am raising is addressed to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, and concerns the Board of Discipline of the Private Secondary Schools Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as it is, cases of indiscipline and misconduct are referred to the PSSA by Managers of schools. The case is analysed by the PSSA, and sent to the Ministry of Education, so that the Ministry sets up the Board of Discipline. By the time the Board is set up and gets the lawyers concerned to fix dates on which they are available, proceeds with the hearings and comes forward with its recommendations, years have elapsed – I say years! By that time, the suspended employee is simply benefitting from his full salary. There have been cases, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where the employees have been suspended and benefiting from their salary for four to five years, and right now, two employees from Rodrigues Island have been waiting for two years to have their case settled. My request to the hon. Minister of Education is to have the procedures of the Board of Discipline reviewed, so that the recommendation of the Board reaches the suspended employee not later than a few months, and not years after the beginning of the suspension. That would be a step to good governance, and will avoid wastage of public funds.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this has been like that for years and years. In fact, we are looking into the matter, and the whole review of the PSSA is going to be brought at some time in the legislation.

CHEBEL - RÉSIDENCE LES CHEBECS - LOW COST HOUSES

Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, ma requête ce soir s'adresse à l'honorable ministre du Logement, et concerne le projet de construction d'une vingtaine de *low-cost houses* à la résidence Les Chebecs à Chebel, et dont je me fais le porte-parole des habitants ce soir.

M. le président, le projet, même s'il est très louable, comporte certains inconvénients comme la construction de six maisonnettes sur l'espace qui sert actuellement de parking pour les autobus qui desservent la région, mais aussi d'espace récréatif où les associations de la région organisent régulièrement des activités pour les habitants du quartier, jeunes et moins jeunes, de même que la célébration de messe. Je fais donc un appel au ministre pour que son ministère et la *NHDC* identifient d'autres espaces disponibles, car dans cette région, M. le président, il ne manque pas de terrains vagues, et que cet espace de parking et récréatif ne fasse, en aucun cas, partie de ce projet.

Je vous remercie.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this time it is a Member of the Opposition, hon. Bhagwan, who raised it and it has been settled.

IMPASSE PALLADIUM, ROSE BELLE – ACCESS

Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): M. le président, le sujet que je vais aborder concerne le calvaire que quatre familles de l'impasse Palladium à Rose Belle doivent subir. Ces quatre familles habitent au fond de cette impasse qui a été déclarée route publique depuis le 15 avril de cette année, ce qui veut dire que le public a accès à ce chemin. Or, il se trouve qu'il y a une famille qui obstrue ce chemin en permanence avec des véhicules, et empêche ces quatre familles d'avoir accès à leurs maisons en voiture.

Donc, le conseil du district de Grand Port et même la police ont été alertés, mais à ce jour rien n'a été fait pour soulager ces quatre familles. Donc, je fais un appel au ministre des Collectivités locales de bien vouloir intervenir pour trouver une solution à ce problème, afin que ces familles puissent avoir accès à leurs maisons en voiture, et que ce chemin soit vraiment un chemin public.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will request the District Council of Grand Port to look into the matter and report to me for this particular action.

SAVANNE & BLACK RIVER – HOUSING PROBLEM

Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue with regard to the housing problem in Constituency No. 14, addressed to the Minister of Housing and Lands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister may be very well aware of the unemployment problems in this region, and the population growth that led to many housing problems. In fact, a house is being shared by three, four or five families, and the grandchildren who cannot receive support from these extended families are being forced to squat the land because the families have remained consistently poor.

May I appeal to the hon. Minister to take the problem of squatters seriously? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many times this question has been put to the House on squatters and houses made of asbestos, and many times we received the same answers. Unfortunately, nothing is being done. I, once again, make an appeal to the hon. Minister to stand by his commitment to provide adequate housing to all those living in a very poor condition and unsafe environment.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not proper to say that I have done nothing. In fact, there are only a couple of asbestos houses, as I extensively replied to a question last week.

Secondly, it is my colleague, the Minister of Local Government, who happens to be a Member; I went round through Constituency No. 14, and I am in the process of legalising about 55 squatters in the region of Coteau Raffin, Rivière Noire, poor people who have been thrown out at Black River, and then...

(Interruptions)

In fact, there are others, and we are doing it as much as we can. We have also constructed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, houses at Bambous, and then there is La Valette also. There are other projects coming. *Petit à petit, on va arriver à destination.*

PHOENIX ROUNDABOUT - TRAFFIC JAM

Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure on the huge mess created at the Phoenix roundabout. Previously, the traffic jam arose only at peak hours; now, the bottleneck occurs throughout the day because of the opening of the third lane.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Minister that nearly all the people of Camp Dowlut on the other side will find it very, very hard, nearly impossible to reach the mosque due to the problem of the road blocked at the Phoenix roundabout.

Further, at a meeting held at RDA two weeks ago, the representative of the PMO, Mr B. P., and the Traffic Branch of the Police Department, advised the reopening of the access road during the month of Ramadan. Once again, the DG of RDA objected to it. I make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure to review the decision, in order to favour the people who, during the fast period, will have to be on time at the mosque for the break of fasting.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, site visits were conducted. The third lane is serving very well, particularly for those who are going south bound, that is, towards the south and Curepipe, but at off peak hours, it is open for the inhabitants of Valentina.

I conducted a few visits, and in fact, the Traffic Branch, the TMRSU, the Road Safety Unit at the Prime Minister's Office, RDA, all were together. Unfortunately, they have come to the conclusion that it is very risky and dangerous to take any such action. I am not aware of any discussion...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the Vice-Prime Minister to answer!

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware of any instruction which has been given for the opening of that road, but the hon. Member knows that in front of the Kovil we were constructing a by-pass. The construction of the by-pass started. Unfortunately, there was too much of opposition to it, and then we had...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Bachoo: Once again...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member has raised an issue; he must allow the Vice-Prime Minister to answer.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will never take any risk upon myself because there is danger of road accidents, and that is why I am bound to be guided by the authorities of the country.

At 6.44 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 16 July, 2013, at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS - MR D. N. - EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

(No. B/638) **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, in regard to Mr D. N., Executive Chairperson of the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to the number of alleged cases of malpractice reported against him, indicating where matters stand in each case.

(Reply not available)

POLICE OFFICERS - OFFENCES - INQUIRY

(No. B/639) 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 Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof who have been reported by their colleagues to have committed offences, since 2005 to date, indicating in each case, the –

(a) nature thereof;

(b) actions taken, if any, and

(c) where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto?

(Reply not available)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - CASES

(No. B/640) 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 Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof against whom a case of assault and/or of domestic violence has/have been reported by the spouse thereof, indicating in each case, where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto?

(Reply not available)

PRISONERS (FORMER) - RECIDIVISM

(No. B/641) 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, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to if a survey has been carried out to ascertain

the proportion thereof who re-offend following release from prison and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

(Reply not available)

FLASH FLOODS 30 MARCH 2013 - INQUIRY

(No. B/642) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the death of eleven persons following the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

(Reply not available)

METHADONE SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT CENTRE - STE CROIX - ROBBERY & ASSAULT CASES

(No. B/643) Mr J. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Methadone Substitution Treatment Centre, found at Ducray, Ste Croix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of reported cases of robbery and assault committed in the vicinity thereof, since its coming into operation to date, and
- (b) if he has received representations from the inhabitants of Ste Croix for its relocation and, if so, if same will be considered and envisage the relocation thereof within the premises of the Abercrombie Police Station where space is available and control can be exercised.

(Reply not available)

JEWELLERY - LARCENY CASES

(No. B/645) 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 jewellery, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases of larceny and possession of stolen thereof, indicating in each case, the number of arrests effected in connection therewith.

(Reply not available)

HAMILTON COLLEGE - MINOR - ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

(No. B/646) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the offence of alleged sexual abuse on a minor, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) if in the recent reported case thereof at the Hamilton College, the rector of the said college has been arrested and, if so, indicate the charges preferred against him, and
- (b) in other cases thereof, since January 2011 to date, the number of arrests effected in connection therewith

(Reply not available)

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS - SUB-CONTRACTORS

(No. B/659) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the public infrastructure projects, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be brought to the legislation with a view to making it mandatory for the parties competing for contracts therefor to indicate the name of the sub-contractors with whom they propose to work, at the initial steps of the bidding process.

Reply: Bidding documents, for works up to Rs100 m., in the “Instructions to Bidders” at Section 1.6, with reference to the General Conditions of Contract – Clause 7; entitled “subcontracting”, make provision for the nomination of subcontractors at the very initial stage of the bidding process, for works

amounting to more than 10% of the contract price. The bidders, therefore, are required to declare, in relation to proposed subcontracts and firms involved in the bidding exercise, the following information -

- Sections of the Works
- Value of the Subcontract
- Subcontractor (Name and Address)
- Experience in similar work

Since the onus to make amendments to legislations and bidding documents rests with the Procurement Policy Office, the latter has informed my Ministry that it will consider the inclusion of a clause for the main contractor to submit particulars of subcontracting in all works contracts.

The question of amending the legislation and the issue of a mandatory Clause shall be discussed with the Solicitor General's Office.

PHOENIX ROUNDABOUT - TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

(No. B/660) 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 Phoenix roundabout, he will state if, following the meetings held with the relevant authorities and the site visits effected thereat, any solution has been found to alleviate the traffic problems occurring thereat.

Reply: The traffic congestion problem at Phoenix roundabout, also referred to as the Pont Fer roundabout, and in the surrounding area has been fully examined by the Road Development Authority in the context of the Road Decongestion Programme. A short-term solution consisting of the provision of a bypass to the roundabout in the southbound direction has been implemented and audit surveys have confirmed a significant improvement to traffic flow during peak hours.

However, following representations from the inhabitants of Petit Camp and Valentina in connection with accessibility, a consensus has been reached between them and my Ministry not to implement the measure during off-peak hours, pending the implementation of a long-term solution.

The Transaction Adviser for the Road Decongestion Programme has indicated that the long-term solution to the traffic congestion problem at Phoenix roundabout would consist of the construction of a major infrastructure which would integrate the Dowlut, Pont Fer and Jumbo roundabouts into a single grade-separated junction, along with the construction of the Valentina-Bagatelle Link Road and Trianon-Verdun Link Road which are presently under construction. The construction of the grade-separated junction is included in the PPP-Road Decongestion Programme and works are expected to start next year.

**MAURITIUS CANE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY - CONTROL & ARBITRATION DIVISION -
REDEPLOYMENT**

(No. B/661) **Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the Control and Arbitration Division, he will state if all the officers thereof have been redeployed to serve at the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and, if so, obtain from the Authority, information as to if the services thereof have been retained for the crop season 2013 and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

SEYCHELLES – CARNIVAL - MAURITIAN DELEGATION

(No. B/662) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the carnival held in the Seychelles, from 8 to 10 February 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to the –

- (a) total cost of participation of the Mauritian delegation thereat, giving details thereof, and
- (b) names of the sponsors therefor, if any, indicating the amount of contribution received therefrom, in each case.

(Withdrawn)

TOURISM INDUSTRY - MARKETING POLICY

(No. B/663) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the tourism industry, he will state the –

- (a) growth rate thereof, over the past five years, and
- (b) marketing policy adopted in regard to the -
 - (i) traditional, and
 - (ii) emerging markets.

Reply: According to statistics available at my Ministry, the tourism industry has registered growth in terms of tourist arrivals and tourism receipts over the past 5 years as follows -

- (a) in 2008, tourist arrivals increased by 2.6% to reach 930,456 and tourism receipts by 1.3% to attain Rs41,213 m.;

- (b) in 2009, tourist arrivals decreased by 6.4% to reach 871,356 and tourism receipts by 13.4% to attain Rs35,693 m.;
- (c) in 2010, tourist arrivals grew by 7.3% to reach 934,827 and tourism receipts by 10.5% to attain Rs39,456 m.;
- (d) in 2011, tourist arrivals increased by 3.2% to reach 964,642 and tourism receipts by 8.3% to attain Rs42,717 m., and
- (e) in 2012, tourist arrivals grew by 0.1% to reach 965,441 and tourism receipts by 3.9% to attain Rs44,378 m.

The House would appreciate that despite of the prolonged economic recession in the Euro zone which constitutes our major tourism source markets, our tourism industry has so far resisted the emerging challenges and external shocks.

This clearly demonstrates that the tourism sector has developed enough resilience, largely owing to the policy measures adopted by this Government.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, we have adopted a policy that focuses on aggressive marketing strategies in selected traditional markets with growth potentials such as France, Germany, UK and Switzerland. In such markets, a concept of “*Le luxe accessible*” is being promoted through fairs, road shows, Fam and press trips, e-marketing and online campaigns on social platforms, celebrity marketing and brand window dressings as well as joint marketing activities with Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Airlines and Hoteliers.

I wish to inform the House that this policy is starting to produce positive results and a substantial increase in tourist arrivals from France, Germany, UK and Switzerland has been recorded for the month of May 2013 as compared to May 2012.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, the policy of my Ministry is to rebalance tourism growth by penetrating more aggressively the emerging markets like China, India and Russia. In this context, my Ministry has, in consultation with all stakeholders, devised appropriate and joint marketing strategies targeting niche market segments such as family vacations, weddings/honeymoon, wellness and spa, cultural and heritage tourism as well as MICE and Sports.

This strategy has yielded results beyond expectation in terms of tourist arrivals which have contributed significantly to compensate for the decline in tourist arrivals from our other traditional European markets.

Over and above, my Ministry is also exploiting new markets such as the Scandinavian, CIS and Gulf countries, Japan and South Korea with a view to gradually reduce our dependence on Europe and attract more visitors from the non Euro-Zone countries.

At the same time, the consolidation of our regional and proximity markets including South Africa and Reunion Island is being pursued.

NTC - LOANS

(No. B/664) 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 National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the -

- (a) amount of money –
 - (i) it owes to Government as at to date;
 - (ii) in terms of loans guaranteed by Government as at to date, giving details thereof and indicating the purpose therefor;
 - (iii) disbursed by Government from 2005 to June 2013 in relation thereto, indicating the purpose therefor, and
 - (iv) owed in terms of bank overdraft as at to date, and
- (b) number of staff employed thereat, indicating the number thereof on the permanent establishment thereof and on contract, respectively.

Reply: With regard to PQ No. B/664, I am tabling the answer.

SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES - ECONOMIC CRISIS

(No. B/665) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the Small and Medium Enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, information as to the number thereof which are having difficulties by reason of the economic crisis, indicating the nature thereof in each case.

Reply: As the House is certainly aware, all enterprises, irrespective of their size and area of activity are affected in some way or another in times of economic crisis.

Even in normal circumstances, enterprises do undergo difficult times due to, *inter alia*, changes in economic and other conditions, including changes in demand patterns, changes in technology, and changes in the business environment, and these difficulties are obviously aggravated in times of economic crisis.

As regards the specific information asked for in the Parliamentary Question, the House will certainly agree that in view of the vagueness of the term “difficulties” and the absence of any time frame, it would be practically impossible to provide precisely the information asked for.

Furthermore, as pointed out in my reply to PQ No. B/434 at the sitting of the National Assembly held on 04 June 2013 there are, at present, no comprehensive and reliable updated statistics available on some aspects relating to performance and difficulties of our SMEs during the inter-census period.

There are in fact some data available on the performance and difficulties of SMEs, but these are neither comprehensive nor can it be totally relied upon. This is precisely the reason that has prompted me to set up a Statistics Unit in my Ministry. We hope that with this mechanism in place, we would now be able to monitor the situation more closely in the future and be able to gather those updated vital statistics.

Nevertheless, Government is fully aware and very concerned about the difficulties faced by Mauritian enterprises, specifically in respect of access to finance, access to industrial space, contraction in demand, and access to state-of-the-art technology which is a consequence of lack of access to finance.

The Government has, accordingly, taken a series of appropriate measures since the onslaught of the economic crisis, and has come up with various schemes to alleviate the difficulties of the local entrepreneurs. We have records available on the number of enterprises which have taken advantage of the different schemes in operation.

Just to give an indication of the popularity and effectiveness of the schemes, only since January 2012 some 3950 SMEs have taken advantage of the different facilities available.

I would, furthermore, wish to point out that despite the economic crisis, our economy has shown strong resilience due to our reform agenda which has started as far back as 2005. This has proved beneficial because while, on the one hand, we are supporting and assisting existing enterprises, on the other hand new enterprises are being set up.

The House would be pleased to note that only for the period January to May 2013, 614 new enterprises have been registered at the level of SMEDA.

ROSE HILL - INTER-URBAN ROADS - BUSES

(No. B/666) 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 inter-urban roads in Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if, following the recent road accident which occurred at Camp Levieux in which a bus of the National Transport Corporation was involved, the Authority will take actions to authorise only mini-buses to operate thereat.

Reply: It is the policy of Government to licence smaller size buses which are more comfortable than minibuses to operate along intra-urban routes. In fact, such buses should not be longer than 9m 40 cm so as to enable them to manoeuvre along the urban roads.

At present, 32-seater buses are already operating along route 132 (Rose Hill-Trefles). Moreover, Rose Hill Transport Buses Ltd is operating nineteen (19) 29-seater buses on route 239 (Camp Levieux – Rose Hill), route 31 (Rose Hill-Route Bassin) and route 146 (Place Margeot – Cybercity – Shoprite – Jumbo).

With the implementation of the free transport scheme for students and old-age pensioners, there is more pressure on public transport during the peak; thus the licensing of mini-buses only to operate on certain routes would definitely aggravate transport difficulties and cause hardship to travellers. In fact, there is an incessant request to have longer buses with higher loading capacity to help ease the peak demand.

STIMULUS PACKAGE - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/667) 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 Stimulus Package and other associated schemes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of companies which have benefitted therefrom, since their coming into operation to date, indicating the –

- (a) total amount of money disbursed as at to date, on a yearly basis, and
- (b) names of the companies which have benefitted therefrom and have subsequently closed down, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) amount of money disbursed thereto, and

(ii) number of job losses.

Reply: As the House is aware, a joint public-private working group namely the Restructuring Working Group has been put in place to assist those enterprises which are viable but are facing difficulties as a result of the euro zone crisis. In fact, the Restructuring Working Group has the responsibility to develop and design financing instruments to support viable enterprises in difficulty.

On the basis of a due diligence exercise conducted by an Independent Financial Analyst, support is extended to an enterprise on a risk and burden sharing basis designed with the collaboration of the Mauritius Bankers Association. Under this arrangement, the commercial banks, the National Resilience Fund and the enterprise are made to share the burden in the ratio of 40:40:20. The Restructuring Working Group meets once a week to review the situation of enterprises that have made a request for support.

As at date, the Restructuring Working Group has developed five instruments which are used to support enterprises in difficulty. These instruments are -

- Issue of Corporate Guarantee;
- Debentures;
- Preferential shares;
- Sale and Leaseback of Property, and
- Provision of Import Loan facility.

Details of these instruments are being tabled.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that since the setting up of the Restructuring Working Group, 98 companies employing nearly 20,000 workers have been assisted through the various instruments for a total amount of Rs1.78 billion. Details of these annual disbursements are also being tabled.

Currently, there are requests for financial assistance from a further 6 companies for an amount of Rs214.8 m.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Government is committed to support as many enterprises that are viable but are in difficulty as a result of the crisis. However, given that the crisis is lasting longer than expected, some enterprises are not able to sustain this continuous strain despite the Restructuring Working Group's efforts to support the enterprises. Thus, 5 of the 98 companies assisted, employing 1,092 persons have unfortunately not been able to survive and have had to close down. A financial loss of Rs2.25 m. loss has so far been incurred under Corporate Guarantee.

Though the enterprises could not be saved, the employees were taken care of either through outright re-employment in other enterprises or through the Workfare Programme.

Out of the 1,092 employees concerned, 264 employees did not show any interest for either re-employment or the Programme. Of the remaining 828 employees, 610 have been re-employed and the remaining 218 joined the Workfare Programme, of which 193 opted for job placement, 19 opted for training and re-skilling, and 6 opted for the setting up of small businesses.

Despite the adverse global economic situation, Government has been able to contain the extent of damage on the local market in terms of company closures and job losses.

Government is fully committed to continue to help enterprises that are facing problems due to the crisis in the Euro Zone. Government is closely following the global economic situation and will spare no effort to come up with additional measures, where needed.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOST SCHEME PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/668) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Household Compost Scheme Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Maurice Ile Durable Fund, information as to the -

- (a) number of composters distributed as at to date, and
- (b) name of the company which was awarded the contract for the supply of the composters, indicating the -
 - (i) contract value thereof;
 - (ii) procurement method used therefor, and
 - (iii) number of training sessions carried out for the beneficiaries thereof.

Reply: With regard to the Household Compost Scheme Project, I wish to inform the House that 10,210 composters have been distributed as at to date.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the information is as follows -

- (i) the contract for the supply of Household Composters was awarded to First Response Ltd;

- (ii) the contract value for the procurement of 12,000 composters was Rs10,902,000 including VAT;
- (iii) the procurement was carried out by an open bidding process in line with procurement procedures in the public service, and
- (iv) so far 449 training sessions have been carried out for beneficiaries.

PAILLES TREATMENT PLANT - CONTRACT

(No. B/669) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Project for the Design-Build/Turnkey and to Operate the upgraded Pailles Treatment Plant, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if the -

- (a) Independent Review Panel had decided to review the cost estimate of the preferred bidder therefor;
- (b) Authority had informed all the bidders that the public procurement proceedings therefor had been cancelled and, if so, indicate the reasons therefor, and
- (c) if the contract therefor has been awarded and, if so, indicate the -
 - (i) name of the contractor therefor, and
 - (ii) contract value thereof.

(Withdrawn)

NTC - SPEED LIMITERS - TENDER

(No. B/670) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the speed limiters, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the cost of purchase thereof;
- (b) if a tender was launched therefor and, if so, indicate -
 - (i) when, and
 - (ii) the names of the bidders and of the successful bidder therefor, and
- (c) if a survey was carried out prior to the installation thereof in the buses.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES - MINISTER OF TOURISM AND LEISURE - VISIT

(No. B/671) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to his last visit to Rodrigues, he will state the -

- (a) purpose therefor, and
- (b) outcome thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that I led a delegation to Rodrigues last month to identify areas for further collaboration in the tourism sector.

As regards part (b) of the question, the main outcome of the visit is as follows -

- (a) the Tourism Authority has undertaken to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to provide, *inter alia*, for short-term placement of Tourism Enforcement Officers of Rodrigues, assistance in the grading of tourist accommodation, survey of pleasure craft and training of skippers;
- (b) the framework for a licensing Committee has been set up to examine applications for tourist enterprise licence and pleasure craft licence;
- (c) the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund organised a brainstorming session to apprise employers as well as employees of the sector about the schemes and projects currently being implemented by the Fund;
- (d) an antenna of the Tourism Employees Welfare Fund has been set up jointly with the Employees Welfare Fund for the benefit of employees;
- (e) the MTPA has undertaken to promote Rodrigues more aggressively in Mauritius and Reunion Island, and
- (f) the MTPA will also organise more FAM trips to Rodrigues.

RODRIGUES - CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER - SERVICE DELIVERY

(No. B/672) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the Certificate of

Character, he will state if measures are being taken, in Rodrigues, to improve the service delivery thereof and, if so, give details thereof.

(Reply not available)

SAMOA ISLANDS - SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES MEETING

(No. B/673) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the 2014 Third International Conference on the Small Island Developing States Meeting to be held in the Samoa Islands, he will state where matters stand as to the preparations for the participation of the Mauritian delegation thereto.

Reply: It will be recalled that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) called for, “the convening in 2014 of a third international conference on small island developing States, recognising the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States”.

The Conference, which will be held from 01 to 04 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa, will seek a renewed political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of the small island developing States (SIDS) by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions. Building on assessments of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), the Conference will aim to identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for sustainable development of those States, particularly through the strengthening of partnerships between small islands and the international community.

In addition, the Conference will provide an opportunity for the elaboration of sustainable development issues of concern to Small Island developing States in the process of charting the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals.

The Conference expects to produce a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political document.

The effectiveness of the third International Conference on SIDS will depend first and foremost on national level preparations that will feed into the regional preparations, followed by the interregional meeting and finally the global process.

In this respect, Mauritius began its national preparations for this important Conference by setting up a National Steering Committee, chaired jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional

Integration and International Trade and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. This multi-stakeholder Steering Committee comprising Government, the private sector and civil society representatives, began the preparatory process with the preparation of a national assessment report which assesses where we are in the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation; identifies new and emerging challenges and opportunities faced by Mauritius and make recommendations on the way forward to and post Samoa 2014.

Broad based consultation, an inclusive approach and ownership are at the heart of the national preparatory process. The national report is based on both the responses to the guiding questions prepared by the United Nations to steer discussions at the national level and on a bottom-up, inclusive consultative process.

A series of consultations were thus undertaken with key stakeholders to ensure cross-sectoral participation and diversity of views. Eighteen thematic focus groups were set up to cover all the Barbados Plan of Action and Mauritius Strategy for Implementation thematic areas. Each focus thematic group was composed of relevant stakeholders from both public and private sector and most of these groups met on at least two occasions. Each group considered the guiding questions and responded accordingly.

In addition, three national workshops were held. The first national workshop was held on 21 May 2013 and saw the participation of representatives from various sub-sections of society such as the youth, women, NGOs, civil society, trade unionists and local authorities. The hon. Member will be pleased to know that the second workshop was held on 11 June 2013 in Rodrigues to ensure that the specific concerns of that particular territory of Mauritius were fed into the process. The Mauritius Private sector was also briefed on the process and their views were sought on 11 June 2013. Finally, a national validation workshop was held on 20 June 2013 to present the report and to seek its endorsement by the representatives of all stakeholders who participated in the focus group meetings and consultations.

Having finalised the report this Friday past, Government is now preparing its participation in the upcoming Regional AIMS meeting, scheduled to take place from 17 to 19 July 2013. It will be recalled that Mauritius forms part of the AIMS region, along with Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Maldives, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles and Singapore. This is an important meeting since the outcome of this meeting will feed into the discussions at the inter-regional SIDS meeting, scheduled to be held from 26 to 28 August 2013 in Barbados.

I would thus like to reassure the hon. Member for Rodrigues that Mauritius is taking a proactive role in the lead up to this importance international conference and expects to take a leadership role in the

region to ensure that our national priorities are addressed adequately in any negotiated outcome document, be it at regional, inter-regional or international level.

PSSA - EMPLOYEES - DISCIPLINARY BOARD

(No. B/674) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Private and Secondary Schools Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of employees thereof which have been referred to the Disciplinary Board thereof, since 2005 to date, indicating the number of cases thereof which -

- (a) have been settled, and
- (b) are pending, indicating in each case, the date on which the employee was suspended.

(Withdrawn)

BUDGET - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/675) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the year 2013, he will state the -

- (a) rate of implementation of the budgetary measures announced therefor, as at to date, and
- (b) latest estimated growth rate therefor as compared to the budget forecast, indicating the causes of the -
 - (i) shortfall, and
 - (ii) impact of the growth outlook on the low income groups and small businesses.

(Withdrawn)

MRA - AMNESTY SCHEMES – REVENUE COLLECTION

(No. B/676) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the incentive schemes implemented by the Mauritius Revenue Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House,

obtain from the Authority, since 2006 to date, on a yearly basis, information as to the number thereof, indicating in each case, the

- (a) nature thereof, and
- (b) amount of revenue raised thereunder, as compared with the total amount of revenue raised under the Income Tax, the Value Added Tax and the Gaming Tax, respectively.

Reply: In 2007, MRA operated two amnesty schemes from July to December 2007, namely -

- (a) the Voluntary Disclosure Incentive Scheme (VDIS) to encourage disclosure of untaxed income, and
- (b) the Tax Arrears Payment Incentive Scheme (TAPIS) to mop up arrears of revenue.

Under VDIS, an amount of around Rs1.05 billion was declared as unpaid tax (Income Tax: Rs563 m. and VAT: Rs487 m.) whilst under TAPIS, the amount of tax collected amounted to Rs114 m. (Income Tax: Rs70 m. and VAT: Rs44 m.).

Thus, revenue collected under the schemes in 2007/2008 as a percentage of total revenue under the different taxes was -

Income Tax	6.6%
VAT	2.9%

In 2012, two new schemes were introduced aimed at granting a last opportunity to taxpayers to regularise their undeclared or under declared income in whatever form it has been kept or invested, including overseas assets. They are -

- (a) the Voluntary Disclosure of Income Arrangement (VDIA) targeting VAT and income tax, and
- (b) the Voluntary VAT registration Incentive Scheme (VRIS).

The schemes were in operation for 6 months up to end June 2012.

I am informed that collection under VDIA amounted to some Rs619 m. (Income Tax: Rs336 m. and VAT: Rs283 m.) whilst under the second scheme Rs21 m. of VAT has been collected.

The Expeditious Dispute Resolution of Tax Cases (EDRTS) and the Tax Arrears Settlement Scheme (TASS) were also introduced in 2012 to mop up arrears of revenue including those originating from gambling taxes. An amount of Rs11 m. and Rs43 m. has been collected respectively by the MRA.

In total, the schemes have generated around Rs695 m. of revenue for Government in 2012.

As regards part (b) of the question, revenue collected in 2012 from the incentive schemes as a percentage of total revenue under the different taxes were as follows -

VAT	1.3%
Income tax	2.8%
Gambling	0.1%

Following representations received that the 6 months time frame was too short, VDIA, VRIS and EDRTS are being operated for 9 additional months from 1st January to 30th September 2013 after some fine tuning. TASS has also been revamped to deal with and eventually clear long outstanding income tax arrears in the books of MRA.

To date, I am informed that taxpayers have undertaken to pay Rs196 m., Rs1.4 m. and Rs2 m. under VDIA, VRIS and TASS respectively. A total of Rs500 m. is expected to be collected from those schemes in 2013.

MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELFARE – MINOR V. A. - MEETING

(No. B/677) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the meeting which she held in her office, on 16 May 2013, in the presence of Dr. the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, minor V. A. and her parents, she will state the purpose and outcome thereof.

Reply: A meeting was held at my office with minor V.A and her parents on 17 May 2013 instead of 16 May 2013 as indicated by the hon. Member.

The parents had requested for protection of their child in view of the extensive media reporting given to this specific case. The purpose of the meeting was therefore to look into possibilities of extending assistance and protection of minor V.A in conformity with the Child Protection Act and the provisions contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Following this meeting, arrangements were made, at the level of my Ministry, for the parents and minor V.A to call at the Child Protection Services at Vacoas.

Psychological and legal assistance were proposed to the parents and minor V.A. The parents declined the offer of legal assistance. The minor has been attending sessions with a Psychologist of the Child Development Unit.

NTC - TATA & ASHOK LEYLAND BUSES - TENDER

(No. B/678) 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 purchase of 80 Tata and 20 Ashok Leyland buses, in 2006, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Corporation, information as to if the successful bidders thereof complied with the tender specifications therefor and, if not, indicate the actions taken, if any, in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed that the National Transport Corporation invited two separate tenders in October 2005 for the procurement of 80 Fully Built Standard Buses and 20 Fully Built Air Conditioned Buses. The closing date for submission of tenders was Thursday 15 December 2005.

Tenders were opened in public on the same day and only two tenderers submitted bids for the two Tenders, viz. Associated Commercial Company Ltd and Ashok Leyland Ltd.

An evaluation exercise was carried out at the NTC and the Evaluation Committee submitted its reports on 08 May 2006. On 08 June 2006, the NTC Board approved that the tenders be awarded as follows -

- (i) Tender for the supply of eighty (80) fully built standard buses to Associated Commercial Company, for Tata Model LPO 1618/62 with turbo charged engine of 180HP, with wheel base of 6200 mm with 69 seats, fitted with Allison Automatic Transmission and with all options.
- (ii) Tender for the supply of twenty (20) fully built air conditioned buses to Ashok Leyland for Model AL-WO 6DTI Turbo charged engine of 180HP, 45 seats, 222 wheel base, fitted with Allison Automatic Transmission, including all options.

I am further informed that while the evaluation of tenders was on-going, Associate Commercial Co. Ltd wrote to the NTC on 24 March 2006, recommending the use of a retarder on the buses fitted with automatic transmission with a view to improving stability, efficiency and life span of the brake and hence

reducing maintenance cost. It further added that Tata Motors would fit the vehicles with retarders at no extra cost on being adjudicated the winner for the full allotment of 80 buses.

In the same letter of Associate Commercial Co. Ltd -

- (i) confirmed a seating capacity of 69 seats plus driver seat;
- (ii) proposed certain changes from the specifications on the type of the body, and
- (iii) the installation of a turbo guard as specified in the Tender Document was not justified because the design of cummins engine do not warrant turbo guard for Euro II type engine with low exhaust temperature. ACC Ltd, therefore, recommends not to install the turbo guard.

Following approval of the Central Tender Board on 26 June 2006, Letters of Intent were issued to both Ashok Leyland and ACC Ltd on 06 July 2006. Subsequently, on 14 July 2006, ACC Ltd accepted the letter of intent and the letter of award was issued on 03 August 2006 for 80 Tata Model LPO 1618/62 buses fitted with, among others automatic Allison T280 transmission.

On 14 August 2006, after the letter of award was issued, ACC Ltd wrote to the NTC, drawing attention to some deviations from the specifications originally agreed upon, namely -

- (i) The vehicle was confirmed to be LPO 1618/62, with a 180HP engine with a Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) of 16000 Kg.
- (ii) Buses would be fitted with Allison T 270R auto transmission with retarder instead of T 280, which was without the retarder.

Following exchange of several correspondences between ACC and NTC, and keeping in line with technical recommendations from Allison and Tata, the NTC agreed to the deviations.

As regards the 20 Ashok Leyland air conditioned buses, while the buses were being manufactured in India, delegations comprising NTC employees carried out inspection visits at the manufacturer's premises and approved certain modifications to the bus structure, namely -

- (i) the use of fibre reinforced plastic instead of galvanized/aluminium in the panels, and
- (ii) use of mild steel instead of galvanized steel in the structures.

FOND DU SAC - MARKET FAIR

(No. B/679) 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 Fond du Sac village, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of a market fair thereat and, if so, when.

Reply: I am informed by the District Council of Pamplemousses that it does not envisage the construction of a market fair in the village of Fond Du Sac for the time being.

I am further informed that a full-fledged market fair is already operational at Bon Air Road, Triolet and which is not far from Fond du Sac.

NTC – WORKERS - SALARIES

(No. B/680) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will state if measures are being taken for the salaries of all the workers thereof to be governed by the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MAURITIUS BROADCASTING CORPORATION – PERIOD 2005-02 JULY 2013 - EMPLOYEES, NET INCOME & LOANS

(No. A/221) 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 Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, for each of the years 2005 to date, information as to the –

- (a) amount of
 - (i) net income realised, and
 - (ii) corporate tax paid
- (b) number of persons employed on
 - (i) the permanent establishment thereof and
 - (ii) contract, indicating in each case, the salaries earned, and
- (c) amount of
 - (i) loans and guarantees, if any, granted by Government thereto, indicating the amount of arrears, if any, and
 - (ii) subsidies and other benefits, if any, granted by Government and international organisations thereto.

(Reply not available)

**MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY - CHAIRPERSON –
OVERSEAS MISSION**

(No. A/222) 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 Mr M. A., Chairperson of the Mauritius Ports Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the number of overseas mission he has attended, since his appointment to date, indicating in each case –

- (a) the countries visited
- (b) the purpose and duration thereof
- (c) the cost of the air tickets and issuing travel agency
- (d) the nature and quantum of the allowances drawn, and
- (e) if he travelled with a diplomatic passport.

(Reply not available)

BUSINESS PARKS OF MAURITIUS LTD - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/223) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Cybercity, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the –

- (a) number of lessees who have constructed on plots of land leased thereat in contravention of the conditions imposed for the space utilization thereof, if any, indicating the measures taken, if any, against them, and

- (b) measures, if any, being taken to prevent the Cybercity from becoming a mass of concrete.

(Reply not available)

LE MORNE - FOOTBALL PITCH

(No. A/224) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Le Morne Village, he will state if there is any project for the construction of a football pitch thereat and, if so, indicate where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the District Council of Black River that it has no project for the construction of a football ground at Le Morne Village for the time being. However, I am informed that the Ministry of Youth and Sports envisages to put up a football ground in the region for the benefit of its youngsters and has made a request to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the vesting of a plot of land identified for the project.

BAGASSE - ENERGY PRODUCTION

(No. A/225) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to bagasse from sugarcane, he will state if a study has been carried out in relation to the -

- (a) optimum use thereof for energy production, and
- (b) revision of the payment of the bagasse transfer price to the planters and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that a number of studies have been undertaken to promote the use of bagasse to produce electricity. The optimum use of bagasse for energy production has been addressed in the following documents –

- (i) 1985-1990 action plan for the sugar industry;
- (ii) the Bagasse Energy Development Programme (BEDP) in 1991, and
- (iii) a Blue Print on Centralisation of Cane Milling in 1997.

With the implementation of appropriate measures, the following objectives have been attained –

- (a) phasing out of intermittent export (which is less efficient) in favour of firm and continuous export (more efficient) of electricity to Central Electricity Board;
- (b) increased use of high pressure boilers of 81 bars at 525°C and condensing extraction turbo alternators;
- (c) replacement of steam turbine drives by electric motor for the mills;
- (d) improved process to save on process steam required by the factory;
- (e) firm power export from bagasse has increased from 39 Gwh in 1991 to 340 Gwh in 2012 while continuous power export from bagasse has decreased from 109 Gwh in 1998 to 3.7 Gwh in 2012. Intermittent power export was completely phased out as from 2000, and
- (f) a decrease in the number of sugar factories from 21 in 1985 to 5 in 2013 with higher efficiency of bagasse combustion.

As regards part (b) of the question, in October 2008, following representations made by planters to the ex-control Board my Ministry directed the Control Board, to set up a Technical Committee to look into the following issues –

- (a) update the existing formula in the 6th schedule of the SIE Act;
- (b) determine the new price of bagasse for payment;
- (c) study the effects of any increase in price on electricity consumption, and
- (d) amend the SIE Act and related Acts.

The Committee submitted its Report in July 2009 and made a number of proposals. However, no consensus was reached among the different stakeholders of the industry on the proposals made. Subsequently, the findings of the report were submitted to the consultant Hunton & Williams LLP.

I am informed that the outcome of the study is being considered by all the parties concerned before a policy decision is taken.

I am also informed that the MCIA has started discussion with parties concerned with a view to finding a solution to the issue.

POUDRE D'OR POLICE STATION – BUILDING - SURVEY

(No. A/226) 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 building housing the Poudre d'Or Police Station, he will state if he has received a request from the Commissioner of Police to carry out a survey of the state thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof and the measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

Reply: This Ministry has not received any request from the Commissioner of Police to carry out a survey of the Poudre d'Or Police Station. However, I have been informed that the matter is still under consideration at the level of the Police Department.

FIRE STATIONS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/227) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Fire Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand as to the proposed -
 - (i) relocation of the Quatre Bornes Fire Station, and
 - (ii) construction of a new Fire Station at Montagne Blanche, and
- (b) if procedures for the construction of a new Fire Station cum Headquarters at Riche Terre have started and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services that a request had been made to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for vesting of some 5 *arpents* of land in the regions of Ebène, Trianon and Phoenix for the relocation of the Quatre Bornes Fire Station. As no State lands of the required extent are available in these regions, alternative sites were being identified. As at date no suitable plot of land could be identified for this project.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. A/40 informing that once the preliminary design for Rose Belle Fire Station will be approved, same design will be considered for the Montagne Blanche Fire Station. The matter is still at the level of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping inasfar as the preparation of the design is concerned.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that a plot of land of the extent of 16A30 at Riche Terre has been vested on 08 May 2013 by the Ministry of Housing and Lands in my Ministry for the construction of a new Fire Station. Necessary procedures have started in this respect.

GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES – SUPREME COURT - WATER SUPPLY

(No. A/228) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Government Fire Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the reasons why –

- (a) the turntable lorry bearing registration number 9 RM 13 is not based at the Port Louis Fire Station, and
- (b) a lorry of 11,000 litres is deployed during week days, in the morning, for the supply of water to the Supreme Court.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that the turntable lorry bearing registration number 9 RM 13 which is an oversize vehicle cannot be based at the Port Louis Fire Station as no proper bay exists thereat. The vehicle is presently based and parked in an appropriate bay at the Coromandel Fire Station.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that following a request received in 2011 when severe drought was prevailing across the island, water was being supplied by the Fire Services to the Supreme Court. Although the situation returned to normal, the Supreme Court continued to solicit the services of the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service due to defects in its water supply system. On 05 June 2013, the Master and Registrar has been requested to effect necessary repairs to its water supply and the services will be discontinued once these repairs would have been undertaken.

WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY – BOARD MEMBERS

(No. A/229) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Waste Water Management Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority –

- (a) information as to the composition of the Board thereof, indicating the salaries and fringe benefits drawn by each member thereof, and
- (b) a list of the persons presently employed on contract thereat, indicating in each case, the –
 - (i) post held;
 - (ii) qualifications possessed, and
 - (iii) salaries and fringe benefits drawn.

Reply: The information sought has been placed in the Library of the Assembly.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES - ADVISERS/PRESS ATTACHÉS -
APPOINTMENT**

(No. A/230) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Advisers/Press Attachés and/or persons employed on contract at his Ministry, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) position held;
- (b) date of appointment;
- (c) qualifications possessed, and
- (d) terms and conditions of appointment.

Reply: I am tabling the required information in respect of Advisers/Press Attachés and persons employed on contract basis in my Ministry.

COCOTERIE ROAD, ROCHE BOIS – SEWERAGE NETWORK

(No. A/231) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the impasse adjoining the Impasse Felix Barbe at Cocoterie Road, in Roche Bois, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to if it has been connected to the sewerage network and, if so, indicate when and, if not, why not.

Reply: Further to my reply to PQ A/38 of 09 April 2013, I am informed that the WMA arrangement to secure way leave from a private owner is still ongoing.

LA PLAINE DRAGON, ROCHE BOIS – FOOTBALL PITCH - LIGHTING

(No. A/232) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposed provision of lighting at the football pitch, commonly known as La Plaine Dragon, at Allée Tamarin, in Roche Bois, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: A Tender Exercise was launched on 30 May 2013 for the Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Electrical/Lighting Works at Dragon Football Ground, Allée Tamarin, Roche Bois, among others.

The closing date was on 03 July 2013 and bids received are presently being processed at the level of a Bid Evaluation Committee at my Ministry.

ROSE BELLE – FIRE STATION - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/233) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new Fire Station in Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to where matters stand, indicating if the design thereof has been reviewed.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that the design for the new Fire Station at Rose Belle has not yet been finalised and funds will be applied for in the next fiscal year.

HIGHLANDS – POLICE ACADEMY - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/234) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a Police Academy in Highlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Land Development Limited, information as to if his Ministry is in presence of a request from the Prime Minister's Office for the allocation of land therefor, since April 2012 and, if so, indicate if consideration will be given thereto and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the State Land Development Co. Ltd (SLDC) that, on 16 April 2012, a request was made by the Prime Minister's Office to the State Land Development Co. Ltd (SLDC) to earmark 25 acres of land at Highlands for the setting up of a Police Academy to provide continuous training programme to the Police personnel at all levels.

I am further informed by the SLDC that a plot of land of 25 acres at Reduit within the Reduit/Highlands development site has been earmarked for the purpose.

The Police Department has submitted a feasibility report on the Police Academy Project for consideration by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.