



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2013

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
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Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
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Roopchand Seetaram	
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 23 of 2013

Sitting of 12 November 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the Government of the People's Republic of China (In Original).
- (b) The Annual 2012 of the Board of Investment.
- (c) The Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (State of Kuwait) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 253 of 2013).
- (d) The Annual Report 2013 of the Bank of Mauritius.

B. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions –

- (a) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Non-Governmental Organisation Trust Fund for the year ended 31 December 2012 (In Original).
- (b) The Annual Report of the Probation and Aftercare Service 2012 (In Original).
- (c) The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Chagossian Welfare Fund for the year ended 31 December 2012 (In Original).

C. Ministry of Arts and Culture –

The Annual Reports 2011 and 2012 of the Mauritius Museums Council.

D. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment –

The Occupational Safety and Health (Ship Construction and Ship Repairs) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 254 of 2013).

E. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life –

- (a) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 249 of 2013).
- (b) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 250 of 2013).
- (c) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 251 of 2013).
- (d) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 252 of 2013).

F. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 19) Regulations 2013 (Government Notice No. 255 of 2013).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SRI LANKA - COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) 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 to be held in Sri Lanka, from 15 to 17 November 2013, and the human rights issue thereat, he will state if -

- (a) he has had discussions with Dr. the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade following his participation in the recent annual Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting and his meeting with the Foreign Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka;
- (b) he will attend the said Meeting following the recent developments in regard thereto, in particular, the decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of India not to attend thereto, and
- (c) the President of Sri Lanka will be invited to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to be held in Mauritius in 2015.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for asking the question because I intended to make a statement in the House, in the afternoon, regarding the situation in Sri Lanka and my participation in the 2013 CHOGM Summit. Therefore, there will be no need for a statement, I can say what I have to say.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has never been and will never be indifferent to the Human Rights violation anywhere in the world including Sri Lanka.

The House will recall my unwavering commitment to uphold the values of Human Rights and my consistent condemnation of human rights abuses in several countries, in several forums. I could give a list on Palestine, on Syria recently, on Iran. As a matter of fact, I have never missed a single opportunity in international fora to talk about human rights violation. Mauritius has rightly been acclaimed for our human rights credentials. At a special session of the human rights in May of 2009, Mauritius was one of the 17 countries which attempted to get the 11th Session of the Human Rights Council to investigate war crimes in Sri Lanka.

At the last meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, as I said I talked about Egypt, Syria and Palestine but also about the issue of dismemberment of part of our territory, the Chagos Archipelago prior to independence by the then colonial power, the United Kingdom, in a clear breach of international law and yet they are not engaging in the process that could lead to a settlement to this shameful past of its colonial history.

Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, places social harmony as one of its highest priorities and to this end, the Government of Mauritius is committed to upholding the highest standards in the respect for fundamental human rights. Therefore, Mauritius has a principal position on the issue of human rights, according to which, Mauritius cannot condone human rights violations taking place anywhere in the world. However, we have examined the situation on a case to case basis. It is the feeling that instead of taking confrontational stands and naming-and-shaming approaches, Mauritius always calls for a meaningful engagement with the country concerned through a process of genuine political dialogue and confidence-building. Mauritius, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I condemn, we have always and I have made it a point of saying it, to whoever big country or small country that we are against double standards on human rights, so characteristic of certain countries. I remember the recent case, a summit of European Union and Africa where the issue of Zimbabwe was being debated, there were lots of comments. My stand was: yes, if there has been abuse certainly, but what about Pinochet? Jack Straw was representing the Prime Minister at that time, he was Home Secretary. I said: what about Pinochet? Why the double standard? Why Pinochet was not arrested in the UK? Why did you allow him to go? His answer was: well, he was not well, Prime Minister. And I said: well then, Mr Home Secretary, it seems you don't know what's happening because if you had looked at the news on television, you would have seen that when Pinochet reached Chile, he got out of his wheelchair and went and kissed everyone. Double standards! And we condemned these double standards. For Chagos, it's the same thing.

Now with regard to part (a) of the question, as Prime Minister, I have had regular consultations with my Minister of Foreign Affairs on a number of international issues, one of which is precisely the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

I am informed by hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell that he met a number of Ministers during the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in the margins of the 68th Session of the United

Nations General Assembly last September, including the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka. He also met Minister Peiris, that is the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka during the IOR-ARC Meeting in Perth earlier this month and impressed upon him - and I made it a point of telling you – he must impress upon him the need for Sri Lanka to address the concerns raised by the Human Rights High Commissioner Ms Navi Pillay and emphasised the need and urgency to set up - I thought that was one solution - a Truth and Reconciliation Commission with a view to submitting recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, let me remind the House that Mauritius is a Sovereign Democratic State, its foreign policy is not guided or dictated by any other interest than our national interests having regard to international commitments and ‘*appurtenance*’ to regional and international organisations. Irrespective of the stand taken by any Government, the decision to participate or not to participate in any international event rests solely with the Government of Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at each Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), the Heads of Government choose the venues for the next two CHOGMs, that is the tradition. Thus, at the CHOGM held in Kampala, Uganda in 2007, the decision was then taken that the two next CHOGMs would be the one in 2009 to be held in Trinidad and Tobago and the one in 2011 will be held in Sri Lanka. I must say and point out that at the time the civil war and all these things were going on. It was not as if it had just started. However, at the CHOGM held in Trinidad and Tobago - I think I mentioned this to hon. Members, they well know it - in November 2009, the decision for CHOGM 2011 came back on the table. It was meant to be in Sri Lanka. The question was whether it should be held in Sri Lanka or not. This was questioned by many Members, and this led to an impasse as to the venue of CHOGM of 2011. It led to an impasse because Sri Lanka, which I indicated that it was willing to withdraw, there changed its position and said it never said it would withdraw. I don’t want to go into the detail; it was an informal meeting as you know, and perhaps it won’t be right for me to go into the details. But there are lots of people who were upset including the Commonwealth Secretary-General, including the British Prime Minister, including the Prime Minister of Australia, but he would not budge. I intervened with other Commonwealth Leaders and then I went and spoke to the Head of the Sri Lankan delegation diplomatically, but I managed to persuade him to ring the President who was

not there and tell him what I am saying and it would be in the best interest of everybody for Sri Lanka to withdraw from the 2011 Summit. Eventually, a deal was brokered whereby Australia would host the CHOGM of 2011, followed by Sri Lanka in 2013.

It is then that I said Mauritius has intervened, Mauritius has found the solution to the impasse. Now, Mauritius cannot just not be considered for a CHOGM summit and the idea was that then we should also choose three destinations instead of two as usually is the convention and that is why Mauritius was placed on the 2015 list, with the possibility that things might go wrong in 2013 and that we might have to fall back on the position of Mauritius. That was done informally; I would rather not go into the detail.

Therefore, the decision was taken to give Sri Lanka additional time to implement its national reconciliation policies and to comply with international human rights obligations.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact – debate in many countries, not just here in Mauritius - what is the best strategy to bring pressure to bear on the Sri Lankan Government with regard to its obligation to investigate and remedy alleged war crimes and human rights abuses to the prejudice to a section of its population?

Some have called for a total boycott as the most effective means of bringing about change in Sri Lanka. Others said: no, we should engage and try to bring about the change through this engagement.

I think engagement up to a certain point to meet the Sri Lankan leaders and the NGO's, have frank discussions with them together with leaders of other nations who will be attending the Summit, and bring home in a forceful manner what they must do to implement the expectations of the international community and better the lives of the Sri Lankan citizens, especially those of the thousands of Tamils in that country.

Now, regarding part (c) of the question, I think it is premature and speculative at this stage to decide who will be invited to attend CHOGM 2015. At any rate, the invitations to attend CHOGM Meetings are issued not by the host country, but by the Commonwealth Secretariat after consultation with the host country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned there were two questions asked by hon. Nagalingum on that issue and I said that I met the Commonwealth Secretary-General on purpose because I wanted to know what is the progress that is being achieved. Can we justify? And we had this meeting with Mr Sharma in June of this year, I made it clear that we intend to monitor the evolution of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and then, take the appropriate action which we think we should take.

He made it clear to me that things are being done, that I made one of the conditions that he must hold the local elections in the North that has been withheld since the Civil War because there is a Tamil majority there. If there are no elections, there is no question of participating in that Summit and, in no uncertain terms, I expressed my grave concerns about human rights violation in Sri Lanka.

Now, the Commonwealth Secretary-General told me they are putting a lot of pressure for them to have the elections in the North of Sri Lanka and I answer the question to hon. Nagalingum. I said this is the situation, we are going to wait. We will participate provided things get done. Now, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the principle stand that I have taken - that is why I wanted to make the statement to the House this afternoon - my information that I have tried to get from different quarters is that the Sri Lankan Government is not doing enough. That is the indication that I get. For example, I hear that after the Tamils won in the North of Sri Lanka in spite of the fact that - from what I hear I must say, but I can't say I have been there and I have seen - a lot of money was spent by the Government but in spite of that the Tamils won the majority in the North.

Now, I have indications - I can't say I know for sure because I am not there, I have asked hon. Dr. Boolell to try to find out - that the Government is trying to reverse that process of devolution by different means, by putting up a second House or whatever and that is the indication that I get, and then, in other words, he wants to reverse what they have achieved. Now, there are people who have disappeared in Sri Lanka, still we see on the news, there is not much being done to find out what has happened to them. I have seen, I have been reading a lot about this, people who say they go to Sri Lanka to try to have a look, they are told they will get free access, everything will be free, but they report back that there have been pressure on the people who meet them, then they are being called by people asking them what did they say, what

did they not say and all these things. This is not what democracy is about and, as I said, there is also the international independent report which has said they must do so many things. From what I see, from the information that I get, not much has been done. There is the report of the United Nations Rights Commissioner and very specific things are said in that report. My impression is that not much is being done.

I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Commonwealth, as I said, is very important for us. Mr Sharma, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, had told me that if Mauritius wants to host the Summit you have to be present, there is a *passation* of the whole system, that it would be unprecedented. I said I will watch very carefully and I will take the final decision.

I wish, Mr Speaker, Sir, with a grave heart, but in no uncertain terms, to again express my grave concerns about human rights violations in Sri Lanka, and I have thought carefully, that is I want to make a statement, in spite of the fact that we are meant to be there for CHOGM 2015, I have decided, in own deliberate judgement - no pressure from anywhere - that I cannot, with the principle that I have taken all this time I have been in politics, attend the Summit at CHOGM.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: I am sorry; I think they started clapping before. Can I start by asking the hon. Prime Minister what did he say: 'I cannot not attend' or 'I cannot attend'?

The Prime Minister: I said because of my principle I have taken consistently on Burma, on Fiji, on Nigeria, on Palestine, on Syria, on Iran - even though we are a small country and against advice very often of the Foreign Ministry, I must tell you - so therefore, if I have a principle in life, I am not going to depart from that principle and, therefore, I will not attend. I will not attend!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Well, I am glad I did not hear. Now, I have heard correctly, therefore, most of my questions are redundant. But nevertheless, let me ask a few questions especially concerning my good friend hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell. He attended that September meeting at the United Nations of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers and at that September meeting in New York, Sri Lanka was taken to task roughly by Canada and the United Kingdom. Some

delegations, some countries came to the rescue of Sri Lanka. Can I know whether our Foreign Minister was present and whether he was amongst those countries?

The Prime Minister: He was but, I did not ask him about this. He was present. He was not perhaps as aggressive as the countries you have said, but he has taken the stand that we have - I think I mentioned it at the beginning – we need to see progress. We cannot just come there and say everything is okay. We need to see progress. That is why I said with a heavy heart, I am not satisfied that enough progress has been made for me to be able to attend that Summit.

Mr Bérenger: If he did that in New York, very good. But, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that in Perth, more recently in September, at the Indian Ocean Rim Meeting, he met the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka - and according to press reports - commended the things and arrangements for the Colombo Summit and expressed the strong support of Mauritius for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence to Ocean Studies and Environment in Sri Lanka and expressed his appreciation of Sri Lanka's keen interest in the activities of the Indian Ocean Commission. Did that take place and, if yes, was it necessary for our Foreign Minister to overdo things the way it has been reported?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this. I am not sure where the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quoting, but what I do know is that he did address the concern raised by the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner Ms Pillay and also, one of the suggestions that we made - that he proceeded to make - is that why not set up a Truth and Justice Reconciliation Commission like we did here, like they did it in South Africa. That was the two suggestions he made.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister rightly made reference to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Navi Pillay who attacked Sri Lanka's Human Rights record very toughly. That would be in August. Can I point out to him that, in fact, he made reference to elections in the North, but that the Commonwealth Observers' mission to those elections themselves denounced the fact that the Sri Lanka Army harassed Tamil voters, said the very Commonwealth team of observers themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I heard him say that the Sri Lanka Government is going back on commitments. Indeed, is he aware that the Government

of Sri Lanka is going back on very vital issues like demilitarisation of the North and land rights to be exercised precisely by that recently elected Northern Provincial Council?

The Prime Minister: I did not go into the details, but what I gather is that they are trying to reverse what has been achieved through an election, and doing all those things. That is the indication that I have. From all the information I have, they are trying to reverse the process of evolution by creating another Body, a second House, and taking all these powers again. What's the point! It is similar to what has happened in Egypt. You elect a Government, then you make a *coup d'état*, and then you say it was not performing. Allow the elections to do! Now, they won the elections; they should have been allowed. That is the kind of thing that has made me decide; on my own deliberate judgement, as I said, I cannot feel that I can participate when these kind of things are still going on.

Mr Bérenger: Can I add to the long list of things that we can reproach the Sri Lankan Government? Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that only last Saturday, the BBC – not any newspaper – reported *à la une* 'Tamils still being raped and tortured in Sri Lanka'?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I have the details.

Mr Bérenger: On the other hand, I heard the hon. Prime Minister speak quite nicely about the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. I know the gentleman. I have met him on several occasions. Very nice! But is the hon. Prime Minister aware that he has been accused by the Foreign Minister of Canada, publicly, of being the stooge of Sri Lanka? And indeed, he has been behaving like that on several occasions recently, including that he sought independent legal advice, when the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka was removed, as to whether this was constitutional. He received independent legal advice that it was unconstitutional and kept that advice secret. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, therefore, that, as from now on, he will be very careful receiving advice from the present Secretary-General of the Commonwealth?

The Prime Minister: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know the details. He is a very nice gentleman. I think he is doing a good work, and that is why I congratulate him. I must say that one of the issues I raised with him is the sacking of the Chief Justice. I said 'how can that be?' He did say to me at the time that he totally agrees with me. This is unconstitutional, and it should never happen. And I said 'well, are we going there just to say we should not have done

this, we should not have done this, and come back home, and then things carry on as usual?’ That is why I said I am going to monitor. So, I don’t follow his advice. His advice was to go; even to the point saying ‘if you don’t go, maybe you won’t be able to hold the Summit.’ I don’t care. Summit or no Summit, human rights are more important than the Summit! If they accept that we hold it, then we will hold it. If they don’t, we will not.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that it would be premature to say whether the President of Sri Lanka would be invited to the Summit to be held in Mauritius in 2015. Indeed, I have just heard the hon. Prime Minister say that, maybe, the holding of that Summit itself will be put into question by what happens in Sri Lanka and in between. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that we will have to keep monitoring very closely the way things evolve between that Summit and any eventual Summit in Mauritius in 2015? But my question is: will hon. Dr. A. Boolell, who will be, I take it, representing Mauritius, maintain our wish to hold that Commonwealth Summit in 2015 in Mauritius, in spite of the situation in Sri Lanka, and in spite of all this talk about core values of the Commonwealth democracy, human rights, and the way we have been treated by the UK on the Chagos and Chagossians’ issue?

The Prime Minister: I would rather not show my cards here; if I had gone, what I would have said about this double standard or the United Kingdom. Maybe I will keep it for some other time, but he will certainly have to follow the line that I have taken. The indication has been that it would be unprecedented if a country who wants to host the Summit is not actually there. That would be something that would be unprecedented, and we don’t know how this will evolve. As I said, I will talk to him afterwards. The decision has been taken. If they say - because I am not there - we can’t hold the summit, well, it is going to be that way. The Summit is not more important than what is happening to people on the grounds in Sri Lanka and, therefore, we will monitor that very carefully.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please!

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Prime Minister say why neither himself nor any other Minister of the Government attended the recent International Conference on Tamil Diaspora that was held on 09 November, where one of the main issues was precisely about the Summit to be held in Sri Lanka?

The Prime Minister: I can explain that very simply. I take the position. As Prime Minister of this country, I have to look at the national interest of Mauritius. I am not going to be subject to any kind of lobby. Going there would have given an impression. What would have happened today? You would have said that I went there, they convinced me, and I decided. No, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will decide on my own what is in the best interest of this country, and what I want to defend.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that one of his Ministers was supposed to be one of the guest speakers at that conference? But he didn't attend. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, at that international conference, an MP from Sri Lanka, Mr Gangaser Ponnambalam, delivered a speech, in which he said that, as today, people are being raped, the Tamil community is being victimised, and that the army, out of 24 battalions, 21 battalions are in the North still fighting the people of Tamil community? Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, now that he won't attend the meeting, what does the Government, Mauritius intend to do to assist the Tamil Diaspora which is asking that there should be an international independent investigation into genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan State?

The Prime Minister: That has always been our position, and that is what hon. Dr. A. Boolell will say. We want an international enquiry at a high level, because otherwise we won't get results. It's no point they themselves making an enquiry. You have seen what the Human Rights Commissioner has said in his report. It is a very, very strong language, in fact, in that. That is the issue that we are going to raise. That is the only thing we can do, in fact.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the outcry within the Commonwealth as to what Presidency of the Commonwealth being given to Sri Lanka would mean, will the hon. Prime Minister consider the advisability of taking the initiative or joining any initiative to ensure that at this next summit, where presumably we will be represented by Minister Boolell, steps are taken to avoid the Presidency of the Commonwealth being entrusted to the President of Sri Lanka, Mr Rajapaksa?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that this is not possible, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is my understanding. That is what the Protocol says, the Convention says. I don't know; we might see if there is any initiative, but that is my understanding.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like that you allow me to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for his courageous stand...

(Interruptions)

...as I was myself a harsh campaigner for him not to be present there. I would like the hon. Prime Minister to reconfirm to the House that, following his declaration, our foreign policy is not dictated by any foreign element. Is it so for Palestine - just to reconfirm - Pakistan and Kashmir? I would like to know why, till now, we do not have a flight to Pakistan?

The Prime Minister: I can't say. We will have to ask Air Mauritius. I know they are trying. It is a question of commercial reasons. If they can fill the flight, I am sure they will. There are negotiations going on, I must tell you. Negotiations are going on for a flight to Pakistan. I confirm. As I said, we are a sovereign country, and we are not going to follow X, Y, Z.

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

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to request hon. Dr. A. Boolell, who will be representing our country in Mauritius, to put it across, not only to the Sri Lanka Government - above all to the Sri Lanka Government - but to anybody else concerned that, on this issue, the Government of Mauritius and the Opposition in Mauritius are exactly on the same wavelength?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly do that. It will be given even additional force to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying - in fact, if our country will take that kind of principle stand.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/846 addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development will now be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister.

In keeping with practice, PQ No. B/846 will be replied at the end of the Prime Minister's question time, time permitting, of course. Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

ROAD ACCIDENTS (FATAL) - MEASURES

(No. B/834) **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 fatal road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof, since January 2013 to date, indicating the additional measures, if any, taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since January 2013 to 10 November 2013, 107 fatal road accidents have been reported to the Police.

It is worth pointing out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, if you look at the number of vehicles, for example in 2000, there were 244,018 vehicles registered and there were 148 fatal road accidents resulting in the death of 163 persons. As at 10 November 2013, there were, believe it or not, 439,816 vehicles registered - nearly doubled. It is an increase of about 80 percent but, in spite of that, there is a substantial decrease in the number of fatal road accidents which stand, as I said, at 107 and the number of death at 123.

I have to point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the number of killed and seriously injured, what they call K.S.I., this is the standard index used internationally to monitor road safety, that was 432 for the period January to September 2012 and for the same period, that is, in 2013, from January to September 2013, it is 356, thus, representing an 18 percent decrease.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in the House on many occasions, one death on our roads is one death too many. In view of the complexity of road safety, concerted efforts from various stakeholders are required to implement the national strategies to make our roads safer. There is, thus, close collaboration between the Special Road Safety Unit of my Office, the Police Department; and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

The Police have intensified its effort for the enforcement of the law, and have taken the following measures -

- Additional Police Officers have been posted to the Traffic Field and Motorway Patrol Division, which operates on a 24-hour basis, to bring the total to 114 Police Officers.
- Since 13 December 2012, 20 additional riders have been posted to the Motorcycle Division of the Road Safety Unit, bringing the total to 50.
- The personnel of the Divisional Traffic Police has been increased and 88 Police riders are currently posted thereat.
- The Emergency Response Service which performs mobile patrol at Divisional level has also been strengthened and there are currently 343 Police Officers posted thereat.
- The number of road block operations has increased and since January to 07 November 2013, 615 such operations have been carried out islandwide.
- Since June 2013, 19 Fixed Speed Cameras have been placed along accident-prone areas and six Mobile Speed cameras are being used. It is targeted to reach a total of 50 Fixed Speed Cameras by the year 2014.
- Since the beginning of this year and up to 07 November 2013, the Traffic Branch has established 86,636 contraventions, including 47,029 for exceeding speed limit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the education of road users, Police carry out awareness and information campaigns jointly with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit through radio

and TV programmes and exhibitions on road safety. The following activities have been carried out -

- Since January to 07 November 2013, 340 lectures have been delivered and 29,856 persons have attended these lectures.
- Lectures have been delivered to professional drivers on safe driving and behaviour on the road, including the different techniques of defensive driving.
- Lectures have also been delivered to children, secondary school students and elderly persons on the safe use of roads, provisions of the law and road safety generally.
- A Roll-Over Simulator has been used to sensitise members of the public on the importance of wearing seat belts. Since April to 07 November 2013, 33 sessions have been carried out whereby 2,691 persons went through this exercise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in addition to the efforts by the Police to address the issue of road safety, Government has introduced several innovative measures.

As the House is well aware, the Penalty Point System was introduced in May of this year, and since that date, 48,678 penalty point offences have been committed and 26,020 penalty points have been paid - the fees have been paid. It is expected that the Penalty Point System will bring about significant positive changes in the behaviour of motorists.

Also many road accidents involving auto or motorcycles happen because such vehicles are not clearly visible on the road. Government has, on 30 September of this year, promulgated the Road Traffic (Use of High Visibility Clothing) Regulations 2013, which will become effective as from 01 January 2014, to make it mandatory for auto and motorcycles riders to wear high visibility clothing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, road safety audits on new roads are carried out by an independent and multidisciplinary team to report on potential road safety hazards and improvements to be carried out. The multidisciplinary team comprises an Engineer from the Road Development Authority, an Engineer from the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, a representative from the Police Department and a representative from the Special Road Safety Unit of my office.

I wish to highlight, Mr Speaker, Sir, several important measures that have been announced in the Budget to emphasise the primacy of safety on our roads. These include, *inter alia* -

- A comprehensive bus replacement mechanism whereby buses will be equipped with the latest safety measures.
- A complete overhaul of all safety features on the existing fleet of the National Transport Corporation buses.
- Regulations to make it mandatory for all newly imported vehicles of five tonnes and above to be equipped with state-of-the-art devices and safety systems.
- A more rigorous annual medical check-up for all heavy duty drivers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I should also say that the Government has also invited a French expert

...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: I am nearly finished - in July 2013 to work out on three road safety issues, namely, the control of medical fitness to drive, the screening of drivers for drugs, and the establishment of a Mauritian Road Safety Observatory. The expert, Mr Speaker, Sir, has submitted a report on 07 October of this year, and it is being studied by the relevant organisations. Then there will be a draft legislation ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: What did I say that they did not like? Now, I say that the report will have to be studied obviously and it will include a revised draft legislation for the control of medical fitness to drive in line with international best practice; also they will use the latest technology for the screening of drugs in drivers. We have a problem and, as the hon. Members of the Opposition, I think I have answered a question. People have started using drugs which are synthetic and therefore not sensitive to the test that we are doing. That also we are going through procurement to get it.

Also, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, the World Bank has recently made a technical and financial offer to upgrade the road safety management capacity in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I need to say this, on several occasions I emphasise that the Government has the firm commitment to enhance road safety in Mauritius. I have also said that we are going to take all the measures that need to be taken, but also what I very strongly feel that we need, and we are doing it, the implementation of the Driver Education and Testing Centre to enhance road safety by setting new standards for driving and by providing education and training, not just for drivers, but all road users including pedestrians. Additionally, the privatisation of the issue of road worthiness certificates is expected to be operational, I believe, early next year, but the public at large should take an active part in this nationwide effort by adopting a more serious safety conscious attitude on the roads.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the long reply of the Prime Minister, I have only one supplementary. One of the main causes of accidents which is happening these days, Sir, is *sur les passages cloutés*. Not later than the other day, one lady – *une Port Louisienne de 30 ans - a été renversée sur un passage clouté à Port Louis* and it also happens in my Constituency in Beau Bassin. There is a complete lack of policing around the Cross Here and also the road markings which have been raised with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell the House what urgent action the Police intend to take for more policing on the Cross Here to put modern system as we have in Europe, allowing people to be protected on *passages cloutés* and also to have a new system on road markings?

The Prime Minister: I must say it would be difficult to put a policeman at every pedestrian crossing. I think that would be asking too much, but I have said that we also need to educate - I am not saying anything about anyone - people how to use the road, when to across and not to cross. One can't walk and just cross. But all this we are doing.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, on the same issue, even in Quatre Bornes, there are pedestrians who have been killed on pedestrian crossings. We saw in India that there were lights – *des lumières clignotantes qui sont mises sur les passages cloutés*. Would the authority consider the suggestion especially at night to have *les lumières clignotantes* on the road itself where there are *passages cloutés*?

The Prime Minister: It would be a good idea. I remember a long time back the hon. Leader of the Opposition was asking why we don't put these lamps on the crossings but here what happens is that they break the bulb and they steal the bulb. But I think that would be perhaps a good idea that we should look at. I can't say anyway.

Mr Bérenger: We have heard a long statement from the hon. Prime Minister and amongst other things he told us that the Police are taking numerous measures to enforce the law. Is he aware that a driver accused his own adviser of using his portable phone whilst driving? He made a public statement to that effect. I would like to know whether the Police has taken a statement from his special adviser in his office and would he be interested to know that I saw only three or four days ago, the driver of a police car driving his car *sur le rond point de Cybercity* using his portable phone? Unfortunately, I did not manage, because he was going the other direction, to get the car number, but is he aware that things like that are taking place?

The Prime Minister: I know Mr Buntipilly. I don't see him doing that, but if the policeman has said it, a statement would have to be taken and the law will have to proceed as it is. Knowing him, he is so careful; he speaks so much about road safety, I can't see him doing that, whether it is a false accusation. If he had stopped, that would be a different thing, obviously.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - PROCEEDINGS - LIVE BROADCAST

(No. B/835) 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 live broadcasting of the proceedings of the National Assembly, he will state if he proposes to set up anew a Select Committee to look therein and, if so when, and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to PQ B/54 on 09 April, I stated that there might not be a need to set up a new Select Committee as I am given to understand that the previously instituted Select Committee had apparently completed its assignment. I understand also that there is a consensus on both sides of the House for the principle of live broadcast of the proceedings of the National Assembly.

I also get the feeling that, last time, we all tended to agree if the work has been done why now go and appoint another Select Committee and all this, but obviously we cannot see the draft

because it is not official. I, therefore, intend to take up the matter with you, Mr Speaker, Sir, to see how we can move forward because if I cannot get the draft report because it is not official, I don't know what is in the report, but we will have to look at the modalities and administrative arrangements so that we can go ahead with this live coverage. I am sure a solution can be found.

Mr Bérenger: Hon. Bhagwan puts the question. Is the Prime Minister aware that the situation is becoming *intolérable*, the manipulation is *infecte*? It is becoming *intolérable*. Is the Prime Minister aware that the cameras and the Director General of the MBC...

(Interruptions)

are present here as strangers, therefore, with your permission? Can one imagine the Director-General of the BBC sitting with officials, with officers? *Quel paillasson*? I say what provocation and I am repeating this is becoming *intolérable*. Will the hon. Prime Minister take it up with the Speaker? Will the Speaker remember that those strangers cannot be *intolérable* in this Assembly?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: That is something that Mr Speaker will have to see. All these things would be things of the past if we have live broadcast, I suppose, but we need to look exactly how things are being done. It is complicated. It is more complicated than people think. A lot of people will play to the gallery as well; that also we have to take into consideration.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware - I am sure he must be aware; the Director General of the MBC-TV was sitting here and has fled away - Mr Hitler - that on the night of Tuesday 22 October whilst reporting the sitting of the National Assembly, there has been manipulation and even I had to send a letter to Mr Speaker where I asked Mr Speaker how things were being done and my supplementary question - because it was on the MBC-TV and the Prime Minister was giving reply - was completely taken away, censored and other people who were not there, were given the other supplementary question. Deliberate cut! Deliberate manipulation by the Director General of the MBC-TV, which I am sure will happen today!

The Prime Minister: I am sorry that the hon. Member has been deprived of his - because he has his own star quality! But I will certainly take up the matter, Mr Speaker, Sir

Mr Bhagwan: Can we ask the Prime Minister as Minister responsible for the MBC-TV that pending any decision taken after the meeting that he will have with Mr Speaker that the Director-General of the MBC-TV not be allowed to come and sit here?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: That is not a decision that I can ask him not to, because he is also a person...

(Interruptions)

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the MBC-TV give me as a hon. Member of this House a fairer coverage on my work as parliamentarian?

The Prime Minister: I didn't quite understand the question. The hon. Member wants to make sure that he gets a fair coverage.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Yes.

The Prime Minister: Yes, certainly, the hon. Member should be getting a fair coverage.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the good work that had been done by the last Select Committee - I was a Member and hon. Bodha was the Chairman, he was then Minister of the then Government - can the hon. Prime Minister envisage the possibility of tabling a motion that this House should adopt and implement the recommendations made in the report of this last Committee so that we don't waste time again and, therefore, the House resolves to adopt the recommendations and to implement the recommendations made in the last Select Committee report?

The Prime Minister: There is no problem. I will speak to Mr Speaker about the issue, but I would like to have a look at the draft, what it says. If it says to give the Opposition fifty minutes and the Government four minutes, I will not agree.

SUBUTEX – TRAFFICKING – CONVICTS

(No. B/836) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the trafficking in and the unauthorised consumption of subutex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police,

information as to the number of arrest effected in connection therewith, since 2005 to date, indicating the –

- (a) nationality of the arrested persons, and
- (b) number of convicts therefor presently serving imprisonment sentences, indicating if consideration will be given for the transfer of the prisoners who are foreign nationals to their country to serve the imprisonment sentence.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendments brought to the Dangerous Drugs Act in August 2008, which subsequently came into force in February 2009, made provision for trafficking of Subutex to be considered as a drug dealing offence punishable under section 30 of the Act by a fine not exceeding Rs1 m. and a penal servitude not exceeding 25 years. Prior to this amendment, all offences related to Subutex were governed by section 29 of the Dangerous Drugs Act 2000 which provided for a fine not exceeding Rs100,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

In regard to part (a) of the question the information requested by the hon. Member is as follows –

Year	Number of persons arrested for Possession of Subutex and Nationality			Number of persons arrested for Trafficking of Subutex and Nationality (as from 2009 only)		
	Mauritian	French	Total	Mauritian	French	Total
2005	309	-	309	-	-	Nil
2006	821	-	821	-	-	Nil
2007	804	1	805	-	-	Nil
2008	844	1	845	-	-	Nil
2009	760	-	760	120	-	120
2010	577	-	577	103	1	104

Year	Number of persons arrested for Possession of Subutex and Nationality			Number of persons arrested for Trafficking of Subutex and Nationality (as from 2009 only)		
2011	345	-	345	77	6	83
2012	96	-	96	30	1	31
2013 (up to 31 October)	20	-	20	5	-	5
Total	4576	2	4578	335	8	343

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that there are 12 detainees in our Prisons undergoing sentences for *Possession of Subutex* and 40 detainees, including five French nationals, who are undergoing sentences for *Drug Dealing in Subutex*.

The Transfer of Prisoners Act 2001, the Transfer of Prisoners (Commonwealth Countries) Regulations 2002 and the Transfer of Prisoners (Convention) Regulations 2005, already make provision for the transfer of a prisoner undergoing sentence to his native country. But there are conditions attached to this transfer of prisoners, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they are as follows -

- (i) at the time of the request the detainee should have at least six months of sentence to serve, that is, left to serve;
- (ii) the native country should agree to such a transfer, and
- (iii) the acts or omissions on account of which the sentence has been imposed in Mauritius should constitute a criminal offence according to the law of the designated country to which the prisoner is to be transferred and would constitute a criminal offence if it has been committed in that country.

In regard to the five French detainees currently undergoing sentence in Mauritius for Subutex related offences, they have made a request to the Commissioner of Prisons to be transferred to their native country to continue to serve their respective sentences. Police has objected to three requests as the presence of the three detainees is required as witnesses in pending cases. In the other two cases, consultations are ongoing with the French Authorities. It must be highlighted that the issue of transferring French nationals who are undergoing sentences related to dealing with Subutex is a complex one, Subutex not being classified as a dangerous drug in France and this implies that one of the conditions for transfer as stipulated in the Act would not be met.

The issue was discussed, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I mentioned at least once, but there were two meetings which I had with the French Minister of Interior, precisely on that issue, Mr Manuel Valls. It has been decided that the legal implications for such a transfer would be looked into by a high level joint committee made up of representatives of Government and the French Embassy in Mauritius. A first meeting of the committee was held on 11 October 2013, during which it was decided that there would have to be an exchange of information between the French and Mauritian authorities in regard to the existing legal framework in both countries for Subutex-related cases. I know another meeting is scheduled to be held by the end of November 2013.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je reviens sur la question de faire les condamnés subir l'emprisonnement dans leur pays d'origine. Il y a le cas récemment d'un ressortissant indien, condamné à 30 ans de prison en 1999 à Maurice, mais une fois en Inde, en 2008, il a fait appel contre le jugement et a bénéficié le 15 octobre dernier d'une remise en liberté en faisant état de la pureté de la drogue selon la définition de la loi indienne. Est-ce que le risque n'est pas là que l'application de la loi, en ce qui concerne le Subutex en France, parce que ce n'est pas considéré comme une drogue dure, est-ce qu'on ne court pas le risque qu'il y a répétition dans ce cas-là aussi ?

The Prime Minister: *Absolument! Vous avez raison.* You are absolutely right that this could well happen. That is why we are discussing it. I made it clear to Mr Valls that we have no objections for prisoners to be transferred, but the problem is if they get scot-free there in France. I must say the Members of Parliament in France who are also saying it should be criminalised and put on the dangerous list, but it is not a majority. So, this is what they are discussing.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister give us an update of the status of the Caterino case, who escaped from the country?

The Prime Minister: I think I have already answered the question. You will have to ask a substantive question.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister told us that he had met the Interior Minister of France, Mr Manuel Valls recently, but some time before that, some time back, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the authorities of France, the way they were not actively cooperating – from what I understood - in preventing this Subutex traffic between France and Mauritius. Is he satisfied now that the French authorities are cooperating as they should?

The Prime Minister: It is quite expressive that I did not say ‘dissatisfied’, but what I said is they are not cooperating and we have sent a team there and the answer was they cannot understand why we have put the Subutex on the dangerous drugs list, when they, in fact, consider it to be a medicine. In fact, they prefer – that’s their own words – people to use Subutex than heroin and they think we are wrong. But we know what is happening here, because they mix Subutex and heroin here, that is the other problem. So, I explained that to Minister Valls. So, they are saying that they are not acting, because for them it is better they use Subutex than heroin and here we have put it on the list of dangerous drugs. That is why we have to find a way. But they are cooperating. Mr Manuel Valls is an extremely capable man, as we all know. He wants to find a solution, but he is also under a lot of pressure about his French nationals who are in prison here. We want to cooperate and find a solution.

Mr Bérenger: The question was France is keen – from what I understand – to receive their nationals who have been found guilty by our Courts here. Hon. Ramano raised a very good point that it should not happen that when they are transferred back to France, one way or the other, they are free. But the case of South Africa is still pending. Is the Government of South Africa still refusing to receive any of their nationals who have been found guilty by our Courts?

The Prime Minister: That is the position up to the last time I heard. They say: “they have committed a crime in Mauritius, you please keep them; we don’t want them”. That is the attitude.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is not about the Caterino case. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether subsequent to this case, there has been any other French national or any other foreign national for that matter who, whilst on bail, for possession of Subutex, has left the country, the Mauritian territory and has escaped from justice?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that there has been a case, but perhaps the hon. Member knows of a case. I cannot say for sure whether there has been a case. I don't think so.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he intends to raise the issue with the Commissioner of Police - regarding the well-known Mauritians who have been living in France and going here and there, who have been caught with Subutex and now they are wandering around in BMW cars, big cars, *décapotables* and so on - whether there is an audit trail; whether there is a permanent follow-up, not only on these criminals, but also on their related activities? Even in our country, we know these people, they are known and they cause a lot of harm in terms of pressure, in terms of problems to the inhabitants and somebody who has been linked with drugs...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I am sorry to interrupt you. I am still waiting for your question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: To have well informed Police Officers like the NSS and so on to look after people! There is one who has....

Mr Speaker: Still your question is not forthcoming!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I am coming, Sir, I am coming...

(Interruptions)

... who has nearly killed two Police Officers the other day! Nearly killed!

Mr Speaker: So, the hon. Member is making a statement on a question!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: What I wanted to say to the hon. Member is that the law will take its course. If he thinks there are people, I will check on it, but the law has to take its course. One of the problems that we have is if everybody did their work properly we would have less problems. But, there are certain things that go wrong, as we know. I don't want to go into details, but there are some bad apples. It is a fact.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that Parliament Question B/841 has been withdrawn...

(Interruptions)

...and also Parliamentary Questions B/846, B/847, B/885 and B/886 have been withdrawn altogether! Time is over! Now, we move to questions addressed to hon. Ministers!

DIRECTOR OF AUDIT - POST

(No. B/846) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the post of Director of Audit, he will state if the incumbent thereof is presently on contract and, if so, indicate the duration thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SAUDI ARABIA - MAURITIUS EMBASSY

(No. B/847) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Saudi Arabia, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed –

- (a) setting up of an Embassy thereat, and
- (b) operation of direct flights between Mauritius and Saudi Arabia.

(Withdrawn)

PRB REPORT 2013 - IMPLEMENTATION - COST

(No. B/848) 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 Pay Research Bureau Report 2013 and the Pay Research Bureau Errors,

Omissions and Anomalies Committee Report 2013, he will state the total cost of implementation of the recommendations thereof, indicating the -

- (a) average percentage increase thereof;
- (b) increases between the lower and the higher grades, and
- (c) impact thereof on the budget and on the economy.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost of implementation of the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report 2013 is estimated at Rs4.6 billion each year. As regards the Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee (EOAC) Report 2013, it is estimated to cost on average around Rs1.4 billion annually over the period 2013 to 2015, as follows -

- (i) Rs1.0 billion in 2013;
- (ii) Rs1.4 billion in 2014, and
- (iii) Rs1.8 billion in 2015.

Thus, the overall salary review exercise will on average cost some Rs6 billion annually.

As regards part (a) of the question, the average increase in salaries with the implementation of the two reports is estimated at around 25 per cent in 2013 and will go up to 30 per cent by 2015.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the increase in salaries in the different salary groups of July 2008 ranges between 25% to 40% as follows -

Salary Group	Average increase in salary
Up to Rs6,800	40%
Above Rs6,800 up to Rs10,000	36%
Above Rs10,000 up to Rs30,000	30%
Above Rs30,000 up to Rs75,000	25%
Above Rs75,000	30%

The House may note that the pre-tax salary ratio of a General Worker to Permanent Secretary, which was 1:8.6 in 2008 and 1:7.7 as at 31 December 2012, now stood at 1:7.5 with the overall salary review exercise.

As regards part (c) of the question, the implementation of the PRB and the EOAC Reports are estimated to contribute around 1.6 per cent of GDP to the overall budget deficit. I am informed by Statistics Mauritius that the effective impact of the salary review on inflation has been negligible as the inflation rate has in fact declined from 3.9 per cent in 2012 to an expected 3.6 per cent this year.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House what will be the impact on the additional tax to be collected as a result of the increase in the PRB report?

Mr Duval: It can be calculated, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is obviously income tax on the Rs6 billion less the individual personal allowances etc. and, obviously, depending on the expenditure pattern, VAT also will be collected.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The reason of the question is: has this been estimated by the MRA because it should be in the Budget Estimates of 2014? Can I also know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister the number of Civil Servants who are affected by this 2013 pay review?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, all Civil Servants are affected by the PRB. I do not have the number, whether it is 50,000 or more Civil Servants and the great majority of them will also be receiving their incremental increases in January 2014 and January 2015.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The reason to ask for the number of Civil Servants is to get the exact figure from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister who said that the PRB will cost each Civil Servant so much money when the Manraj Report was not yet published. Now that we have this Report, what would be the cost per Civil Servant given the number of Civil Servants affected?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not say per Civil Servant, I mentioned per taxpayer. It was not per Civil Servant.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say whether the initial Manraj Report or any other version did recommend that no salary compensation will be paid to public officers for the year 2014?

Mr Duval: There was discussion within the EOAC Committee as to what should be done but, as the hon. Member knows, Cabinet took the decision to amend the final Manraj Report in two ways: one, increases from 01 January to July 2013 would be paid in cash instead of in terms

of days off and secondly, there would be no salary compensation when inflation was less than 5%. And, of course, inflation at the moment is estimated at 3.6%.

PUBLIC SECTOR EXTERNAL DEBT

(No. B/849) 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 total public sector external debt, classified into Government and public enterprises debt, he will state, as at to date, the -

- (a) total outstanding amount and its respective percentage of Gross Domestic Product;
- (b) total servicing cost and its respective percentage of exports income;
- (c) proportion payable at fixed and floating interest rates respectively, and
- (d) risks of the current portfolio to foreign debt management.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to parts (a) to (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the information requested by the hon. Member is already posted on the website of my Ministry in Tables 1, 3, 4 and 13 of the website.

Regarding part (d) of the question, it may be noted that the level of the public sector external debt represents moderate risk for debt management for the following reasons -

- (i) as at end Sept 2013, the share of foreign debt in the total public sector debt stock stood at 26% only while the remaining 74% was composed of domestic debt;
- (ii) our external debt to GDP ratio is 15.3%, whilst the foreign exchange reserves of the country represent 27% of GDP, nearly twice the amount;
- (iii) the public sector external debt servicing to export of goods and services is only 1.4%;
- (iv) our debt management strategy is to generally have a balanced portfolio of fixed and floating external interest rate loans. However, over the last few years, Government has opted for a higher share of variable interest rate loans to benefit from the low international rate environment. The low international interest rates

have allowed us as I mentioned to reduce the public sector external debt service ratio to around 1.4% for the year ending September 2013;

- (v) the foreign loans have allowed Government to lengthen the maturity profile of the debt portfolio and, therefore, the refinancing risk is moderate.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason for me to ask the question is that the question was sent some time ago, but the website has the figures of March. That is why the question is there. Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, when we talk of the risk of external debt, whether there is more reliance recently on floating rate external debt than on the concessional rate, and, is this not a risk that we are going for floating rate commercial loan from foreign institutions?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, obviously, when we are dealing with floating rates we have some uncertainty as to the future. The thinking at the Ministry of Finance at the moment is that we should now opt for more fixed rates in case the exchange rates begin to move up again after the end of the crisis.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, just to give you an example of the advantages that have been obtained by Government by using floating exchange rates, if you take the past years US Dollar, you would pay perhaps about 0.8%, in terms of interest on US Dollar, whereas the fixed rate on US Dollar would be higher than 3%. So, there is a big difference.

Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention that the public sector external debt service ratio is around 1.4% and has greatly fallen thanks to the use of floating interest rates. In the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was as much as 7.3%, so really it has gone down substantially.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I ask for a clarification from the hon. vice-Prime Minister?

Mr Speaker: Put it in a form of a question!

Mr Jugnauth: It is in the form of a question. I see from the website of the Ministry of Finance that the total public sector debt standing at September 2013 to be Rs213,750 billion representing 59.1% as a percentage of GDP. And when I look at the Estimates of 2014 that have been circulated, the revised Estimates of December 2013 stands at Rs216,920 billion, which is about Rs3 billion more, and representing 58.5% as a percentage of GDP. Can I get a clarification from the hon. vice-Prime Minister?

Mr Duval: I would like to do so, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I would need to check the figures.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Ameer Meea!

CATTLE (LIVE) – SELLING PRICE

(No. B/850) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney-General whether, in regard to live cattle, he will state the -

- (a) places where scales are being used for the weighing thereof, indicating if the scales have been issued with authentication certificates and if so, indicate;
 - (i) in each case, the duration thereof, and
 - (ii) number of checks carried out in relation thereto and the number of contraventions, if any, booked, since November 2012 to date, and
- (b) measures taken and mechanisms, if any, put in place to control the selling price thereof.

The Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection (Mr C. Sayed-Hossen): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I propose to reply to PQ B/850.

I wish to inform the House that the Legal Metrology Services of my Ministry, Ministry of Commerce, is mandated to assize weighing instruments (scales) and to ensure that these are not tampered with. Once the assizing is done, a seal is affixed on the weighing instrument and a certificate is issued for that specific instrument. This certificate is valid for a period of two years. Over the period of two years, verifications of assize instruments, weighing or otherwise are carried out. For example, between January and October 2013, around 7,500 verifications were carried out.

As regards part (a) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information regarding the places where scales are used for the weighing of live cattle for public sale, the dates of verification and the duration of the validity of the certificates issued.

Since November 2012 to date, no contravention has been established.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the price of live animals is not controlled and there is no recommended selling price in respect of

same. However, I received representations in earlier October to the effect that the prices charged for live animals for Qurbani 2013 were on the high side. Following these representations, I requested officials of my Ministry to collect the returns of the importers of live animals for analysis. Subsequently, I held meetings with the importers and relevant stakeholders in the presence of officials of my Ministry and officials of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. It was, thereafter, agreed that the price of live animals would range on average between Rs140 to Rs145 per Kg.

The House may be aware, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the importation of live cattle or live sheep/goat is a *de facto* monopoly and that it is only competition that will serve to better regulate the market.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit of my Ministry monitored the situation by supervising the weighing and sale of live animals. There were actually 41 visits, which were carried out for monitoring and supervision exercises in respect of live imported animals.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Merci, M. le président. L'honorable ministre a animé une conférence de presse en octobre dernier, avec pour thème '*Price of cattle for Qurbani 2013.*' Et il se serait plutôt fait l'agent des importateurs et des vendeurs qui abusent de la situation monopole pour imposer des prix qui n'arrêtent de grimper. M. le président, sur quoi l'honorable ministre s'est-il basé pour dire que le prix devra varier sur R 140 à R 145? Quelle expertise son ministère a, pour définir le prix de R 140 à R 145? Est-ce qu'il a vérifié tous les documents des importateurs pour arriver à ce prix là?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I would wish the hon. Member would understand simple English, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

... that after receiving representations, I requested officials of my Ministry to collect the returns of the importers ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Sayed-Hossen: ...of live animals for analysis. All the documents were collected. And I think it is very cheap, Mr Speaker, Sir, for the hon. Member to speak about myself, being the agent of the importers, whereas it is known that since I have been Minister of Commerce for the past two years, I have been trying to break that monopoly of the importation of live cattle. It is very simple. We have the shipping documents, we have the invoices, we have a breakdown of all the costs and officers of my Ministry have been doing that for years, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is, cost analysis and officials of my Ministry have come to the conclusion that it would be reasonable for live cattle to be sold at the said prices.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is really shocking for someone who has been the President of the democratisation ...

Mr Speaker: No, it is not allowed.

Mr Ameer Meea: He made comments on what I have said.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, don't make a statement, put your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, l'honorable ministre a déclaré ceci et c'est pour cela que j'ai dit qu'il a été l'agent des importateurs. Il a déclaré ceci dans sa conférence de presse.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, put your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: Il a aussi dit le fait que 15% des 1,500 animaux est considéré comme assez spécial et leur prix sera un peu élevé. Et il va encore plus loin 'Socovia a mis à la disposition'. Il fait la publicité de la compagnie qui importe et qui vend ces animaux. Socovia a mis à la disposition du ministère une liste de revendeurs et il s'est aussi réjoui de la collaboration

du cartel et a reconnu qu'il n'y a personne pour le concurrencer. Tout cela a été dit par l'honorable ministre durant ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, put your question now!

Mr Ameer Meea: ...durant sa conférence de presse. Donc, M. le président, est-ce que l'honorable ministre a l'expertise pour pouvoir venir justifier de tels prix alors qu'à longueur de l'année – écoutez moi bien – le prix se vend à R 110 le kilo au public et c'est seulement pour la fête de l'Eid-Ul-Adha que le prix grimpe à R145 et, aujourd'hui, le ministre vient nous justifier une telle aberration.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: M. le président, il est clair que je n'ai pas personnellement l'expertise de vérifier cela. Je ne suis ni boucher ni maquignon, M. le président. Peut-être un boucher ou un maquignon serait mieux placé pour le faire. J'ai bien déclaré à la Chambre que je me suis basé sur les recommandations et les conseils des officiers de mon ministère. Je répète que nul ne peut mettre en doute l'intégrité des officiers de mon ministère en ce qui concerne l'analyse correcte et raisonnable des chiffres qui sont mis à leur disposition par des importateurs. C'est un travail qu'ils font tous les jours de l'année.

En ce qui concerne cette situation de monopole, M. le président, il n'y a rien de nouveau. Tout le monde sait que Compagnie X, Socovia, a le monopole de l'importation et je dis dans ma réponse principale que c'est un monopole *de facto*. C'est un monopole qui est arrivé par la force des choses et que nous devons essayer de casser ce monopole pour qu'il y ait une concurrence.

Maintenant en ce qui concerne le reste des jugements de valeur de l'honorable membre, je passe outre à cela. Merci, M. le président.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say whether he has taken into consideration the fact that right now live cattle is being imported from South Africa, which makes the price go up, whereas live cattle could have been imported from Madagascar where, with the freight and all, the price could have gone down?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not a specialist in cattle or in meat. My role as Minister of Commerce is limited, as I said in my main reply, to respecting the regulations that apply to consumers. Now, regarding the origin of the sourcing of live cattle or sheep or goats, this is not something which falls under my Ministry or my responsibility.

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, selon le titre d'un hebdomadaire : 'des profits de R 45 millions au cartel', dont le partenaire d'affaires est le frère d'un ministre, et le ministère de ce membre du gouvernement a une certaine implication dans le traitement de ce dossier, ce qui fait que ceci explique cela. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can disclose his interests in the matter?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: M. le président, je n'ai aucun frère boucher ou maquignon. Je n'ai aucun frère actionnaire dans une activité d'importation de bétails. Il y en a peut-être parmi nous, peut-être de l'autre côté de la Chambre ; moi, je n'en sais rien. Je répète : moi, je n'en sais rien.

(Interruptions)

Mais, je ne suis pas du tout impliqué dans ce genre d'affaires, M. le président. J'inviterais l'honorable membre à faire cette déclaration en dehors de la Chambre.

Mr Jugnauth: Le ministre a parlé du monopole *de facto*. Qu'est ce que le ministre est en train de faire pour casser ce monopole?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: M. le président, ce n'est pas le *job* du gouvernement ou d'un ministère ou des institutions du gouvernement, mis à part ce qui est stipulé dans la loi, c'est-à-dire à travers la *State Trading Corporation*, d'importer du bétail. J'ai discuté très souvent avec mon collègue, le ministre de l'Agro-industrie et de la Sécurité alimentaire, sur les facilités à mettre en place pour permettre à d'autres importateurs, des entrepreneurs, des investisseurs, des opérateurs économiques d'importer du bétail, et à la première occasion qu'un opérateur économique se présentera, je suis certain que mon collègue, le ministre de l'Agro-industrie et de la Sécurité alimentaire, et moi-même, en tant que ministre du Commerce, nous ferons tout pour lui faciliter une telle opération pour casser le monopole.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, year after year, prices have been increasing. The hon. Minister just stated that he cannot do anything about controlling prices. But can I ask him if regulations can be changed, even the law, if need be, so that prices are stabilised, and we don't see that year after year prices go up so high?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would be happy to be advised about what sort of mechanism you can put into place to regulate, to fix actually the price of live animals.

Mr Speaker: This is a proper time to break. I suspend for one and a half hours!

At 1.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.41 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions No. B/855, A/279 and A/280 have been withdrawn.

CONTROL & ARBITRATION DIVISION – OFFICERS - REDEPLOYMENT

(No. B/851) 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.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the wake of the reforms of the European Union (EU) sugar regime and more particularly the drastic cut in the price of sugar by 36%, the six service providing institutions of the Sugar Industry including the Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board were merged into the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and the function and activities of the former Control Board now fall under the Control and Arbitration Department of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority.

Out of 148 employees on the establishment of the ex-Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board, five officers were retained by the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority and the rest were redeployed as they were Civil Servants. There was, however, an understanding that these redeployed officers would be offered the option to work for the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority during the crop season on payment of an appropriate allowance.

With coming into operation of a new equipment, namely, the infracana which is a stand-alone equipment for the determination of sucrose content in canes, the Control and Arbitration Department requires only 93 seasonal employees in different grades for this year's crop season against 138 for last year.

The redeployed employees of the former Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board were invited to express their interest to work for the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority for crop 2013. However, only 35 employees responded positively.

As the number of employees was insufficient, the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority had recourse to casual workers.

Mrs Hanoomajee: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that some officers of the Control Board were asked whether they were agreeable to work for the harvest 2013 by way of a circular letter which was issued, but they were given only one day to reply to that letter and, even then, that circular letter did not reach each and every Officer and that is why only some of them responded?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of the details of how they proceeded to ask them for their expression of interest to work for the crop season, but what I am aware of is that they were not willing to work. There were only 35 who expressed their agreement to work. They had entered a case before the Supreme Court when they were redeployed. They are not agreeable to their redeployment. They are not so happy about being redeployed and they are questioning that redeployment before the Supreme Court. This was one of the reasons - I was told - that they were not willing to work.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the hon. Minister now enquire into this because they were not given the opportunity to say whether they were willing to work or not and they were completely discarded? Can the hon. Minister carry out an enquiry to find out who is the responsible officer and why the others were discarded?

Mr Faugoo: I will do so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Does the hon. Minister find it normal then that the services of retired officers were taken onboard against payment whilst those who were in service were discarded?

Mr Faugoo: It is normal on the basis that they did not agree to work. Now what the hon. Member is claiming, I don't know if it is founded or unfounded. I said that I am going to enquire, depending on the outcome of the enquiry I can pronounce on what the hon. Member is saying, whether it was right to retain the services of the people from outside.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will never come to this House and say things which are unfounded. So, can I get a timeframe from the hon. Minister when we can get the results of this enquiry?

Mr Faugoo: By next week.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

CASCAVELLE – ROYAL ROAD - SPEED BREAKERS

(No. B/852) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Cascavelle, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of speed breakers on the Royal Road thereat.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a matter of policy no road humps are placed except near the schools or other such places where there is dense movement of pedestrians. It is known that road humps carry lots of inconveniences, particularly for fast movement of priority vehicles like Fire Brigade, ambulances and the Police. However, following a survey carried out by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit recently, new road safety measures are being appraised for implementation during the course of the next financial year as follows –

- Setting up of traffic light at the junction near the Primary school of Cascavelle, and
- Setting up of a pedestrian push traffic light near Cascavelle Road junction with Palma Road.
- Additionally, fixed speed cameras will soon be installed near Casela in Cascavelle along the Royal Road known as the Black River Road A3 and along Palma Road B2 near the junction of Cascavelle Road. The exact location is being assessed.

With the implementation of these arrangements, adequate traffic management on road safety measures are already being implemented along Cascavelle Road.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister when this project will be completed?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, traffic lights are not available actually. We are getting them in January. As from January, the work will start and within one month it will be completed.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2015 – SPORTS DISCIPLINES

(No. B/853) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the 9th Indian Ocean Island Games to be held in Reunion Island, in 2015, he will state the –

- (a) sports disciplines selected for participation therein, indicating in each case, the training programme scheduled to be held at national and international levels respectively, and
- (b) budget allocated therefor by his Ministry and by Club Maurice, respectively.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the list of sports selected for the 9th Indian Ocean Islands Games to be held in Reunion Island in 2015 is as follows -

- (1) Athletics (Men & Women), including handisports
- (2) Badminton (Men & Women)
- (3) Basketball (Men & Women)
- (4) Boxing (Men only)
- (5) Cycling (Men only)
- (6) Football (Men & Women)
- (7) Handball (Men & Women)
- (8) Judo (Men & Women)
- (9) Swimming (Men & Women), including handisports
- (10) Table Tennis (Men & Women)
- (11) Tennis (Men & Women)

(12) Volleyball ((Men & Women)

(13) Weightlifting (Men & Women)

(14) Yatching (Men & Women)

I am tabling a schedule of training programme at national level.

As regards training at international level, most of our high level athletes are already training with the help of the Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports in international training centres abroad. As for the other athletes, training abroad may start once the pre-selection exercise is over.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the estimated budget for 2013, 2014 and 2015 is Rs140 m. This includes participation as well as training prior to the competition.

As regards assistance from *Club Maurice*, I am informed that negotiations are still in progress with potential sponsors and donors. It is expected that about Rs30 m. will be mobilised by *Club Maurice* to assist National Sports Federations in terms of specific equipment, training camp, food supplements and vitamins, psychological support, workshops, motivational and team building exercise and equipment for training. The list of sponsors will be made public by the *Club Maurice* in due course.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire par rapport aux disciplines qui ont été choisies pour participer à ces jeux, combien actuellement bénéficient du support d'un DTN et de bien vouloir nous préciser lesquels et en même temps, dans la foulée, est-ce qu'il peut nous dire s'il y a des disciplines qui ont sollicité aussi l'apport, le soutien d'un entraîneur étranger justement dans le cadre de leurs préparations?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, actually we have 14 sports that will be presented for the next Indian Ocean Island Games. They have not requested for a National Technical Director for the time being. I think that they intend to have the National Technical Director a bit closer to the Indian Ocean Island Games because obviously there is a lot of money involved when you take National Technical Directors. So, for the time being, they have not made any request officially to have a National Technical Director, but they informed me that in due course they will be coming for a request for a National Technical Director, maybe in a few months time.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans un passé récent l'honorable ministre avait informé la Chambre, suite à une de mes questions, qu'il y avait un comité de suivie qui avait été mis en place pour suivre justement tous les besoins des différentes sélections nationales. Peut-on savoir où en sont les travaux de ce comité de suivie et, si jamais il y a eu un rapport qui a été préparé, est-ce qu'il pourrait éventuellement déposer une copie de ce rapport ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the *comité de suivie* was put in place by myself immediately after the last Indian Ocean Island Games in August 2011. They have had several meetings with the sports federations. In fact, it is only now that we have been aware of the sports that will be present. Nearly two years after the last Indian Ocean Island Games that the *Comité Internationale des Jeux* has been able to finalise the 14 sports that are going to participate in the next Indian Ocean Island Games. We are having regular meetings with these federations and I can submit a copy of their requirements and the training programme.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, par rapport à ce que le ministre vient de nous dire concernant le Club Maurice, il a affirmé qu'il y a une somme de R 30 millions qui sera éventuellement récoltée pour la préparation de nos athlètes. Peut-on savoir quand cette somme sera disponible et quand effectivement cet argent sera mis à la disposition de différentes sélections nationales?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stated in my answer that negotiations are still in progress with potential sponsors and donors and the list of sponsors will be made public by the Club Maurice in due course.

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question, M. le président, toujours concernant les finances, que le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports compte allouer aux différentes fédérations pour leurs préparations. Je suppose qu'il y a une somme qui a été identifiée dans le budget qui a été présenté récemment et le ministre parlait de R 140 millions. Donc, ne serait-ce qu'une partie de cette somme sera déboursée pour faciliter les athlètes dans leurs préparations.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, preparation of athletes is an ongoing process. And as such, we cannot separate preparation of athletes from one competition to another. During the last weekend, we had an open Africa Judo competition. Obviously, when we helped these competitions to be held in Mauritius and the athletes participated, it was also an ongoing process. So, we don't have a specific line budget regarding the budget to be allocated for Indian Ocean

Island Games. But the requirements up to the Indian Ocean Island Games in 2015, is Rs140 m. after consultation with the specific federation. So, we are obviously going to give them this money which includes the participation budget that is being allocated to them.

Mr Bhagwan: It has been the practice in the past for our national teams to follow coaches abroad prior to the Indian Ocean Island Games and have friendly matches and competitions. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether a calendar has been prepared with the different federations with regard to the training of the different national teams and also their trainers?

Mr Ritoo: I informed in my answer again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the federation comes with the calendar of activities regarding playing locally and also going for training abroad. So, it is included in the programme that they submit to the *comité de suivi* and this is obviously financed by the Ministry.

SERGE ALFRED SWIMMING POOL - REPAIR WORKS

(No. B/854) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool, he will state the -

- (a) repair works undertaken thereat, since July 2013 to date, giving details as to the cost and to the names of the contractors therefor, and
- (b) conditions of access thereto by members of the public.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the swimming pools of my Ministry are closed during the months of July and August for the purpose of *vidange*. By the same occasion, other general maintenance and repair works are also carried out.

The repair works effected at the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool since July 2013 to date are as follows -

- (i) General electrical works effected by Gregelectrical Co. Ltd for the sum of Rs92,450.
- (ii) Maintenance and civil works in connection with *vidange* carried out by SJC Co. Ltd for the sum of Rs242,000.
- (iii) Supply of inox perforated plates by Furnicon for the sum of Rs54,510.

- (iv) General Maintenance by Giga Power Ltd for the sum of Rs93,150.
- (v) Replacement of damaged tiles inside the pool by Tusk Contracting Ltd for the sum of Rs14,577.40.

With regard to part (b) of the question, a monthly package is charged to members of the public using the swimming pool in the morning as follows -

- (i) Weekdays – Rs300 per month;
- (ii) Saturdays only – Rs200 per month, and
- (iii) Sundays – Rs200

For those using the swimming pool in the evening, the tariff charged is Rs50 per hour for adults and Rs25 per hour for children.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, si j'ai bien compris la réponse du ministre, il y a eu plusieurs contracteurs qui ont été sollicités pour les différents travaux à être effectués à la piscine Serge Alfred et peut-il nous dire s'il y a eu un appel d'offre avant que les travaux ne commencent et que le choix soit fait sur certains contracteurs?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these contracts that have been awarded have been through the tender procedures.

Mr Bhagwan: Since the Serge Alfred swimming pool is situated in my constituency, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, can I know from the hon. Minister whether he has had a look because I raised that issue last time. We must not talk only within the swimming pool, but outside also, the environment; the immediate environment of the swimming pool *laisse à désirer*. There is a problem of security. A lot of people, even women, attend this swimming pool in the morning and afternoon up till late. There is a real problem of security in terms of uplifting of the environment and lighting. So, can I appeal to the hon. Minister once again - I raised that issue last time - so that he can have a personal look, not to rely on his officers or the federation, to go and see whether what I am saying is true or not, and to take immediate measures in the interest of all the senior citizens, women and children attending the swimming pool?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I had regular visits at the Serge Alfred swimming pool. We have put the lights now, and I should also say that we have regular meetings with the Police of the vicinity to see that there is a regular Police visit there.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire si les travaux qui ont été effectués à Serge Alfred swimming pool ont été complétés à la satisfaction de son ministère puisque, lui-même, il vient de nous dire qu'il visite régulièrement la piscine?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated, I regularly visit the Serge Alfred swimming pool, because we have got so many swimmers there and also many parents accompanying their children. In fact, I should say that the quality of work that was done by the contractor was not to my satisfaction. Also, the supervision was not as I expected, and there has been an enquiry to establish responsibilities and disciplinary action will be taken against such officers should it be proved that they have failed to supervise the works as expected.

Mr Bhagwan: Will the hon. Minister be surprised - I know what I'm saying - that the outside premises of the swimming pool are like a "jungle". You know what is the meaning of "jungle"? *La jungle!* So, can I appeal again to the hon. Minister not to rely on his officers, to go and see, *il y a des arbres, l'herbe haute, miraye, qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?* C'est l'image même de notre *National Swimming Pool* et le nom que ça porte c'est Serge Alfred. Alors, j'insiste auprès du ministre, je fais face à une affaire personnelle; je sais ce que je suis en train de dire. C'est dans notre circonscription et ça fait honte à l'île Maurice de voir l'état extérieur du *swimming pool*.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is totally wrong to say that it is a "jungle". I go there very regularly. In fact, my colleague, Minister, he swims every morning there; myself, I go there; my son goes there every morning. So, to say that it is a "jungle" is totally untrue. But I should say that there are lots of trees in the vicinity.

(Interruptions)

I don't know how many times, the hon. Member visits that place, even if it is in his constituency, but I go there very often, nearly every day.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Ritoo: Nearly every day we are there and my colleague Minister is there.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you have asked a question, allow the hon. Minister to answer now!

Mr Ritoo: I can certify that the environment is alright. We don't have any problem with any people there because we don't have only the swimming pool we have also a dojo there. We have got our high-performance tennis centre there. So, how can the hon. Member say that this is a jungle?

Mr Quirin: Donc, si j'ai bien compris l'honorable ministre, juste avant il avait répondu à une de mes questions concernant si les travaux ont été complétés à la satisfaction ou pas, il a confirmé effectivement que lui-même il n'est pas satisfait et s'il confirme effectivement que le carrelage a été mal posé, principalement dans le bassin, qui représente un danger, j'avais moi-même soulevé ce problème-là il y a quelque temps de cela ici et le carrelage a supposément été remplacé, mais qu'est-ce qu'on a constaté par la suite? C'est que cela représente toujours un danger, mal posé, etc. Donc, il y avait eu un blessé il y a quelque temps de cela. J'espère qu'il n'y en aura pas un autre.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your question, hon. Quirin?

Mr Quirin: Je demandais au ministre, M. le président, avec votre permission, est-ce qu'il confirme qu'effectivement le carrelage a été mal posé dans le bassin de la piscine Serge Alfred ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the contractor immediately stopped the work that was entrusted to him. Henceforth the contractor will not be considered for any eventual works by my Ministry, but, in the meantime, the tiles have been replaced by another company. In fact, due to the wear and tear, we also take note that the swimming pool dates back to 27-28 years now and obviously the tiles are now a bit old. It is only at the next *vidange* exercise that we will be able to replace the other tiles. In fact, it is well secured and it is being taken care of by the officers of my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre est-il au courant qu'il y a eu un incident, assez grave je dirais, à la piscine, où un de ses officiers, je pense que c'est le Project Manager, a été agressé apparemment concernant un non paiement des ouvriers qui étaient sur le site ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I am aware of an incident that occurred but fortunately I was not here. I was in the Francophonie games. There is a police inquiry going on so it is not proper for me to make any statement now.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been further advised that PQ Nos A/279, A/280, B/857 and B/883 have been withdrawn. Next question!

TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION – PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS – COMPLAINTS

(No. B/855) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the complaints made by foreign students against registered private institutions providing tertiary education in 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if inquiries have been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof, in each case.

(Withdrawn)

CHILD TRAFFICKING - MEASURES

(No. B/856) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to child trafficking, she will state the measures her Ministry is taking to address the issue.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in accordance with section 13(a) of the Child Protection Act 1994, as subsequently amended in 2005, my Ministry addresses the issue of child trafficking through the following measures -

- a) all reported cases of alleged child trafficking are automatically referred to the Police for criminal enquiry;
- b) Protective and Support Services are provided to reported victims at the level of the CDU outstations including the Child Protection Services at Vacoas as well as at the Drop-in-Centre managed by the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association;
- c) the operation of the Hotline 113 to record and report cases of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children commonly known as CSEC;

- d) a 24-hour on call service is available at each outstation for reporting of emergency cases including Child Trafficking;
- e) close collaboration with the *Brigade Pour la Protection des Mineurs* and other stakeholders to assist in the identification and support of victims.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a series of preventive mechanisms have also been developed as follows -

- (i) the setting up of a Community Child Protection Programme since 2007. It aims at empowering the community, *inter alia*, through the development of community surveillance mechanisms and facilitating reporting of cases. 15,430 persons have been reached under this programme.
- (ii) the creation of 261 School Child Protection Clubs since 02 September 2010;
- (iii) under the National Parental Empowerment Programme, 44 “*Ecoles des Parents*” have been conducted since 2010. They include modules on child protection and the dangers of trafficking and CSEC.
- (iv) 95 representatives from different Ministries and NGOs have benefitted from capacity building programmes on CSEC since 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, notwithstanding the provisions made in the Child Protection Act (Amendment) 2005 to include a penal servitude for a term not exceeding 30 years on conviction for child trafficking, efficient networking and improved coordination are crucial to identify and address such cases.

To that effect, the ‘Working Together’ Committee regroups 14 stakeholders to improve collaboration between all parties concerned; the objective being to ensure prompt and adequate intervention in cases involving children, including cases of trafficking.

Moreover, continuous sensitization campaigns are organised by my Ministry in mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is also working closely with the National Adoption Council (NAC) on the elaboration of a legislative framework to cater for both local and intercountry child adoption. This legislation shall, *inter alia*, deter unscrupulous mediators, sale of children and other forms of exploitation and trafficking.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether, since 2002 - since we are still referring to the study made in 2002 - any new study has been made on the situation of child prostitution in Mauritius. In reply to PQ B/374 on 26 June 2012 the hon. Minister, herself, said: 'I agree with the hon. Member, but it is time for us to do another study so that we can really assess the current situation'. I would like to know if any study has been carried out yet.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at that moment, when I was speaking to the hon. Member I did agree and I still agree that there needs to be a study on child prostitution. In fact, same was announced by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech concerning *les Assises de la Famille* whereby the issue of child prostitution also will be taken up and a study made in that context.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like also to ask the hon. Minister, since many cases of children being forced into prostitution by their own parents are being reported now, whether the hon. Minister intends to liaise with the Attorney-General to see to it that the Criminal Code be amended in such a way that parents who force their own children into prostitution be liable to more severe penalties?

Mrs Martin: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this Ministry, of course, we do not accept such situations and whenever such a case is reported automatically the victim is assisted to take the culprit, in fact, through all the necessary procedures be it the court procedures or the police procedures. This is one of the main things that have been reported. I must inform the hon. Member, I am sure she already knows, that we are currently working on the Children's Bill which is nearly finalised and once this is done, provisions will be included so that parents also are liable in case they do not assume their duty as responsible parents.

Mrs Labelle: I have heard the hon. Minister mentioning *Ecole des Parents* and among the modules she mentioned child protection, child trafficking. May I firstly ask the hon. Minister who is delivering these courses and whether there are other modules than child protection and child trafficking and if so, what are the modules that are included in the programme given to the parents?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the *Ecole des Parents* project is in line with the CRC and it had been conducted by the CDU before, now it has been handed over to the National

Children's Council which still pursues the same programme that has been developed by the CDU. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a pool of professionals including psychologists, nutritionists, people who work with children also form part of this programme because this programme equips, in fact, parents with better parenting capabilities and also hones their capacity to detect and discuss with the young child or adolescent whatever the age of the child is about different problems which he or she may be facing. In fact, this programme is designed to enhance the relationship between parents and children and also inform parents on the different mechanisms that are available at the level of governmental institutions so that the parents are better equipped to deal with any of their child's issues.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the Minister did not reply to the question put by my colleague, hon. Ribot with regard to whether a survey has been carried or will be carried out to know the exact number of children who are involved in prostitution. The thing is that she is mixing things with *Assises de la Famille*. This is not the same thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Martin: I must stress, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the *Assises de la Famille* is going to examine the different issues concerning children and child prostitution also being one issue, I am sure this will be discussed so that we can design the way forward. As I have said, with regard to the questions of hon. Ribot, I do agree that we need to know what is happening and especially how we should help the children and how we should also cater to make sure that the situation is, in fact, under control.

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, in regard to the coming into operation of the new Residential Drop in Centre for the development and protection of children from any form of sexual abuse and exploitation at Grand River North West, building which has been handed over to the Government since 04 June 2012, where matters stand?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here also I must stress out that the Ministry has encountered some hurdles with regard to the recent flooding that had happened. We had a legal issue with the *l'Education pour Travailleurs*, which asked for one of the walls to be pulled down. The case had gone to the Court and I am informed that it came before the Supreme Court for settlement on 31 October 2013 and the application was withdrawn, which will allow us now to

close the wall. The works will start out in three weeks' time to be completed in a maximum of five weeks.

Mr Jugnauth: Le ministre vient de confirmer, que suite à la question de l'honorable Mme Ribot l'année dernière, qu'elle est convaincue qu'il faut faire une étude concernant la prostitution infantile. Est-ce qu'à ce jour son ministère a déjà commandité cette étude, si non, quand cette étude sera commanditée ?

Mrs Martin: J'ai déjà mentionné, M. le président, que nous avons pensé à faire cette étude. Le seul problème que nous avons, c'était le manque de fonds. Nous avons pu l'obtenir du ministère des Finances, et là, maintenant, toute la discussion va être prise, au sein des Assises de la Famille, pour déterminer la marche à suivre.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: M. le président, la ministre vient de nous dire qu'elle est presque prête avec le *Children's Bill*. Elle vient aussi de dire qu'elle aura les Assises de la Famille pendant lesquelles la ministre pense qu'elle aura l'occasion de discuter tous les *issues which are related to the child welfare*. Est-ce que je peux demander à la ministre qu'est-ce qui viendra avant, si elle a un *time frame* pour les Assises, le temps de compléter le *Child's Bill* et quand est-ce qu'elle pense terminer tout ce travail ?

Mrs Martin: M. le président, nous avons, quand même, un programme étoffé comme l'a souligné l'honorable membre. Nous avons plusieurs dossiers à pouvoir compléter et les Assises de la Famille vont se tenir normalement dans le premier trimestre de 2014, pour faire en sorte que nous puissions démarrer, aussi vite que possible, les appels d'offres pour les études qui seront déterminées au cours de ces Assises de la Famille. Quant à savoir qu'est-ce qui sera la priorité, M. le président, ce sera déterminé au sein de ces Assises. Je ne peux pas *preempt* sur ce qui va se passer.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me recall the hon. Minister that once I asked if she has funding to implement measures on the National Action Plan and to carry on implementation of these measures, she mentioned that funding is not a problem. Today, there are too many ramifications and contradictions in her answers. I would like to, really, know if the hon. Minister understands that every day the rights of many of our children - from poorest backgrounds and any other social and economic related problems - are being violated and their development threatened as they are being sold as a commodity on the market and whether she

will seriously take the necessary urgent measures to carry on the survey that she kept mentioning and has mentioned right now?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already explained many times that this is what we are going to do when we are going to hold on the *Assises de la Famille* to determine what is the way forward with regard to that. I must assure the hon. Member that we take this issue very seriously. Contrary to what she wants the public to believe, this Government is really serious about children issues and we are working on these different dossiers. However, there are hurdles, like I have explained for the Drop in Centre, which are beyond our capacity to deal with. If we have an issue, we have to deal with it and then only we will be able to implement the different measures which concern the children.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hurdle referred to by the hon. Minister, as far as the coming into operation of the residential centre at Grand River North West is concerned is apparently a wall. But till three months ago, the main hurdle seemed to be that no NGO had expressed any interest in the management of that shelter. Can we know from the hon. Minister whether she has got an NGO and whether the management of that residential centre has been sorted out?

Mrs Martin: Yes, I mentioned the wall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is one of the hurdles that we have. The hon. Member rightly mentioned that we are still looking for NGOs. We have launched several proposals and we have still not obtained a responsible bidder and the latest one has been also launched, I think, one or two months before and now we are examining the bids.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that *Les Assises* will start in the first quarter of 2014. My question is: what is the time frame for the completion of the project and when does she intend to come with the Children's Bill to Parliament?

Mrs Martin: The Children's Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, has gone through several steps. We have started since 2010 and with consultations with the different stakeholders, where we have reached now is that we have collected all the information, we have been working on it and we are submitting soon the final proposals to the State Law Office.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am coming back to the management of that residential centre. The hon. Minister just said that another bidding exercise has been launched. This is going to be the fourth one. The third one which is also supposed to have been international was launched on 08 March 2013 and the closing date was 22 April 2013. Must we understand that there was no expression of interest, even at the international level?

Mrs Martin: As far as I am informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was none, but I don't have the information with me, because this question concerns child trafficking. However, if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will gladly answer.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Ribot: Yes, I have a last question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Every time that issue of management of that centre has cropped up, we have been asking the same question. What is the *Plan B* of the Minister? If we have no expression of interest from any NGO, does it mean that that residential centre is never going to open?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member must understand that we have gone through different processes. We have gone, first of all, with the first bid where we have asked the local NGOs to participate. We have conducted a sensitization campaign with the support of MACOSS to be able to inform the NGOs working with children what we are doing and why we want to decentralise the activities of the Ministry so that NGOs or non-state actors also would be able to participate. The second one, we opened it to international bidders and now we still did not obtain any responsive bidder. We have still launched the third one. As from there, let us wait and see until the procurement decides. If ever one responsive bidder is obtained, the question of the hon. Member will not stand.

CDU - OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN OFFICE REPORT

(No. B/857) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Child Development Unit, she will state the recommendations contained in the Ombudsperson for Children Office Report 2012-2013 concerning the restructuring thereof which have been implemented, if any, as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

HOTELS - APAVOU GROUP – COMPLAINTS

(No. B/858) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Apavou Group of Hotels, he will state if his Ministry has received complaints against the management thereof, over the past three years and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, taken by his Ministry and the Tourism Authority in relation thereto.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that two hotels are presently operated by the Apavou Group, namely Indian Club Apavou Hotel at Le Morne and La Plantation Hotel at Balaclava.

Since the year 2010, some 17 complaints have been received against the hotels of the Apavou Group, both at the level of my Ministry and the Tourism Authority. These were referred to the Tourism Authority which is the enforcement body for investigation and appropriate action.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that the Tourism Authority has undertaken 38 inspections/monitoring visits whereby the following actions were taken -

- (a) 59 contraventions;
- (b) 7 warnings;
- (c) 2 suspensions;
- (d) 1 non-renewal, and
- (e) 1 enforcement notice.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il y va de la réputation de Maurice. A part des doléances, il est un fait que le groupe fait l'objet, actuellement, d'une action en liquidation. M. le président, est-ce que je peux savoir du ministre, à part de l'action du liquidateur, s'il existe un *Monitoring Committee* au niveau de son ministère pour s'assurer que les touristes et les différents opérateurs du monde touristique, que ce soit à Maurice et aussi à l'étranger, ne soient pas victimisés ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the Receiver/Managers have contacted us. They said that the hotels will continue to operate normally, all efforts will be made

to preserve the jobs of the 465 employees and everything is going as usual. According to them, the hotels are not bankrupt, but they are in this situation due to lack of revenue.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il y a un sentiment dans le secteur touristique que le groupe bénéficie d'une certaine impunité au niveau des différents ministères malgré le nombre d'infractions. Le ministre peut-il nous dire que le groupe qui est un opérateur important dans le monde touristique doit, au mois de janvier 2013, une somme d'environ R 9 millions rien que pour le terrain à Palmar, une somme de R 29,200,000 pour le terrain à Balaclava et une somme de R 46,279,000 pour le terrain au Morne vis-à-vis du ministère des terres et du logement. Est-ce que le ministre peut se prononcer là-dessus?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that these questions should be addressed to the substantive Minister.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, vu que la situation est quand même très alarmante au niveau du groupe, est-ce que le ministre peut assurer la Chambre aujourd'hui que le Groupe Appavou n'a pas été un des bailleurs de fonds de l'Alliance gouvernementale lors des élections générales de 2010?

(Interruptions)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is completely wrong! It must be on the other side. If he checks the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many of these applications were made between 2000 and 2005!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

I am giving you the opportunity to ask your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to declare my interest in that I have been the Legal Adviser in the past of the taxi operators of these two hotels. Given that the hon. Minister has been made aware of the very real human tragedy...

(Interruptions)

...I am not giving way!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: On a point of order...

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not giving way...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: On a point of order please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order...

(Interruptions)

On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I will take the point of order of the hon. Minister afterwards!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: There is a point of order!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: I will start again since I was rudely interrupted by this person. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was in the process of declaring my interest in that...

(Interruptions)

...in that I have acted as Legal Adviser...

(Interruptions)

Will you allow this situation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

Am I entitled to put my question?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister Mohamed, allow the hon. Member to ask his question!

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order now! This hon. Member...

Mr Obeegadoo: I am not giving way!

Mr Mohamed: He had the guts to call him 'this person'!

(Interruptions)

So, can he withdraw that?

(Interruptions)

That is a point of order that he has wrongly addressed a hon. Member of the House!

(Interruptions)

Withdraw it!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet now!

(Interruptions)

I will consider the point of order later on, and I will ask hon. Obeegadoo to ask his question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I was saying therefore that since the Minister has been made aware of the very real human tragedy experienced for more than a year now by the taxi drivers of the hotels of the Appavou Group in the Le Morne region, since he is aware that Government, through the DBM Ltd has intervened to offer loan facilities to these taxi drivers, will he agree, being given the continuing uncertainty, to ensure that the same facilities continue to be extended until a solution is found? And, will he also agree, will he commit to exploring, at the earliest, the possibilities of redeployment of these taxi operators so that they may face up to their personal responsibilities?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, for the redeployment, I will take up the matter with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

Concerning the loan facilities, we will take up the matter with the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned the fact that the Receiver/Manager has taken over. Can I ask him whether he is aware that since this has taken place, several employees of the Group, especially in the South-West region, have been threatened with redundancy and can he see to it that no such tragedy takes place so that in whatever restructuring exercise takes place, the security of employees in those hotels – the Indian Resort or any other establishment of the Appavou Group hotels - do not suffer for the mismanagement or whatever else of the owners?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already said this in my previous answer that all efforts will be made to preserve all the jobs.

Mr Baloomoody: To follow up on the question of hon. Ganoo, what we are saying is now that we know that the hotel is in receivership, the Receiver/Manager is here to get the highest bid. Is there a committee, in which the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure is involved to ensure that when there is the *passation du pouvoir* between the Receiver/Managers and the new owner, the security of employment of the workers is guaranteed?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already answered this question, in fact, that the Receiver/Managers have guaranteed that all efforts will be made to preserve all the 465 jobs.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

NEF - JOB FAIRS - EMPLOYMENT

(No. B/859) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the job fairs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to the number thereof organised by the Foundation, since May 2010 to date, indicating the -

- (a) number of visitors thereto by age group, and the number thereof who -
 - (i) have been offered employment, indicating the age group and sector of employment, and

- (ii) are still awaiting employment offers, and
- (b) average waiting period between training and securing an employment.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that job fairs which are part of its placement and training programme were first organised in 2011 and, as of date, some 20 job fairs have been organised in different parts of the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the main objective of a job fair is to provide a platform with a view to enhancing the employability of prospective job seekers. It is also a forum which enables direct face to face contacts and interaction between job seekers and employers on employment placement and training opportunities.

I must stress that in the process NEF only acts as a mere facilitator and is by no means responsible for providing employment. The job fair is open to members of the public, irrespective of age groups and qualifications, who are on the lookout for job opportunities.

However, I must emphasise that a special attention is given to NEF beneficiaries from the different pockets of poverty in terms of transport facilities, motivation and encouragement in view of increasing their chances of employability, thereby empowering them to integrate the mainstream of society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that over 20,000 job seekers have attended the job fairs organised by the National Empowerment Foundation as of date. The turnout varies depending on the locality where the job fair is being organised.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, taking into account that the job fair is a public event, it is not possible to keep a record of visitors on the basis of age group. However, from January this year, the NEF has put in place a system whereby it is keeping track of the sectors in which there are offers for employment. In this regard, I am tabling a list of companies that are offering opportunities to job seekers as a result of the different job fairs organised since the beginning of this year. According to the National Empowerment Foundation, more than 600 applicants have secured employment in different sectors this year and I am tabling the list of the companies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must reiterate that there is no guarantee for immediate employment through the job fair, but I must also underscore that a job fair gives an employer the possibility of constituting a database which can be used as and when vacancies arise, provided that applicants meet the requirements of the job.

As I mentioned earlier, NEF is keeping a record of only those persons who have been able to secure employment as from January this year. I should also inform the House that once NEF has facilitated the process of interaction between an employer and a job seeker, the decision to recruit rests entirely with the employer, and NEF is not involved at all in that exercise.

The benefit of a job fair may not, however, be visible in the immediate term. It is an ongoing process, and the employer may recruit anytime depending upon his needs and priorities. Therefore, the second part of question (a) does not arise.

As regards part (b) of the question, the twofold objectives of providing training to unemployed persons is to enhance their employability and to equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and aptitude in sectors where there is a felt need for such competencies, that is, plumbing, electrical works, masonry, welding, aluminium door making, hospitality, garment making, beauty care, to name a few, so that they become self-employed and economically independent.

Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, training does not mean instantaneous employment, so that it is not possible to indicate the amount of time that a trainee may have to wait before securing employment. Also, it depends in which sector the incumbent has been trained. There are sectors as cruise ship, BPO, construction, to name a few, where the possibilities of immediate employment are high. For example, I am informed by the NEF that in the cruise ship, some 400 trainees have been recruited this year within a short lapse of time. In other sectors, it may take slightly longer. The average waiting time varies from sector to sector.

I wish to inform the House that two more job fairs will be organised this year: one at La Tour Koenig on 30 November, and the second one at Mahebourg, on 14 December this year.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister state whether he is aware that very often, following job fairs, some people who are already in employment are prompted to quit their jobs to follow courses run by NEF, with the promise, of course, to get a

better job afterwards. But, very often, these people have to wait for months, for years. I know of a case where a person quit his job to follow courses run by NEF, with the promise to be employed on a cruise ship, and that person is still waiting since two years. Will the hon. Minister state what are the measures that he proposes to take to reduce the period between training and employment?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of the case, but I will definitely enquire. As I said, there is no such fixed time between training and employment.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding these job fairs, the hon. Minister has mentioned that special attention is being given to NEF beneficiaries. May I know from the hon. Minister, among those 600 applicants who have secured a job, how many come from the list of NEF beneficiaries? And if you allow me, I would also like to know the cost of these job fairs. If the hon. Minister does not have the total cost right now, maybe he can give us an approximate amount for one job fair; how much does it cost to the NEF.

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the cost is concerned, around Rs1 m. was earmarked in this Budget. We have organised some five job fairs, and two are coming. It is around Rs75,000 to Rs100,000. With regard to those who are recruited, as the hon. Member would like to know, I will try to find out, but I know that we do have beneficiaries of NEF who have been recruited.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister also mentioned that where there is a high demand such as BPO, cruise ships and so on, 400 have been recruited. Is the hon. Minister aware whether the beneficiaries of NEF easily find jobs in the BPO sector or on cruise ship? Are these jobs for his market?

Mr Dayal: Let me emphasise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that at the NEF we provide placement and training. We have got some 400 employed in cruise ships. Like I said, this year only, some 400 have been recruited, and 200 are being processed till December for possible recruitment. There are vacancies for some 3,000 in cruise ships. People are interested in cruise ships, and there are other possibilities like BPO also, and there are other sectors where beneficiaries of NEF are interested.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is for the economic empowerment of the vulnerable groups. This is one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.

May I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a mechanism to ensure that those who are supposed to be served by his Ministry are really being served through these job fairs? I would like to know whether he has analysed, whether those who are being recruited come from his Ministry's list, whether there is a particular evaluation or assessment which has been done after the 20 job fairs that the hon. Minister himself mentioned and how many of the NEF beneficiaries have really benefitted from what his Ministry is organising?

Mr Dayal: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to circulate a paper, showing people from different pockets of poverty attending our job fairs. I would like to mention that we provide transport facilities. We motivate people from the pockets of poverty. I am going to circulate for each job fair, the regions where people have been canvassed. We give facilities for them to come and to visit the different job fairs, whereby they can get employment in the BPO, ICT, security services, light engineering, *hôtellerie*, *construction*, insurance, cruise ships, education, *formation*, ICT Caravan and so on. We do make sure that our beneficiaries do visit through certain facilities extended to them.

But, for the second part of the question, I will try to seek information and circulate it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. François!

FISHERMEN (REGISTERED) - DEATH AT SEA -COMPENSATION

(No. B/860) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the payment of compensation to the heirs of the fishermen in case of death at sea, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the number of cases of death at sea reported for consideration, over the past five years, indicating in each case -

- (a) the date of the accident which was the cause of the death, and
- (b) if payment has been effected and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that 14 cases of death at sea of fishermen have been reported to my Ministry during the last five years. Compensation is paid by

my Ministry to the heirs of registered fishermen who have died at sea in a twofold manner as follows -

Firstly, as soon as the case is reported, financial assistance of Rs10,000 under the Fisher Family in Distress Scheme is paid to the heirs of the deceased fisher in case the body is recovered. In cases where the body is not retrieved, the heirs are paid an amount of Rs2,500 on a fortnightly basis for a period of two months.

Secondly, a compensation of Rs200,000 is paid to the heirs of registered professional fishermen in case of accidental death while fishing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, payment of the compensation of Rs200,000 is effected after all relevant legal procedures have been completed, including *inter alia*, the conclusion of the Police enquiry; in case the body of a fisher is not recovered, upon the later being declared judicially dead and the determination of the legal heirs entitled to the compensation through appropriate affidavits.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the above procedures, which the House will appreciate are quite lengthy, have been completed in four of the 14 cases, and payment of the compensation effected accordingly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am, with your permission, tabling information on the date of the accident which was the cause of death, and the details regarding payment of the compensation in respect of death at sea reported over the past five years.

Mr François: I thank the hon. Minister for the answer. With regard to the legal matters and enquiries, may I know what is the average time for same? Because some of these cases date more than three years, some more than five years and some more than six years, may we know what is the time frame for these legal matters?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, there is no time frame. It depends on the enquiry and we have no control on that.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Barbier!

FISHERS (REGISTERED) - NUMBER

(No. B/861) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the fishers, he will state the number thereof registered in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues respectively, over the past five years, on a yearly basis.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I am tabling the information with regard to the number of fishermen registered in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues respectively over the past five years on a yearly basis.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been an increase in the number of fishers over the past five years or is it more or less the same? Can we have an indication?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figures are still on the high side. For 2012, we have 2,160 fishers in Mauritius and 1,236 in Rodrigues. I can also add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that since 2010 no new fisherman cards have been issued because we are guided by the FAO Code of Conduct for responsible fisheries. This is to allow for regeneration of the lagoon.

Mr Barbier: As for now, can we know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any study carried out to establish what is the acceptable number of fishers in the country, being given the situation in our lagoon, be it in Mauritius or in Rodrigues? Have there been established a ceiling number of fishers which is acceptable?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, it depends on the amount of fish in the lagoon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can say that in 2005 we fished about 947 tonnes of fish and this has declined to 705 tonnes in 2012. So, we have to act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Barbier: Is the hon. Minister telling us that the acceptable number of fishers is related to the volume of catches and, if so, whether this has been established as a policy from the Ministry and whether this is being applied actually?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, it has been established, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have talked to the fishermen. This is why we are coming with aquaculture which we want to provide as an

alternative to the fishermen. There are several cooperatives that are willing to have fish cages and so on. I think this will help our lagoon.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance announced in the Budget the eventual ban on both large net and gill net fishing. These types of fishing will be phased out. He mentioned also that about 21 fishermen cooperatives and associations will be encouraged to surrender their fishing nets. Can the hon. Minister tell us the number of fishermen who will be involved in case this eventual ban takes place and these cooperatives surrender the nets?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this will be gradual. There is no banning of fishing by nets actually, but what we are trying to do is gradually to phase out net fishing and push the fishermen towards aquaculture. This will be done in consultation with the fishermen. There will be no radical decision taken. It will go on smoothly so that the fishermen are not penalised.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the number of fishers over the past five years, is the hon. Minister in a position to provide us with the information on the ratio gender-wise?

Mr Von-Mally: If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I can find the information and give it to her.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should I understand from the hon. Minister that he is no longer recruiting new fishermen in Mauritius?

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, in fact, since 2010 we are not giving new fishermen cards, but we are trying to propose the fishermen to go towards aquaculture.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform and confirm to the House that, in fact, the policy of his Ministry is to do away completely with net fishing in view of the fact that the Budget has mentioned specifically that net fishing is not compatible with the Government's policy of replenishing our lagoons. So let's call a spade a spade!

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have discussed with the fishermen. We are going along with what the fishermen themselves want us to do. We are working together.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he can inform the House of the status of the fishermen who are based at Les Salines, but who are supposed to be moved from there due to the project of Neo Town?

Mr Von-Mally: The fishermen are still working there. There is no problem right now. We will cross the bridge when we reach it.

Mr Obeegadoo: In that same context, will the hon. Minister agree to provide us figures as regards the number of large net and gill net fishermen and how that figure has evolved since the year 2005?

Mr Von-Mally: I have already given the number of large nets and gill nets. In fact, the question does not pertain to net fishing, but I can give the hon. Member the answer afterwards if he comes with a substantive question.

Mr Barbier: With regard to bank fishermen, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he has any records for mainland Mauritius? I don't think we have for Rodrigues. Does the hon. Minister have the data for bank fishers so that we have an idea what is the trend for the past five years, if possible?

Mr Von-Mally: I am tabling this also.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the extension of net fishing after 31 October, will the hon. Minister inform the House whether he will extend same next year with regard to his policy for protecting and replenishing of the lagoon?

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it all depends on the number of bad weather days that we have. If we have too many bad weather days then the law provides that we can extend, but if there are not so many bad weather days we are not going to do it.

Mr François: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, isn't it contradictory with regard to the policy of replenishing the lagoon if we have to look at the reproduction of fish and not with regard to bad weather days?

Mr Von-Mally: Not at all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We are going according to the law. We must abide by the law. We do not extend the net fishing season just out of whims and caprices. It is because there are too many bad weather days during the fishing seasons. That's all!

Mr François: Does the hon. Minister find it proper that during the extension of the ten days, there are a lot of '*ti poissons*' - as we call it – being fished by the fishermen? Is the hon. Minister prepared to stop that?

Mr Von-Mally: We can stop it if there are not so many bad weather days, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We are abiding by the law. The hon. Member must understand that.

FISH FARMING AT SEA – PROJECTS

(No. B/862) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to fish farming at sea, he will state the number of projects therefor presently under consideration, indicating the number thereof submitted in mainland Mauritius and in Rodrigues respectively and the names of the promoters thereof.

Mr Von-Mally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are a total of 42 Fish Farming Projects that are being considered for Mauritius and Rodrigues, out of which 7 relate to projects to be undertaken on a large scale in mainland Mauritius.

The remaining 35 projects under consideration have been received by my Ministry following an invitation for Expression of Interest for small scale aquaculture projects using floating net cages that was launched in June this year. Out of the 35 applications for small scale fish farming, 25 pertain to applicants in Mauritius and 10 are from Rodrigues.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the names of the promoters in respect of both the large scale and small scale fish farming projects that are being considered by my Ministry.

Mr Barbier: May I know from the hon. Minister whether prior to the launching of these projects, there has been any impact assessment or study carried out?

Mr Von-Mally: Yes, there has been prior study and there have also been pilot projects. We have not started headlong with large projects; we have started with small projects. Even now we are moving forward with small projects to see how it goes on. It has taken about two years for us to talk to the fishermen so that they can see, by themselves, how the project can help them. The hon. Member can rest assured that we are not going to put too many cages in our lagoons. We would just put the right amount so that we can exploit our lagoon optimally.

Mr Barbier: May I know whether this impact assessment which has been carried out is related to the global projects or to each and every project?

Mr Von-Mally: The global project!

Mr Roopun: Can the hon. Minister tell us on what criteria will the selection for the operators be carried out?

Mr Von-Mally: No, there has not been any selection. There has been an expression of interest. Now, there are cooperatives that are coming. They have asked for fish cages, and we will make sure that all of them get fish cage.

Mr François: What is the number for Rodrigues?

Mr Von-Mally: For Rodrigues it is 10.

Mr François: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the Regional Assembly which is very sensible to marine environmental issues, is agreeable or not on the implementation of this project in the shallow waters in the lagoons of Rodrigues, and also the limited passes we have, which is very small?

Mr Von-Mally: I think the hon. Member should put the question to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr François: No, I do understand because I have information that there has been request from your Ministry to the Regional Assembly. That's why I am asking the hon. Minister whether this is agreeable.

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we wanted to put a pilot project in Rodrigues as we have two pilot projects here in Mauritius. But the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Commission for Fisheries asked for a project write-up. We have given the project write-up. They wrote back to ask for a more detailed project write-up and this has been done. But, up to now, we have received no answer.

Mr Barbier: Can I know from the hon. Minister about the financing structure of this project? Can I ask him whether he has been working on the marketing, on the number of cages? We know that actually the existing farm is exporting these fish. So, may I know the type of fish,

what is the marketing strategy behind and what is the financial structure of these projects? Can I also know what facility the Ministry is given for achieving the financial and marketing strategy?

Mr Von-Mally: In fact, there is a Committee in my Ministry working on that. Concerning the type of fish that we are going to raise, it concerns mostly the local species like the *siganus sutor* species, the *cordonier* and the *gueule pavée*.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Bodha!

EIILM MAURITIUS/EIILM SIKKIM - AGREEMENT

(No. B/863) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the EIILM Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if it has any agreement with EIILM Sikkim and, if so, indicate the nature and conditions thereof.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before replying to the question, I would like to declare interest as I have done on several occasions in the past that the Managing Director of the local branch of the institution is a brother of mine. I have to stress once again that I have no interest whatsoever in the institution and have no legal authority in any regulatory matter relating to the tertiary education institutions.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that EIILM University (Mauritius Branch Campus) is managed by a locally registered company known as EIILM Ltd. This company was first registered as Cyber Academy on 04 February 2005 and changed its name to EIILM Ltd on 06 April 2012. The sole shareholder and the Managing Director of the company is Mr Sunil Jeetah.

I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that EIILM University Sikkim, India signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Cyber Academy Ltd on 4 November 2010 and an Addendum to the Memorandum of Cooperation, followed the change of name of Cyber Academy to EIILM Ltd. The Memorandum is of a duration of 6 years and is subject to extension upon such other terms and conditions as may be agreed between the two parties.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that the Memorandum of Cooperation is an agreement between two private entities and contains a confidentiality clause, which requires the written permission of both parties to disclose its contents.

However, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that the agreement defines the role and responsibilities of both parties, namely for EIILM University Sikkim to -

- provide such academic support for the conduct of educational courses;
- provide notes and other didactic material to enable the proper teaching of the courses provided that all intellectual property rights therein shall at all times remain vested in the EIILM Sikkim University or the author thereof;
- setting of examination papers and correction of answer sheets by EIILM Sikkim University. The services of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate may also be sought in that connection.
- provision of services by academic staff of EIILM University Sikkim as and when required;
- provision of other facilities such as promotional materials and other ancillary services;
- possibility of students to complete their studies at EIILM University Sikkim;
- provision of scholarships to students at terms and conditions to be agreed.

It also provides for the EIILM Ltd Mauritius to -

- comply with all accrediting standards as per Mauritian laws;
- not to charge fees and operate any bank account on behalf of EIILM University Sikkim;
- strive to achieve highest academic standards;
- provide a standard acceptable to EIILM University Sikkim, and
- ensure compliance with accreditation, licences and authorisation as may be required by the Indian and Mauritian laws.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the answer given by the hon. Minister, the EIILM Company in Mauritius was incorporated on 6 April 2012.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bodha, please go ahead with your question!

Mr Bodha: Yes. And the company Beaufort Cyber Institute, I think, was incorporated on 4 February 2005. May I ask the hon. Minister when was the application made to the TEC for the creation of the EIILM University in Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can find out the exact date and table it in Parliament.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister then whether the application was made before the signing of the Memorandum of Corporation?

Dr. Jeetah: I have, in the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provided all the information. I remember ...

(Interruptions)

...I have given all these dates, and all the documents had already been laid on the Table of the Assembly, but I can still provide the information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether when EIILM University (Sikkim) applied for recognition by the UGC in India declared that it had an off-shore campus in Mauritius, yes or no?

Dr. Jeetah: No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because I am aware of that. It was not a requirement for it to declare that it had an off-shore campus in Mauritius.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister then what is the status of the EIILM University in Mauritius whether it is a *université de plein droit*, whether it is a post secondary educational institution, whether it is a centre of an overseas institution or whether it is a branch campus of an overseas institution. What is the status of this institution?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had another question which has been withdrawn by hon. Obeegadoo. I can give all the information that was sought if that is okay for you. It is quite a long and extensive answer that I have got here. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have to bear with me. The Tertiary Education Commission made an amendment in its Act in 2005 to give

powers to the Tertiary Education Commission to regulate private post secondary institutions and accredit programmes following recommendations made by a committee which comprised of Mr Suren Bissoondoyal, Professor Boojeedhur, the adviser at the Ministry of Education, Dr. Luchmeeah the then Executive Director of the Tertiary Education Commission. The Tertiary Education Commission...

(Interruptions)

I have to give all the information. Please bear with me; I'll give all the information.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: If it is a long explanation, can you afford to table the information.

Dr. Jeetah: I can, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but the status of this institution is that an off-shore campus as per the regulations in India. It is not a study centre, it is not an off-campus centre. It is an off-shore campus.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said that it is an off-shore campus, may I ask him now then why the EIILM University (Sikkim) did not recognize the off-shore campus when it requested for a recognition by the UGC in 2008?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have all the information here. I can explain. For the two other types that I mentioned there is a requirement that they have satisfied the UGC, but for an off-shore campus, they have to get the authorization of the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius which they have provided to the Tertiary Education Commission.

Mr Bodha: may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, on the 28 of March 2007, the UGC published a letter which was sent to the TEC saying that in this regard there was a question: I am directed to inform you that EIILM is not included in the list of universities being maintained under the sections of the UGC Act. That dates back to 2007. The recognition of EIILM (Sikkim) dates back to 2008. Can I ask the hon. Minister then why did the TEC approve the EIILM University in Mauritius in 2007?

Dr. Jeetah: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member should have asked the question to the then Minister who was in charge of education in 2007. My Ministry was created in 2010, but Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can lay down on the Table of the Assembly a letter by the Government of India and a letter by the Government of Mauritius as well as a letter written to

Professor Roland Lamusse, the then Director of EIILM Mauritius whereby all the clearance was obtained for them to start their institution here in Mauritius.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who is operating EIILM University in Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: I did mention it is a company run by Mr Sunil Jeetah.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, then this would have been a flouting of the TEC Act. May I bring to the kind attention of the Minister: is the Minister aware that, according to section 12B subsection 2 of the TEC Act...

(Interruptions)

I am asking whether he is aware of this and whether...

(Interruptions)

No problem. In view of the fact that he gave an answer that the University is operated by a local representative, may I ask him then whether it is not flouting section 12B subsection 2 of ...

(Interruptions)

It is the Minister...

(Interruptions)

TEC Act which says -

‘(2) No centre or branch campus of an overseas institution shall include the name of that institution as part of its name unless (...)’

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, it is interpretation of the law, this is flouting the Standing Orders and I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to rule right away because otherwise it flouts the whole exercise.

Mr Bodha: I am asking whether at the time when the application was considered...

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on my point of order...

Mr Bodha: I am not going to give way.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, move on to your next question, please.

Mr Bodha: According to the law, the branch campus cannot be operated by a local representative...

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, the hon. Member is still asking about interpretation of the law that goes against Standing Orders and I ask for a ruling right away.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a branch campus can be operated only by the overseas institution itself.

(Interruptions)

May I ask the hon. Minister to confirm that a branch campus is not being operated by the overseas institution from Sikkim?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the company they do have the Vice Chancellor of the Indian institutions. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't want to get into the argument of being able to interpret the law. What I can say to the House is that we have a sitting judge, hon. Justice Domah so I do not pretend to know the law better than a judge who sits there.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that six hundred students are paying hundred thousand rupees every year which is sixty million, may I ask the hon. Minister who delivers the degree certificates of EIILM University in Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the examination is conducted through the Mauritius Examination Syndicate and the degree is an Indian degree awarded by the Indian counterpart.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that very recently the Joint Secretary of the UGC University Grants Commission sent a letter to the Vice-Chancellor Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning in Management (EIILM) University in India when this whole controversy arose about courses run by the EIILM University on off-campus and off-shore centres and which letter I am going to table Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Joint Secretary, Mr Dogra, wrote the following to the Vice-Chancellor of EIILM University in India: 'The UGC has taken a serious view of the complete violation of UGC Regulations by the EIILM University. The EIILM University is hereby directed to immediately close down all the off-campus centre, off-shore campus centre, Study Centre and Franchisee Centre as these are established without the approval of UGC and a second document was sent recently from the Secretary of the UGC one Mr Akhilesh Gupta who sent...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Is he aware that a letter was sent to his Ministry through the High Commission of India? I quote the following lines -

“The UGC has not granted any permission to Sikkim Manipal University and EIILM University to set up off-campus centre(s), study centre(s) or off-shore campus centre(s). As such, both these universities cannot run courses in Mauritius through their own campuses or through Franchise Agreement.”

Is the hon. Minister aware of these two documents? I am going to table this document, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do have these letters. I have to bring some clarification again. I have the University Grants Commission New Delhi document here. This is the UGC (Establishment of and Maintenance of Standards in Private universities) Regulations, 2003. I do not wish to interpret, but I would just read the provisions of the law. There are three types of centres. There is one...

(Interruptions)

I am not interpreting; I am just reading what the hon. Member has referred to. There is section 2.2 which says -

““Off-campus centre” means a centre of the private university established by it outside the main campus (within or outside the State) operated and maintained as its constituent unit, having the university’s complement of facilities, faculty and staff”

That’s a local unit.

2.4 is a study centre - I am not interpreting, I am just reading -

“2.4. “study centre” means a centre established and maintained or recognised by the university for the purpose of advising, counseling or for rendering any other assistance required by the students used in the context of distance education.”

So, this is a different matter.

Now with regard to 2.3, this is an off-shore campus and I would like to read this again -

“2.3 “off-shore campus” means a campus of the private university established by it outside the country, operated and maintained as its constituent unit, having the university’s compliment of facilities, faculty and staff.”

With regard to 2.3 and 2.4, these two categories require UGC’s authorisation to operate.

With regard to 2.3, that is, off-shore campus, there is a provision here in 3.3.4 and I am going to table this document -

“3.3.4. Any off-shore campus(es) in foreign countries shall be opened only after obtaining due permission from the Government of India and also that of the Government of the host country”.

This institution has the authorisation of the Government of India - I am going to table a letter to that effect - plus the Government of the host country. I shall table this as well.

With regard to the two others the hon. Member mentioned it does not apply to this local institution. This is for their own little branches operating all over the place. This one is for an off-shore campus and they have provided these two letters here, in Mauritius.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that hon. Ganoo has just referred to a letter from the UGC word by word, being given that it is public knowledge now in Mauritius that the UGC has written to say and I quote – this is the letter of 06 September that was mentioned earlier -

“The UGC has taken a serious view of the complete violation of UGC (Establishment of and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations 2003 by the EIILM University.”

And has called on EIILM University to stop its activities here, why is the hon. Minister, since he says he has no personal interest, contriving by any means to continue to justify the continued operation of that institution?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to remind the hon. Member when he was Minister, Mauras College of Dentistry came into operation. And I have a letter here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Listen to my answer! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at least, for Mauras, UGC...

(Interruptions)

Allow me to answer, hon. Member! You had your chance! At least, for Mauras College of Dentistry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - I did make sure, I went through all the files, etc - UGC clearly stated that he had nothing to do in the matter. It is between two States because it is an off-shore campus. I am tabling a letter to that effect, as well.

Mr Bhagwan: We have been discussing this issue for quite a long time through PQs and even PNQs. If the hon. Minister has nothing to hide, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that his name has been mentioned, it is a family business where his brother is involved, all sorts of letters, contradictions have been involved, can the hon. Minister, in his own interests and in the interests of the children, of those poor parents who have invested from India, recommend the hon. Prime Minister to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to look into the whole issue? If he does not concur, so he has something to hide and he will have to pay this in front of the nation.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I absolutely have no problem with that. But I have a problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, none of the institutions from India and currently operating in Mauritius, be it Amity, be it Mauras, be it Arya Sabha, I have a list of about 10 institutions which require to have UGC approval. Allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to read a letter from UGC dated August 2007 in response to a letter written by one of the universities to UGC seeking their permission to operate in Mauritius. Allow me to read this letter and I will table it -

“With reference to your letter No. F.ACAD/Aff./2288/4772/2007 dated 22.03.2007 on the subject mentioned above - that is, to sanction the proposal of starting Dental College here, in Mauritius. It is stated that affiliation of any college to the University is the subject matter of the concerned University from which affiliation is sought. The University Grants Commission has no role to play in the matter.”

So, it is clear for off-shore campus, they have no role. But then, I must add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to clarify the matter that the requirement is for two Governments to give their authorisation and these institutions have not asked for it. Therefore, they have not obtained it, because there is no requirement, according to the law.

Mr Jugnauth: If the hon. Minister is saying that everything is being done legally, can he say why Tertiary Education Commission has written to EIILM University Mauritius requesting to submit evidence that necessary approval has been obtained by EIILM University Sikkim India from relevant authorities in India to operate a campus outside the territory of the state of its location? That letter is dated 08 August 2013.

Dr. Jeetah: I congratulate the Tertiary Education Commission for doing the job. I think it goes in the sense because it is an independent Body. I have told the Tertiary Education Commission that they have to make sure that every institution -be it my brothers or anybody - to make sure that they abide by the rules, and the rules here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that they have to have both Governments' authorisations which they have obtained.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the legal adviser of TEC has stated that EIILM University Mauritius should show cause within 15 days why they should not close down and has expressed concern that certificates issued by Sikkim will not be recognized if the local campus continues to operate?

Dr. Jeetah: I do not have this information, but I think the TEC is doing their job. I can only congratulate them.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is up, but I will allow hon. Obeegadoo to put the last question.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware, on the one hand, that if we are to believe the UGC, then this EIILM University Mauritius Branch Campus falls foul of the Tertiary Education Commission regulatory framework for post-secondary education that says that the institution that sets up here must be recognised accredited university, deemed university in its country? Does the hon. Minister realise on the other hand that if we follow hon. Bodha and what the Minister himself says that this institution is now run, operated by a Mauritian company, Mr Sunil Jeetah as its sole owner, that it is therefore running foul of the provisions of the Tertiary Education Commission Act that say that if it includes the name of EIILM then it must be established and operated by the overseas institution? Will he therefore - because we are saying that it is doubly illegal- agree to immediately seek formal legal advice from the State Law Office and come here to the House and tell us what that legal advice is?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to remind the hon. Member again when he started the Mauras School of Dentistry...

(Interruptions)

...there was no such requirement! And I am not aware...

(Interruptions)

Yes...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! I will kindly request the hon. Minister to confine ...

Dr. Jeetah: Yes!

The Deputy Speaker: ... to confine himself to the question that the hon. Member has asked.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to understand, there is law and it continues because this is the process that we have! There is precedence here whereby...

(Interruptions)

...the hon. Member started a regulation which did not have the requirement to have UGC approval. He should have done that then! Maybe today we would not have had that problem!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have got to draw your attention to the fact that Parliamentary Questions B/866, B/869, B/870, B/871, B/872 and B/881 have been withdrawn. The Table has been further advised that Parliamentary Questions B/873, B/879 and B/889 have been withdrawn!

(Interruptions)

I am sorry but time is up!

Dr. Jeetah: But you did say that you would allow us to raise a point of order towards the end. You did say that!

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order!

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I seek your ruling as per section 40 (2) of Standing Orders and Rules of National Assembly whereby hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger uttered the word, I am sorry to say that, ‘fesse’, from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

I take, Sir, strong exception to his choice of words and I seek your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Jeetah! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/864 and B/865 have been withdrawn!

(Interruptions)

I want some order in the House now! Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, please!

(Interruptions)

TERTIARY EDUCATION - PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

(No. B/864) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to tertiary education, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to the number of private institutions thereof which award degrees, indicating -

- (a) the conditions which an institution has to satisfy to be issued with an authorisation to award degrees, and
- (b) in each case, indicate the -
 - (i) number of students attending thereto, and
 - (ii) degrees being awarded.

(Withdrawn)

MAURAS SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY –MEASURES

(No. B/865) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Mauras School of Dentistry, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to where matters stand as to the interests of the students following courses thereat, indicating the measures, if any, taken by the Commission in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

BEACHES (PUBLIC) - FOOD CATERING - PERMITS

(No. B/866) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the public beaches, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Beach Authority, information for the past five years as to the number of permits issued for food catering thereat.

(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.

PUBLIC BILLS

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded the Supplementary Appropriation (2012) Bill (No. XX of 2013) was read the third time and passed.

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

At 4.26 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.04 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(No. XXIII of 2013)

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

Question again proposed

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. This year again, I am honoured and privileged to be asked by my Party Leader and Leader of the Opposition to be the spokesman of the Opposition to reply to the Budget Speech, and also on behalf of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start with the bad news. This morning, a friend in my constituency got knocked down on his motorcycle, and I asked him how he came to be knocked down. So, he told me: because I was hurt by an increase in the price of cigarette, by an increase in the price of my '*ti grog*', by an increase in the price of my Smartphone, by an increase in the price of my soft drinks, by an increase in the price of petrol soon, because of the Rs1 tax per litre. So, he was knocked out. So, I said: 'that's bad enough. What happened?' So, he said: 'I managed to get up', and that is the good news, Mr Speaker, Sir, because he managed to get up and buy a *béquille* because there was no tax on *béquille*.

(Interruptions)

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by telling you that this Budget has already been qualified by my Leader as being *très décevant*, and by the Leader of the remake also as being *sans direction, sans ambition* and *mal inspiré*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say why this Budget, like last year's Budget, has failed to achieve its results. Remember last year, the hon. Minister said he was going to achieve a 4% growth. I am not talking of tablets that he said he is going to distribute and that were not distributed, the hot meals that got messed up, but the hon. Minister did not achieve the growth of 4% and achieved a growth of 3.2 %. So, below the estimate! Also, he did not achieve a rate of growth which is the normal rate of growth that should have been achieved by our economy, if we look at the past 30 to 40 years' record, which is around 5%. So, it is below the norm.

It is also, Mr Speaker, Sir, below the peers because we need to compare Mauritius - not like what all the time the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance do - with Europe, with US, UK and the rest. Let us compare the performance of Mauritius with its peers, with the average growth rate achieved by the SADC countries, for example. In 2013, while we are expecting to achieve 3.2% growth, the SADC countries, on average, achieve 4.2%, and next year, 2014, where the growth is estimated by the Minister of Finance to be 3.8% to 4%, let us compare this. The SADC countries are projecting a growth rate of 4.6%; the COMESA countries, South of Sahara countries only, the average growth rate is expected in 2014 to be 6.1%, and the last category of peers is the oil importing countries of Africa, excluding South Africa, of course, is 6.3%. So, our peers will do better than us, and have been estimated to do better than us this year

also. Because, as I said, in 2014, SADC on average will achieve 4.2% growth, COMESA Sub-Saharan Africa will achieve 5.6%, and oil importing countries of Africa, excluding South Africa, will achieve 6.2%.

Mr Speaker, Sir, so, it is below estimates, below norm, and below peers. So, it is three times below - and we know what below means - and this weak and anaemic growth shows that we have an economy which is *au ralenti*. In fact, it is *en mode d'atterrissage*, because we need 6% growth to create enough jobs for the new entrants in the labour market, and to sustain positive growth in the future. So, this growth is weak in spite of all the hype that has been made and comparisons that have been made.

So, let us, for the sake of comparison, because when we say that the performance of the economy is below average, we always hear 'but look at the performance of your MMM/MSM Government! They have not done better! We have done better.' So, I say: okay, let's have a look. Let's have a check, let us compare the performance of your Minister of Finance with the Ministers of Finance of the MMM/MSM Government between 2000-2005. Of course, we have to allow for a lag effect, because in the year 2000 the growth rate was the highest. In 2000, MMM/MSM came into power; the growth rate was more than 10%; in fact, the highest since 1980s. I know some people would not like to hear that – so, we grant it. We say, okay, don't attribute it to the Minister of Finance then, hon. Paul Bérenger, because there is a lag effect - the growth rate in 2000; let us attribute it to the previous Government.

Let us attribute the growth of 2001 to hon. Paul Bérenger. So, what was his growth achievement? Hon. Paul Bérenger achieved, in 2001, 4.6% growth; in 2002: 1.6%; in 2003: 6.3%. The average for these three years is 4.2%. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, of course, with the lag effect, he took over near the end of 2003, so we attribute the 2004 growth to him. So, in 2004, it is 4.3%; in 2005: 2.7% and in 2011, he achieved 3.6% growth rate as Minister of Finance with a Budget which was acclaimed wholeheartedly by our good friend the hon. Member for Constituency No. 18. The average growth rate of hon. Pravind Jugnauth was 3.5% compared to the 4.2% of hon. Paul Bérenger.

Let us look at the track record of our current Minister of Finance. In 2012 – last year - it was 3.4%; 2013, it was 3.2%. So, he achieved an average growth rate of 3.3%. There is nothing

to shout about; these are the facts. The average performance of hon. Xavier-Luc Duval was 3.3% compared to hon. Pravind Jugnauth, 3.5% ; compared to hon. Bérenger, 4.2%. Who is the best Minister of Finance, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is on the account of growth. This 2013 Budget was supposed to achieve growth for the greater good of everybody so that everybody would be likely to get jobs, or even better jobs. But what do we find? The specter of unemployment was still there and is still there, in spite of a Budget for the greater good. So, unemployment is on the constant rise and is now 8.3%. The Budget 2014 has not even forecast the rate of unemployment. Maybe they are not confident enough to say that they will curb unemployment but, definitely, unemployment is on the rise constantly in the last few years. So, we have a slower growth with loss of jobs, we have a growth that is jobless.

What has this Budget in 2013 done to put the economy on the high gear, on the high growth trajectory, moving the economy to that phase of development where we will reach the situation of a high income, high wage and high value economy? I asked the question and the answer is already there.

Let us look at another indicator to measure the success of the Budget 2013. Let us look at investment. The total investment fell. In fact, it has fallen systematically over the last years, but the total investment rate fell from 23% in 2012 to 21.2% in 2013 – this year. But worst still, the private investment fell even further. The private investment, Mr Speaker, Sir, was 17.5% which is already very low. It fell in 2013 to 16.1%. So, there is a contraction in investment; a contraction in different sectors, mainly construction. If there is a contraction in the investment in the construction sector, of course, you would imagine therefore that there will be a contraction in the economy. *Parce que nous disons toujours quand la construction va, toute l'économie va, tout va. But, tout ne va pas, M. le président!* If we look at the Business Confidence Index of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Mr Speaker, Sir, the Business Confidence Factor has fallen to 85.1 from an index of 100 four years ago. In fact, the Confidence Index has fallen to its lowest point in the history of the MCCI and this is what the MCCI report says and it is not the propaganda of the Opposition.

It says –

“Le Business Confidence Index est un indicateur synthétique du climat des affaires à Maurice et permet de transcrire l’état d’esprit et le moral des chefs d’entreprises depuis quatre ans. Le moral est aujourd’hui au plus bas.”

So, it is worst since the start of the working out of this index. Why do we have to look at the index of the World Bank, Ease of Doing Business, Heritage Foundation, World Economic Forum? Why look at all these foreign documents, Mr Speaker, Sir? Look at documents here! Immediate, next door! Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry, local documents! 85.1 ! Lowest index of Business Confidence ! *Mais, malheureusement, nul n’est prophète dans son pays, M. le président.*

Now, let us look at the Consumer Confidence Index. The 2013 Budget was supposed to instill growth and create a feel good factor. You remember - unfortunately, you were not there, I think, Mr Speaker, Sir – how we all feared that they would break the tables and the Budget has not provided for maintenance of these tables, because they were going to achieve a feel good factor! So, let us look at what an independent research firm called TNS Analysis has found out. It published the Consumer Confidence Index and, there again, it said that since 2010, when the index was first worked out at 100 as the base, today or rather in September 2013, this index has plunged to 65.4, which is the lowest in three years. So, in September 2013, the index has dropped from 100 to 65.4.

This is what it said –

“La perception est que l’économie est au plus mal. La perception des perspectives d’emplois a détérioré. Seulement 10,4% des gens perçoivent maintenant – c’est-à-dire en septembre 2013 – qu’il y a des perspectives d’emplois disponibles.”

It means that the consumers feel that job prospects available in the market have dimmed and therefore, we are getting less confidence. In fact -

“42% des consommateurs ne croient pas en une amélioration des revenus dans les prochains six mois, tandis que 39% croient dans une baisse de leurs revenus dans les six mois à venir.”

Which makes a total of 81% don't believe that there is *une bonne perspective d'achat de bien de consommation*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Consumer Index has fallen, so the economy has done nothing good. The Budget has done nothing good in spite of - I don't know how many hundreds, I have forgotten the number - the hundreds of measures that have been published and announced in a timetable but, unfortunately, this year - I don't know, I have to ask the hon. Minister - I tried to find out where is that timetable and how many measures and I couldn't find any. The Minister has promised to publish it at a later stage; I don't know the reason why. Maybe there have been some problems, some discussions, and some afterthoughts being tagged in here and there, so they were not able to really define which measure is in and which measure is out and which measure will be implemented at what time. But, this is a side issue, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Last year, so many measures were announced and 91% were supposed to have been implemented and look at this result. *C'est boudé par la Chambre de Commerce*. Although last year, the Minister of Finance achieved what he failed to achieve at one time; he forced the Governor of the Central Bank to reduce the key repo rate. In spite of that, the growth rate has not really taken off. So, what is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir? What is happening? I don't understand. And yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is excess liquidity in the banking system; although there is plenty of money flushed around. So much money that people don't know what to invest in and they start investing in Ponzi schemes.

(Interruptions)

And still, *le moral est au plus bas, M. le président*. What is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir? So, because private confidence, business confidence is low, because private investment is not there, so we would have expected public investment to chip in and that the Government would have accelerated public investment in order to make good the lack of private investment, but we saw last time, in the course of the supplementary Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the public investment was not injected as was estimated. In fact, there was an under spending of Rs10.5 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, when private confidence is low, when private investment is down, when people are not consuming, you would have expected Government to inject money, spend money and invest in productive investment in order to boost the economy and create a multiplier effect in

the economy. But what did we see? We saw that there was, in fact, a fiscal compression; there was a fiscal squeeze. The Budget deficit which was supposed to be 3.8%, actually was squeezed to 1.8%. So, that's why there was no growth because of this lack of fiscal stimulus. Because the Minister was expecting the Governor of the Central Bank to stimulate the money supply, to ease the credit, he depended on monetary policy to inject the required expenditure in the economy, but this, of course, was resisted by the Governor of the Central Bank and we know the clash. We know what happened, how Mr Mansoor had to write a very naughty letter saying that the Governor of the Central Bank is not doing the right thing and will be accountable to history, because he is playing with the future of the country. Very strong language, Mr Speaker, Sir! Maybe this is the reason why he was asked to fly not to London but to Washington.

(Interruptions)

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is slower growth, lower employment, less jobs, but what about inflation, Mr Speaker, Sir? Inflation is still there in spite of the slack in demand. In spite of the Euro Zone recession, inflation is still there. So, the Minister can pride himself on the fact that inflation is not that high and is subdued. We grant him that! But this low inflation is caused by the low growth, by the dampened demand, and by the crisis in the Euro Zone, our external markets, and we have to also acknowledge the contribution of a very tight monetary policy by the Bank of Mauritius, which has achieved its aim of anchoring inflation at a low level.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, prices are still high, because if you listen to the trade unionists, they tell you that the *panier ration*, which is Rs8000 at the beginning of the year, in January, has increased in September by Rs750. So, the typical basket of a typical low-income working family, the price has increased by Rs750, which is, in fact, more than 12% increase. So, within nine months, the inflation calculated by some trade unionists is already in two digits. Something like 12% to 13%.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not be lulled by this low inflation rate. In fact, it is hurting the poor very much. On top of that, Mr Speaker, Sir, the poor working class, hard-working people are suffering from this loss in purchasing power. But they are also getting very, very much indebted. All the surveys, even the survey of the National Economic and Social Council has raised the alarm and reported that the debt level of households has reached an

intolerable level and something has to be done. And are we surprised, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the savings rate is so low?

Savings rate, Mr Speaker, Sir, has fallen to a level which is not seen for many years. It has fallen to a level of 15% from the last statistics that were published. So, savings have also fallen to its lowest level and investment also is weak, and we know the link between saving and investment, Mr Speaker, Sir. You need to mobilise saving; you need to promote saving in order to raise sufficient financial resources to allow the intermediation of these funds for proper investment. But when saving is so low, what happens is that you can't get domestic financial resources enough to finance investment and, therefore, you have to look for foreign savings. So, that's why there is so much hankering after FDI and so much hankering for foreign debt.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us look at another indicator to assess the result of this Budget 2013, the poverty level. According to the Household Budget Survey, the latest one, the poverty line for an average household comprising of two adults and two children was Rs13,330 in 2012 and according to Statistics Mauritius, 241,750 people, that is, most of the workers in the private sector, earn less than Rs13,330 per month, and since wage is the main source of income for these people, so, it means that a lot of workers are already living under the poverty line, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not people who are deprived from jobs; it is not people who are unemployed, unskilled or whatever. Working people are poor according to the definition of Statistics Mauritius. Over 100,000 workers, mostly women earn less than Rs6,000 per month, Mr Speaker, Sir and over 100,000 people are benefiting from food aid. So, it means that there is a lot of poverty in this country. And this Budget has not done anything to alleviate and reduce poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In fact, the poverty intervention level set by the NEF (National Empowerment Fund) in 2011 was Rs6,200 and it is still being used now, and Budget 2014 itself has identified 8000 families living below this poverty line. So, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of poor people has increased. In fact, the Household Budget Survey showed that the number of poor persons has increased from 93,200 in 2001 to 126,200 in 2012 so an increase of over one third, Mr Speaker, Sir; over 33% increase in the number of poor people from 2001 to 2012. As we have just seen, 126,200 people are deemed to be poor according to that survey. It shows that some 10% of the population is living in poverty. This is only the statistics of Mauritius figure. It is not the figure that is everyday found on the ground by social workers. They will tell you the poverty is more

than that. That is why social aid, Mr Speaker, Sir, comprised 29% of the household disposable income in 2012.

So, poverty is at its worst level since twenty years. If we look at income inequality as shown by the index of inequality, the Gini coefficient, it has increased from 0.371 in 2001 to 0.413 in 2012. Obviously there is greater inequality of income and we know that. Anybody who goes to his Constituency will see that there is a widening gap between the poor and the rich. The statistics of the household budget survey show that the lowest 20% of households had a share of national income of 6.4% in 2001, but now it has a share of income of only 5.4%. So, the lowest 20% of the households have a share of only 5.4% of total income whereas the highest 20% of household who used to have 40% has now 47.4% which shows that the gap between the rich and the poor has widened since 2001. On top of that, we should not just look at the inequality index, let us look at the middle class of this country.

The middle class of this country is suffering a lot, has been reduced in size. If we look at the crime rate and the situation of crimes today, a middle income family is living in such insecurity that it has to spend so much money on security. It has, first of all, to put up a big wall. On the wall, he has to put up barbed wire then he has to put an alarm system. In spite of the alarm system, he will put a system of *antivol*, and in addition to *antivol* he will put a camera system outside and inside his house so insecure he is. Of course, I am not talking of other animals which he will keep for his security but it shows that there is an increase in insecurity, a breakdown of law and order because of this increased poverty and we, in our Consistency, see that the joggers along Vandermeersch Street every day are attacked. Gold chains are being snatched by pickpockets and people are being attacked all the time, Mr Speaker, Sir, to such an extent that in a gated residential apartment complex, one lady was even killed by her security guard and handyman. The security guard and the handyman went to her flat, stole the lady and finally killed her. So we are at a stage where poverty, income inequality, lack of job prospects, business confidence, confidence of consumers is so low that we have this kind of situation of insecurity and breakdown of law and order Mr Speaker, Sir. So this is the macroeconomic picture. Now let us look at the fiscal situation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let us look at the public financial situation as a result of this Budget because we always hear the government saying that it is exercising great fiscal discipline and stewardship, and that's

why Government is being praised by all these world organisations. Let us see what is the situation. We saw last time that the budget deficit in 2012 was very low. Now, we have the results of budget deficit for 2013. So, how was the public financial management carried out? We were expecting that the Government was doing a sound and prudent fiscal management and the budget deficit was 1.8% in 2012 which made them get an upgrade in the sovereign debt rating. We would have expected that the budget deficit would be within the tolerable limits. No, Mr Speaker, Sir, this year the budget deficit 2013 is estimated at 3.7%. From 1.8%, the deficit has more than doubled Mr Speaker, Sir. So how do you explain this and how do you judge this? You are making a deficit. Normally you are very proud; you have got Moody rating upgraded. You are shouting everywhere that you are doing the best fiscal management but now the budget deficit has more than doubled from 1.8% to 3.7% Mr Speaker, Sir. Is that fiscal prudence?

What is most shocking, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that this budget deficit is the result of accounting gimmick; is the result of colourable accounting because a lot of expenditure that should have been spent out of the budget, out of estimates in the budget, is not being spent out of the budget; it is spent out of special funds because money has been kept away from the budget and put in special funds. It is now that they are using these special funds to make public expenditure which should have been accounted in the budget. So we have to add back all these public expenditures that have been made out of the special funds. So, in fact, the budget deficit is bigger it is because you have to add back all the payments that have been made out of the special funds plus also the Government has taken money from special funds, transferred it to the consolidated fund. So what happens is that: suppose you have made a deficit of 100 in fact your deficit is not 100 because you have made 100 deficit as a result of the fact that you have drawn money from your outside drawer to put into your kitty. So, if you add back that money which has been transferred from the surplus funds to the consolidated fund, the deficit is much higher. So I have made a calculation of what is the real budget deficit, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In 2013 the budget deficit is Rs13.8 billion according to the estimates. So, we have to add back the Rs1.2 billion that have been transferred to the consolidated fund. So if we add back the Rs1.2 billion to the consolidated fund plus the payment and the expenditure that have been paid out of the surplus funds which should normally have been paid out of Budget you would have added another Rs4 billion. You would have added another Rs4 billion. So, you would have added in total Rs5.2 billion to the Budget deficit. Instead of Rs13.8 billion, you would have

added another Rs5.2 billion. So, this would have made a Budget deficit of Rs19 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is not 3.7%, because the Budget deficit is not Rs13.8 billion, the Budget deficit is Rs19 billion. In fact, the Budget deficit is 5.1%. So, the real Budget deficit, by bringing back all the surplus funds into the picture and also by getting rid of this colourable accounting, is 5.1% in 2013. I would like to see how Moody's and others will look into it.

The IMF has already sounded the alarm and said that this is a very risky matter, because you cannot have sound macroeconomic decisions on the basis of false accounting, on the basis of wrong figures of Budget deficit. This Budget deficit in 2013 was, in fact, 5.1%. If you make the same calculation by adjusting for the surplus funds for 2014, where the Minister is saying that he is making 3.2% Budget deficit, actually it is not 3.2%, the real Budget deficit is 5%, Mr Speaker, Sir. Therefore, we have a wide Budget deficit and this is not sound public financial management, Mr Speaker, Sir.

In the face of this kind of situation, how sustainable is this fiscal situation? Given that we are highly dependent on indirect tax, we have just seen how the Government is depending mostly on VAT and on what is called the sin taxes, that is, tax on cigarettes, alcohol, petroleum and gambling. You are taxing all the time, every year, year in and year out. There is no imagination, Mr Speaker, Sir. This Government has run out of steam completely. Instead of doing a real tax reform, restructuring the tax system, this Government is doing what it has been doing for the last five years, that is, raise tax on cigarettes, on alcohol, on petroleum products and on gambling. They have now found another gimmick, which is to raise tax on SMS and now on smart phones. So, a bit short of imagination, I would say, Mr Speaker, Sir.

When you depend so much on indirect taxation, there is a limit to which we can tax people. Where do you find the money to finance this kind of Budget deficit, Mr Speaker, Sir? You will have to find the money from debt; you will have to borrow overseas and locally. This is what is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir. We just had a PQ this morning which shows that external debt has increased. External debt component has risen in the total public sector debt. So, this makes us now, therefore, very vulnerable to external parties, to external credit institutions. This makes us fiscally vulnerable and it is not fiscally sustainable, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On top of that, let us also be aware that a Budget deficit which is financed by external loan like that is, normally, inflationary. So, when you create such budget deficit and inflationary

pressures, who will suffer most, Mr Speaker, Sir? Inflation is a tax on the poor. So, again, you are going to make the poor suffer as a result of this mismanagement of public finances.

Reliance of these external debts is a risky affair. We just discussed about that in the PQ this morning. But, however, this Government seems to believe that the more you are able to borrow, the more you get foreign currency, the more you are proud of your rating and the more you are replenishing your foreign exchange reserves. But what's the point of having all these foreign exchange reserves, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the poor are not getting enough disposable income? The Government coffers are full of foreign exchange reserves, Mr Speaker, Sir, but the population is starving. So, we have a situation where you have a very rich Government whose coffers are full of foreign exchange reserves, but the poor person's wallet is empty and his disposable income is reducing all the time. Can we call this a good budgetary management, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Let us now look at what is called the external imbalance. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have talked about the internal situation. The internal situation meaning that we have talked about the domestic growth, the employment situation, the price stability, the level of fiscal balance. These are internal equilibrium, internal balance. But what about the external sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to the external sector, we have a structural dependence on imports, because we are still very much dependent on food and energy imports. We are still heavily independent on raw materials and equipment from outside and we are having a structural imbalance because the imports are two times the size of our exports. We are not able to raise our exports because we do not have the competitiveness and we are not able to boost our exports. That's why the hon. Minister is always coming back, harping on the question of the rupee being too strong, because we are not able to export enough to pay for our imports, because his Budget is not bringing the resilience, his Budget is not bringing the feel good factor, his Budget is not increasing manufacturing capacity, his Budget is not creating more productivity in the country. So, that's why the exports are always lagging behind the imports.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have another imbalance in the trade account. That's why we have to rely heavily on services to make good that trade imbalance. But services also recently have been suffering from the slack in external demand. What are these services? Tourism! Tourism is suffering because of the problem in the Euro Zone. BPO and ICT, exports are also

suffering because of lower demand in Euro zone, slower growth there. That is why, in spite of a big and growing services sector, deficit in the current balance is very high. In fact, deficit in the current balance was 10.3% of GDP in 2012 and it is supposed to have stabilised around 10% this year, but it is way too high, because, normally, a country should also manage its external balance in a way that is sustainable. But if you have 10% current account deficit year in and year out like that, what does it mean, Mr Speaker, Sir? It means that it has to be financed. How is it going to be financed? It will have to be financed by foreign borrowing and FDI.

So, that is why this Government is so dependent on FDI. Any FDI would do for him so long he has FDI. So, that's why they are going around promoting Mauritius, trying to find investors, whether it is productive or non-productive, that's not the matter. Because you have a current Budget deficit, your current account is having a big hole, you need to bring in foreign currencies. So, that's why you have all kinds of FDI in real estates, in all kinds of things and you are making this country dependent on foreign capital, on foreign money.

Mr Speaker, Sir, If we get FDI that is productive, we get FDI that adds value to the economy, that's good enough, but what we are having is not just FDI, we are having a lot of influx of foreign money, a lot of money which is influx of hot money, Mr Speaker, Sir. This influx of hot money has been coming in waves to such an extent, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it is creating excess liquidity in the banks and we are having a problem of liquidity management by the Bank of Mauritius because the banking system is getting that inflow of hot money, foreign capital, to make good that hole in the current account deficit. By getting all these foreign loans and hot money, the banking system now is over liquid and does not know what to do with the money! This is creating an inflationary situation so much so that the Bank of Mauritius had, on several occasions, to intervene to mop up that excess liquidity. In economic terms it is called cash sterilisation. It has nothing to do with the dog sterilisation which we are promoting! The Bank of Mauritius has to mop up this excess liquidity by cash sterilisation. This sterilisation, however, costs money to the Bank of Mauritius because it has to absorb that excess cash in the banking system and has to issue securities on which it has to pay interest. So, the Bank of Mauritius is paying a lot of interest because of the policy of Government which has a structural deficit financed by foreign money and hot money on top of it!

So long as we will have this situation, there will be a dependence on this foreign money which will create excess liquidity which will have to be absorbed by the Central Bank and the Central Bank will have to pay interest on the securities that it has to issue to absorb the excess liquidity! Who will fund the Bank of Mauritius? That is the big question! That is why the Bank of Mauritius has not been paying dividend in the last two years. I mean, it has paid very little dividend Rs50 m. or something, but it used to pay hundreds of million rupees dividend. So, it is not paying the amount of dividend that is budgeted year in and year out by the Ministry of Finance. That is why there is that tug of war.

That is another tug of war, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the Bank of Mauritius is actually subsidising Government for its excess liquidity action. That is why, I think, the sooner the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Mauritius could sort this out and find an agreement on how to share this cost of sterilisation, the better it is. If we look at the estimates we will find that for the year 2014 zero income from the Bank of Mauritius is budgeted by the Ministry of Finance.

(Interruptions)

It is because you are injecting liquidity and you are expecting Central Bank to absorb it at its cost, you will not get anything. That is why you are depending too much on the FSC now. I see that the FSC was supposed to bring in Rs850 m. to the Consolidated Fund, this year the Minister is expecting Rs1.4 or Rs1.7 billion. I do not know where he is going to get that! Maybe he has a magic to create money!

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have seen how the financial management is putting the country at risk and we have a vulnerability and sustainability problem in our fiscal, trade and economic models. In fact, all the models that had been working for the last 10 to 15 years are now at risk. So much so that, we hear that cry of despair at paragraph 44 where the hon. Vice-Prime Minister said –

“(...) without growth Mauritius is going nowhere. Growth matters.”

So, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is desperate for growth! But, how do we accelerate that growth? How do we invigorate that growth, Mr Speaker, Sir? How do we fire the engine of

growth? This Budget falls very much short of the demand for the actions to fire the engines of growth!

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we look at this Budget, in fact, it is a shopping bag! It is a shopping list of a lot of projects, a lot of measures! Many of these measures were old measures, old ideas, pet ideas which have been revamped, rehashed, recycled, put and lumped into this Budget Speech without any holistic approach, without any strategic plan, without weighing the costs and the benefits and without looking at the alternatives so that you have in this Budget projects that even contradict with each other. I will give you one example, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister says that he is going to have a bus fleet renovation programme for five years. So, he is going to allow all the bus operators to renew their fleet. Low floor...

(Interruptions)

...semi low floor buses, 200 buses for our private operators, 100 buses for the NTC. This is what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is saying. He is having a programme. It comes under the “Build Mauritius” Plan! He also said by the same token that we are going ahead with the Light Rail System. The project is going ahead, we are issuing tender. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is always on a fast track. He tells me, he is a man of action...

(Interruptions)

He is doing action everywhere except in my Constituency, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

That is the problem!

(Interruptions)

So, if we are going to have this fast track Light Rail System, how long will this take to be in operation, Mr Speaker, Sir? It will be within four to five years. It will be there. The Light Rail Transport System, according to the plan of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

Now we are having a programme of renewal of all the fleet of buses, how long will these buses last? Some eight to ten years. But, in five years, we are going to have Light Rail, so you are going to take the riders of these buses and you are going to push them into the Light Rail System! Can you have these big buses act as feeders, coming from Chebel to Coromandel? These low semi floor - I do not even know how it is being described! There is a contradiction in terms, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

There is no planning! There is no consultation! There is no strategy! The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has an imperative because there are all these '*corbillards*' *roulant* on the roads! He has to take some money and use it for the bus fleet renewal. At the same time the Light Rail System is going on with Mr TGV.

(Interruptions)

We have two big investments contradicting with each other! Do you want to know another contradiction in the list, Mr Speaker, Sir? There are so many, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development said that we now have an airport terminal and we are going to make it an aviation hub because it is a brand new terminal costing billions of rupees. We are going to use it to be a hub. Now he is going to make a 'Master Plan'! The Budget said this! There will be a 'Master Plan' to look after the terminal, training of pilots, maintenance of aircrafts, Freeport zone, air cargo and the hotels. After having put an expensive terminal of Rs16 billion, now you are looking for a 'Master Plan'!

(Interruptions)

It is extraordinary, Mr Speaker, Sir! They dare put it in the Budget!

Mr Speaker, Sir, this lumping of all kinds of hotch potch projects without any consistency, coherence is not a tool for growth. It is not an instrument that will fire the engine of growth, Mr Speaker, Sir, because these are diverging programmes, different ideas, different projects that suit the personal interests of different influential policymakers in this Government. I won't say what it is, but in any case, there is no focus, there is no goal, there is no plan, and, in

fact, there is not even conviction from the Minister of Finance and Economic Development because I see that in reading his speech, he had lapses and he was looking for water.

(Interruptions)

I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister is making him '*avale coulèvre*' or what is happening, but definitely there is no conviction in what he has been reading and less will on the part of Government to achieve all that he has said.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, don't be surprised if you look at the title of this Budget Speech. Sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to wear glasses, because I hit against the branch of my letchi tree at home this morning. Normally, I don't wear glasses. But, if you look at the copy of the Budget Speech, it says that it is the Budget Speech of the Government of Mauritius. Normally, it is written 'Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance, hon. Vice-Prime Minister'; this and that. Right! But, this time, you look at the cover, and it is said: Budget of the Government of Mauritius. Government of Mauritius Budget!

Mr Speaker, Sir, now I understand why it is written like that! It's because there is a hotchpotch of all kinds of different, diverging, various measures, programmes, budgets, projects, ideas, concepts, everything! You name it, it is there! It is a cocktail of whatever everybody wants to put in. So, in the end, what happens, Mr Speaker, Sir? Of course, you don't have an implementation plan, Mr Speaker, Sir! Now, I understand why you can't have an implementation plan. It's because he, himself, did not have the plan! Because all these people are pushing their own pet ideas and their pet projects into that shopping bag. So, he got lost. He said 'wait, after two to three weeks, I will come back, and I will give you all these measures in proper order and with the time schedule of implementation'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is always so proud. As an Accountant, he sets limits, he sets deadlines, targets, how many percentage he will achieve, when. So, this time, it is way off the mark, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

But, the film rebate is not enough...

(Interruptions)

The Budget is a farce, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, I have to take it lightly, Mr Speaker, Sir.

But, what you also see in the Budget is some eloquent pieces of silence; eloquent. For example, nothing is said of the need to coordinate the action between the Bank of Mauritius and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. How? I just mentioned one example, which is the agreement to share the cost of sterilising the influx of foreign money. So, there is no real action and measures to realise this; what he called congruence of action of the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Mauritius.

We don't hear anything about the DBM. We always hear hon. Ms Deerpalsing talk about democratising. In fact, she is the Chairperson of that Commission of Democratisation, but one instrument of democratisation is the DBM. It is the DBM and the Government of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, which hon. Ms Deerpalsing repeatedly proclaims that he is the architect of democratisation. But, the financial instrument of democratisation is the DBM - the Development Bank of Mauritius - because this is the bank for the poor people, for the small man, for the small fisherman, for the small planter who is looking for his *faisance-valoir*, for the small trader, for the small hawker. They won't get access to credit in the banks. They go to the Development Bank of Mauritius because it's a development bank; it is not there to make money, to make profit, and Government gives them a special window, a line of credit to help these small people who have no assets, who have only their hard work and their skills, their will and their tough determination to succeed in life.

We hear nothing of DBM. It was supposed to be a micro bank, a small SME bank, but we want to have a bank run on commercial lines again. This defeats the whole purpose of democratisation. I am very sorry! The Budget is being silent on such an important issue, when I know very well that the Commission for the Democratisation of Economy has been very actively participating in the pre-budget debates and Budget preparations, and yet, this has been missed out completely. Unbelievable! That's why I said this Budget is just a hotchpotch of different diverse interests. Maybe they have no interest in finding a solution for the DBM. Actually the DBM will celebrate its 50 years' anniversary next year; maybe we are going to give it *un enterrement de classe l'année prochaine*. God knows!

We have also this question of the casino companies and others, because the hon. Prime Minister has said many times: we want to have a leisure hub, we want to have centres where people will have leisure which is sane, sound, properly regulated. This is his vision. Very good! Where is it? Silent completely! What has happened? I don't understand, Mr Speaker, Sir. A key element for attracting Indian and Chinese tourists: gambling, casino. Forget about the morale and other dimension of it.

(Interruptions)

But it is a business, and this is what the Indians and the Chinese are looking for when they come to Mauritius. But what a shame! What a shame! This is a sector that has brought the revival of the Singapore economy. If you don't understand anything, go and learn in Singapore.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a Budget, therefore, that shows no vision, that has no leadership, that has no strategy. It seems that, therefore, it is a collection of different inputs from different people, without any policy, coordination or leadership. Why is this so, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because it is clear that these different measures represent pet ideas from different Ministries. For example, we have the idea of the Ocean Economy. The Ocean Economy has been tagged in there, Mr Speaker, Sir, without any real plan, without any strategy, and it is now that they are going to have a task force to look into it. So, what is this new pillar of activities called the Ocean Economy in this Budget? Because what is a Budget? A Budget is a plan, Mr Speaker, Sir. A Budget is not a vision paper. A Budget sets out the figures, the facts and the funds, the commitments to realise the project. So, we have Ocean Economy, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we don't know what value, how, when, and how much is involved. So, we are having task force, and all kind of studies and research. This is a clear example of lack of proper coordination within the Government.

On the other hand, if we look at the Land Use and Urbanisation Strategy because this is what it is all about - Mauritius has nothing else, but its land and building to develop now. Ocean economy is something which is in the medium to long term. We have traditional sectors: BPO, financial services, tourism and others. So, the only sector that needed attention is the construction sector, but for the construction sector you need to take measures in a context of a new urbanisation plan. In fact, the Government had a lot of ideas of urbanisation. It had the idea

of having a new administrative city in Highlands. It has the idea of a Neo Town in the city with skyline, complexes of new buildings, commercial centres and leisure complexes and we have Jin Fei which was going to be a thriving, busy logistic warehousing and manufacturing centre. So, there are a lot of projects in the pipeline and I would have expected that there had been an urbanisation plan. There had been something which is well thought through to provide also the transport element into it, because there is no point having different centres of growth, different poles developing all over the place and without proper transport connecting all these places. I would have expected an urbanisation plan, a transport strategy. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, nothing of the sort! That is why we have all these piecemeal measures of having some buses being renewed here, some works being upgraded here and there. There is no consistency, there is no coherence. Therefore, if we look at what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is seeking to achieve, this is what he said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are two main planks of his growth strategy. One is to build Mauritius.

How does the hon. Minister build Mauritius? It is through a physical infrastructure plan. What is this physical infrastructure plan all about? It is to have new pillars like aviation hub, port development, marine services hub, petroleum hub, bunkering hub, cruise terminal, ocean economy, bus replacement and others. There are a lot of measures and projects lumped together. I don't know it will run to how many billions, Mr Speaker, Sir. Another thing which I find very strange is that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister talked of billions of dollars in a project when, in fact, it is a project which is going to be done by the private sector. I don't find it in the Budget. Most probably it is something that is going to be done by the private sector. So, why make mention of billions and billions of investment when they are all going to be done by the private sector? Talk about what you have earmarked in the Budget, how this is going to be operationalised through that budgetary system! But, no! Billions and billions are quoted all over the place so that we don't know what exactly is private and what exactly is public. If we have had a proper Public Private Partnership (PPP) in all these projects, then I would have understood, but nowhere is it mentioned that there is Public Private Partnership in these projects. It is either private sector or public sector and where there is PPP, I know there is this LRT which is PPP and the toll road project.

Talking of toll road, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is *le grand absent* also because I don't hear anything about toll road in this Budget. Because he was talking of all these big projects, we are going to have a new committee to fast-track these major projects. How are we going to fast-track these major projects? It is through a Committee at the Ministry of Finance and I am going to come to that later. But, just to summarise what I was saying, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has come up with three planks strategy. First, to build the infrastructure with all these hubs and physical investment. Second, to create new pillars. He calls it new pillars: green economy, ocean economy, film industry and Africa strategy. These are the new pillars; four new pillars that he is going to create. Third, to improve the investment climate. How does he improve the investment climate?

I don't know whether this has been tagged into it or this has been forced into it, but three committees are going to be put up. One committee is a fast-track committee for major projects which is to expedite the processing of permits and approvals. The second committee is the e-monitoring committee at the Ministry of Local Government for processing and monitoring building and land use permits. The third one is another committee for the tourism licences and permits. This, I think is tagged in because of tourism. We have three main planks; infrastructure, new pillars and business climate. Let me talk on each of these, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me talk about infrastructure in the context of the instrument for growth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I always hear the hon. Prime Minister talking about *MID* project (*Maurice Ile Durable*). This is his pet project. In fact, he even wanted to make Mauritius like a Davos where all the *pandits* and top brains would come to Mauritius and brainstorm on *durabilité* - the concept of sustainability. The hon. Prime Minister claims that he has a vision that builds on a sustainable Mauritius. So, I would have expected his Budget to have mentioned the words 'sustainable development' and the words '*Ile durable*'. Nowhere did I find this, Mr Speaker, Sir! Nowhere I have found the words 'sustainable development', '*développement durable*', '*île durable*'. I only hear of *MID* related projects as if it is *à côté*. So, it is not translating the Budget and the vision of the hon. Prime Minister which everybody always repeatedly says in this House; the great vision of the hon. Prime Minister. But the vision is not in the Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. Show me the vision! There is no sustainable development. There is no *MID*.

(Interruptions)

There is nothing! The private television is only *khalé, pilé, maja karo*, singing and dancing. It is no good, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I see that this Budget speech not only does not mention this whole concept of sustainable development, but it comes up with another concept. The concept now is modern, inclusive and caring society. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister wants to modernise, makes it inclusive and caring society even if it is not sustainable. That's a pity, Mr Speaker, Sir! I was pinning high hopes that I will see a lot of measures in this Budget to talk on sustainability, but when I look through the surplus funds, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was shocked. I found that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has wrapped up and has closed down the *MID* Fund because he has left zero cent in the balance for 2014. I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister and his Commissioner of *Ile Durable* is aware of this. So, what is the point of having a Director of *MID* Fund and *MID* Commission when the Fund is going to be wrapped up!

On the contrary what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance says is that without growth Mauritius is going nowhere. What he wants is economic growth. So, this is a Budget that is going to invigorate growth on the back of what is restyled as green economy. It is being restyled as green economy, but it contains many provisions for big infrastructure works and for big projects, which will have very negative sustainability implications, Mr Speaker, Sir.

A budget designed for sustainability, Mr Speaker, Sir, goes much further than what this Budget provides for, particularly after all the hypes we have heard before. So, we are very concerned that this Budget which is being adopted here will exacerbate the vulnerability of Mauritius.

In fact, we are very disappointed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Ministry of Finance seems to be fixated on its narrow view of growth and failed to acknowledge that sustainable investment and sustainable development make more economic sense in view of the fact that this can provide greater resilience to the economy to external shocks, reduce environmental risk and protect and enhance the natural resource base of Mauritius.

Maybe it is high time, Mr Speaker, Sir, for policymakers to think of an alternative model of development, not just economic model, and chalk out a strategic integrated balanced approach to development that takes into account the social and economic impact and also the long-term sustainability.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, we don't see the vision of MID translated in this Budget, because it is the usual economic growth model that is being promoted here, and it is because of this lack of confidence in MID, lack of confidence in the strategic capability of MID to achieve and transform the economic landscape of Mauritius that has made the Minister, I presume, adopt a different style, calling it a Budget promoting the green economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is about time that policymakers think hard on societal change. For this reason, we have to have a hard look at the way the land use planning and the land management are being carried out, Mr Speaker, Sir. At paragraph 93, the Budget says, and I quote -

“Quite literally, we are redrawing the map of Mauritius.”

But does the Government really understand the implications of such a redrawing venture? Does it know what the final version of the map will look like? If it does, then we should better share it.

However, what we know is that in this Budget, there is no orderly development and planning of land use. 25% of our territory is already built up, Mr Speaker, Sir. Land prices are skyrocketing, pricing the majority of the middle class out of the land market. So, what will happen to the future generation, Mr Speaker, Sir, when they will find that it is difficult to buy land for housing or for even other economic activities?

So, we very badly need a National Physical Development Plan, and, more importantly, we need the full Government commitment to such a plan. If we need to redraw the map of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has to be undertaken within a national exercise and not in the preparation of the Budget, or not to be used as a tool to reward some *ti copains* and *ti copines* or political agents by dishing out land parcels and State lands left, right and centre.

Government is clearly aware that there is a highly speculative land market outside. Many plots of land remained vacant for years, because people are waiting for the price to skyrocket and this has become a nuisance in the neighbourhood. So, ordering the local authorities to ensure that

such plots are fenced and maintained is not the ideal solution. What we need is to stem the land speculation. What we need is to encourage the people who have bought the land and left it bare, to make use of the land even for food production. We have to ensure that we have a safe, sound and developed neighbourhood, and this will create the decent quality of life for those people who live there, but the Government is not attacking the root cause of the problem.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we talk of land use, what we find is that we are building roads all over the place, connecting the roads and then trying to develop property along the new constructed road and in the end create a spiral of land speculation. But all this is done without a clear Master Plan and without a National Physical Development Plan. In this way, Government is therefore jeopardising the sustainability of the island.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during the first phase of industrialisation, we did allow the development to go out of control and environmental standards were not to the level that is required. So, we have followed this growth strategy, but we must learn from our mistake and now after more than three decades of such growth path, we must learn and try to have a more integrated and more coherent land strategy.

(Interruptions)

For this reason, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me talk about the land transport system. The Budget tells us that congestion cost is a whopping Rs4 billion, but we don't know how the Minister has come up with this astronomical figure. Now, the Government is proposing to spend even more money on road infrastructure. But such projects are being implemented piecemeal, as we have seen in the case of the Toll Road Project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are relying too much on these road constructions for development. Road construction breeds more cars; more cars breed more pollution, more CO2 emission. So, this is not sustainable, but the Government will have us to bear the fact that it is having two big land transport projects. One is the Toll Road Project and this Toll Road Project is going to encompass the Dream Bridge, the new Terre Rouge/Verdun Link Road, all the roads from the airport to Port Louis and the Ring Road Phase I and Phase II.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that the Budget has not touched on this question of the toll road, but has the Government taken consideration of the fact that this Toll Road which is being proposed by the Minister of Public Infrastructure is going to cost Rs20 billion out of which money has already been spent from taxpayers on all these road infrastructures and these are going to be lumped together in order to give to foreign contractors to complete and to run.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me quote the example of Indonesia where you have a lot of toll road network. This should be an example to the concerned. In Indonesia, you have toll road and in order to prevent other people to use the toll road because they are not able to afford the tolls, they have a fence on both sides of the road. So if you come inside the toll road, you have to cross the fence and go to the toll booth and pay the toll before you can use the toll road. Do you imagine what is the scene there? So you have a toll road which is fenced on both sides, with limousines, inside, all the latest fashion cars going there, paying their tolls, moving very fast all the wealthy people and on the other sides of the road which is fenced you have rickshaws, you have taxis, bicycles, motorcycles, all the other types of vehicles jammed on both sides of the toll road. If they want to come inside the toll road, you have security guards with guns and you have the tall huts where there are security people with cameras to check on people who come and pay to go inside the toll road. Is this the kind of development that you want in Mauritius? Already we have a *société à deux vitesses*. Already the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Is this the kind of development that we want to have in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the soft part of the Budget, that is, different measures that the Government wants to put in place in order to invigorate growth. So, before we can assess how that is going to impact on accelerating growth, I am talking of all these fast track processing committees, all these monitoring committees for processing permits before we talk about what impact that will have on development, on projects and processing all these permits let me go back to the economic model that we are having today. The economic model that we are having today is based on an old model of cheap labour. I say an old model of cheap labour because we are still back to the days where we depend on cheap labour to be competitive. That's why the living wage is the basic minimum wage, that is, it's something like Rs3700 per month. The basic wage which is the minimum wage paid in the free zone for example is something like Rs3700. This is the basic minimum wage. So, we have been depending on this type of low wage model

for development. This has worked because there was a lot of abundant labour in the past but today this labour with the development of services sector is looking for better jobs and better salaries to live. We still go back to this old model because we are not competitive. So we maintain that cheap labour.

So, what happens is that the Ministry of Labour is there to make sure that this model is sustained, that the business model is sustained. How? Because local labour does not want to work at that low-wage so the Minister of Labour now is opening the floodgates for foreign labour. Foreign labour now is replacing local labour in order to maintain the low-wage model. So, we are attracting the kind of development through export production which is dependent on foreign labour. What does that mean, Mr Speaker, Sir? It means that we have not moved from that old economic model where we depend on cheap labour to grow, even in the services sector, even in the traditional sector, you are not able to give higher wages. The Minister of Labour has given the undertaking so many times to the trade unions that he will bring forward the minimum wage legislation and that he is going to fix the social wage to Rs8000 per month. This is the kind of revolutionary wage policy that he was supposed to introduce after consultation with the ILO. It is in this context that the Minister of Finance has mentioned that he is going to refer fourteen cases to the NRB to award higher remuneration orders.

(Interruptions)

He has referred but it does not mean anything because every year only three awards are granted by the National Remuneration Board and even where the award has been granted as in the case of office attendants, the award has been granted by the NRB in September 2012 and up to now it has not been proclaimed by the Ministry of Labour.

So, it means therefore that he has been deliberately keeping wage low in this country because he wants to depend on foreign labour which has become a new business for some people and this is where they are going to take advantage of. So this foreign labour bias, Mr Speaker, Sir, shows that we are not even able to make any gains from the foreign investors. Let me explain to you how that model works. We have abundant cheap labour. We used the cheap labour to work, to produce and to get money and this money stays in Mauritius and this money is what is circulating in the economy and creates growth. But, now you are not giving the local labour the jobs; you are replacing them by foreign labour; the foreign labour is still paid at a low

rate. For example, the Minister will agree that he is not even aware that many employers are not paying night allowance after two hours overtime to the foreign workers. So, this is being allowed by the Minister of Labour. It means that the wage of a foreign labour is compressed as competitive wage rate and, on the contrary the Mauritian labour, if it has worked in these low-wage sectors would have kept the money here; but the foreign labour, he is working at that wage which the Mauritian labour is being replaced, and he is repatriating and draining that money out. So the local value added of this kind of production; the local value added of this kind of export manufacturing has been reduced. We are getting less local value added when we have foreign workers. So why are we so fixated in a bias for foreign labour as this Budget is showing.

What does this Budget say? It says it is going to allow the Ministry of Labour to issue permits to foreign labour to replace local labour and to displace them according to a ratio to be worked out. How is this ratio going to be worked out in the different sectors? This is left to the administrative discretion of the Ministry of Labour Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is what is going to cause abuse. This is what is going to lead to all kinds of corruption. I would have rather that the Minister of Finance issues rule-based criteria on which he is going to apportion the ratio between foreign and local labour in external sectors, but it is not rule-based, it is an administrative decree. It is not going to be issued in a Government regulation on the Government Gazette, Mr Speaker, Sir. So the Ministry of Labour is imputing that local labour is not willing to work in these low paid sectors. But has any survey been carried out to substantiate this? Is it really that the local workers don't want to work in these places? So, the stand of the Government, the approach of the Ministry of Finance, is to allow more permits for foreign labour and also to exempt employers from paying National Pension Fund and National Savings Fund to foreign workers, except in sectors like the EPZ. So, it means, therefore, in the EPZ, foreign workers will be employed, for which employers will not have to contribute NPF, NSF and the rest. So, they are going to save 10%, whereas if we use local labour, we would have paid all this. This is in the Budget.

(Interruptions)

It is in the Budget Speech and you can read it yourself if you don't understand. This will allow the employer, therefore, to continue using foreign labour and maintaining low pay in the sector. These two measures of the Budget, therefore, will maintain this low-wage model. So, where is

the strategy to make Mauritius a middle income, a high wage, a high income, high value added economy? This is not going in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister of Finance knows that just adding new sectors to work will take a lot of time. But, he is also announcing a new element in his Budget for investing in public utilities. Just investing in public infrastructure is not enough, so the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance has announced that he is providing for investment in utilities, that is, in water, energy and others. But the problem is that we have a Financial Secretary who has worked in a Commission, who has issued a report of the National Energy Commission, - the report is there - but we have no inkling whatsoever of what is that strategy, what has that Commission come up with and why now the Budget is coming up with all these piecemeal measures, of incentives to photovoltaic and some money earmarked here and there.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, let me give you an example how the whole question of investing in Public Utilities has been mishandled. I take only the example of water. We look at the water problem. Mr Speaker, Sir, if we compare Mauritius with Israel, Israel has more than six times the population of Mauritius. It has 11 times the size of the surface area of Mauritius, but it has four times less annual rainfall than Mauritius. But it has no water shortage ...

(Interruptions)

There is desert there, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, the problem in Mauritius is not insufficient rainfall. The problem in Mauritius is mismanagement. It is the mismanagement of our water resources that is the problem because we have enough rainfall to capture and to store, but we are not able to capture, store and distribute them properly, because the billions of money that have been spent so far are lost in the sea or are either diverted in non-revenue water.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is even worse is that no reservoirs have been built under this Government since the Midlands Dam in year 2000. There could have been some small dams built along some rivers, but even that has not been done. So, are we surprised that we are having all these problems with water? Even old water pipes are still not yet replaced, Mr Speaker, Sir. And all this time, the water situation is getting worse and yet we know already what is needed to solve our water problem. What is needed is proper, critical water management.

On the contrary, what we are doing now is to rely completely on Singapore and to organise prayers, while the different places are being deforested and new building permits are being issued for all kinds of projects in different places so that we are having a negative impact on the capture and conservation of water. All the inefficiencies, incompetence and mismanagement are being made to pay for by the consumers because the Government has been incompetent in managing the water resources. That is why consumers, all the time, are made to pay more. Now, when we talk of water management, we are only looking for Singapore as an example in order to solve our problem.

Mr Speaker, Sir, so what we are saying is that the Government is coming up with all kinds of projects which have no coherence. It is coming up with new a hub which is a dream. But what is he doing to the traditional sector, to the existing sector? Let us look at the ICT/BPO sector. Mr Speaker, Sir, growth has slowed down even in this ICT/BPO sector. Do you know the reason why, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because there is still lack of qualified, skilled and technical staff, because the law which was introduced by this Government on ICT in 2004, is still in existence in spite of all these changes or in spite of all these revolution of 4G and multimedia, we are still working with an old law of 2004 which was introduced by the MMM/MSM Government. Now the Minister comes in his Budget with a 16% cut in tariff for IPLC. Mr Speaker, Sir, but what is the margin of profit of Mauritius Telecom? You are bringing a tariff cut of 16%, but the margin may be more than 300%, Mr Speaker, Sir. This tariff cut is not enough because if we compare what is the rate in Reunion Island, for 2 Megabytes per second, the Mauritius Telecom is charging 3,000 US dollars, but for the same amount of Megabyte in Reunion Island, they are charging 1,200 dollars, so more than 2 times. So, the cost of this kind of connectivity is still very high in spite of the 16% cut. The small BPO firms cannot afford IPLC. And what have they got to do? They are forced to go to Mauritius Telecom for ADSL and Symmetric DSL. But even that ADSL and Symmetric DSL are very expensive and are of no good quality, Mr Speaker, Sir. ADSL for Corporates is Rs2,000 per month for one Megabyte per second. In France, it is only 1 euro, that is Rs40 compared to Rs2,000 per month. So, can you have small BPOs when the ADSL and the IPLC also are so expensive?

The Mauritius Telecom has a monopoly on ADSL, it has a monopoly on all the Symmetric DSL. It is a wholesaler and a retailer at the same time. And by cutting this IPLC by 16%, this is not going to change the situation. What is needed is a liberalisation of the Telecom

Industry in Mauritius. We do not liberalise it. If we keep the virtual monopoly of Mauritius Telecom which is acting both as a wholesaler and a retailer, you will never achieve competitiveness. In fact, the ICTA has never enforced the unbundling of the local-loop, because we do not have any *dégroupage* of the ADSL. And therefore, all the small operators, all the start-ups still have to go to Mauritius Telecom for their needs at high costs.

The second measure of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development is to guarantee a minimum level of service for internet package provided by Internet Service Providers (ISPs). This is a good step in the right direction. But, why should the monitoring be only on the service level of ISPs? Why is there not a monitoring on the quality of service of the fat cats like the Mauritius Telecom, Emtel and others? In the cybercity region, we all the time have problems with our mobile phones and we do not receive our calls properly and the quality of reception is very bad. What do we do for that? Why is it that we regulate small ISPs and we do not regulate these big monopolies? This shows the kind of democratisation that this Government is talking about! It is protecting the monopoly of the big boys and it is killing the small BPO firms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to another sector. I give two examples, the BPO sector where the small man is being crushed and stifled and the global business. In the Global Business Sector it is really appalling that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister who comes from that sector makes no mention whatsoever of the Indian DTA! Mr Speaker, Sir, the Global Business Sector has depended on the Indian DTA for so long. It is now starting to diversify into Africa. Our future, the growth of the industry still depends a lot on this Indian DTA and we are now at the worst time in the history of the global business and it is the time where employment creation has stalled in the global business, where the number of new companies created is also faltering. The Global Business Sector is looking to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister for more clarity and certainty on the negotiations that are being carried out with India. But nothing is said in this Budget in response to this challenge!

On the contrary, what do we have in this Budget? We have an innocuous proposal. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has introduced a paragraph which says –

“We will further enhance our legislative framework....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: “We will further enhance our legislative framework and provide greater avenues to that sector for dealing with residents.”

Furthermore, the Vice-Prime Minister also mentioned that –

“A Joint Committee under the Financial Services Consultative Council has been mandated to provide recommendations for the better integration of global business with the domestic sector.”

So, we have a two-legged situation, Mr Speaker, Sir. On the one side, we are promoting more commercial substance in the Global Business Sector, in other words, we want the global business companies to show more substance in Mauritius to do some domestic activities. But, at the same time, before this item has been settled and before we have defined what is local substance, we have that different paragraph here which says that: “a Committee has been mandated to study how to integrate the global business to the domestic sector.” Do we want to have only one type of company now, Mr Speaker, Sir? Do we want to integrate the global business into the local domestic business? Is that, therefore, the will of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to have a situation where we call into question the Global Business Sector and make everything onshore?

Mr Speaker, Sir, if this is the intention of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister then this will put to halt the whole democratic process in the economy! I would like the Democratisation Commission to look into that because it is all well to look at other countries like Singapore and say that now we should go to a situation in which there is no difference between onshore and offshore. But, these countries have had a track record of so many years in advance of Mauritius in financial services. They have a different tax system. They have a different corporate system where they can have this duality of doing onshore and offshore activities together. But, Mauritius has a global business sector which has allowed a lot of young professionals to emerge, which has allowed a lot of people from low income and little means to come up on the force of their intellectual capacities to develop a sector which has proved its worth and has earned the reputation for the jurisdiction. But, by integrating the Global Business Sector to the domestic

sector, you are wiping off this Global Business Sector and this is a dangerous move that may hide an agenda of some vested interest who wants to take over the business of Global Business Sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have covered all the traditional sectors...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: We have covered all the traditional sectors. Allow me to just say a few words about the SMEs. I have just said that...

(Interruptions)

I have just said that this Government has not been doing a democratisation job properly for the economy. I just said that Development Bank is now going to be killed off. Now, I am showing that the Global Business Sector is threatened because they want to absorb it in the local sector so that they want to kill off the Global Business Sector which has its own regulations and its own set of rules. It has its own regulator. If we do not have a global business sector, what is the role of the FSC? Is it the intention to absorb the FSC into the Bank of Mauritius?

What I am saying is that there are a lot of moves under this Budget against democratisation: destroying the Development Bank of Mauritius, destroying the Global Business Sector, not raising minimum wages! Promising and promising and not doing anything! For the small scale sector it is even worse! Let me quote what Mr Amar Deerpalsing, the President of PME said recently about the measures in the Budget for Small and Medium Enterprises. Mr Amar Deerpalsing said –

« C'est un long discours pour ne pas dire grand-chose. Il n'y a rien de nouveau. On s'attendait à autre chose. Alors qu'on a déroulé le tapis rouge pour les étrangers avec des mesures incitatives pour qu'ils investissent vite, récupèrent leur argent vite et achètent des biens immobiliers facilement, les PME doivent s'acquitter de multiples permis. On soutient les exportateurs mais on n'allège pas la bureaucratie pour les

opérateurs sur le marché domestique, alors que nous aussi nous subissons la concurrence étrangère. Ce budget est une perte de temps ».

(Interruptions)

So, for Mr Amar Deerpalsing, president of the Federation of Small...

(Interruptions)

...and Medium Enterprises, this Budget is not going to help...

(Interruptions)

... small scale industry!

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me end by saying that this Budget, therefore, has not invigorated any other engines of growth. It has not propelled the new sectors. On the contrary, existing sectors like the SMEs, the Global Business Sector, the DBM, the BPO, all these sectors are being hammered by the different policy options of this Budget.

In this context, therefore, I will end by saying that it is a pity that the Government has not taken the chance of all the fiscal space that it had, of all the fiscal resources that it had, of all the surplus funds that it had, to take a bold approach, and to take courageous measures to really launch and create the *déclic* in the country. There is no feel-good factor as a result of this Budget. This Budget is as weak as a *béquille*. This Budget is good for sending to the '*karo fatak*' which the Government wants to promote. This Budget is going to make the poor poorer, and this Budget is going to give zero hope to the population. There is no hope for more jobs. There is no hope for higher pay. There is no hope for new opportunities, and there are no wider opportunities for people to make a living. So, this is a zero hope Budget.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Now, some order, please! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

(7.01 p.m.)

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, il me semble que l'honorable membre de l'opposition, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing, a oublié une phrase, la dernière phrase: *that there is no hope for them*.

M. le président, je voudrais commencer par féliciter chaleureusement mon ami, mon colistier, l'honorable Xavier Duval, vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances, ainsi que le Premier ministre, pour ce Budget qui est *another building block* pour une île Maurice pour tous. Mais avant de venir sur ce que je voudrais dire, laissez-moi dire que le long discours de l'honorable Li Kwong Wing, qui n'avait ni queue ni tête, qui était très confus, très, très confus, que même ses propres collègues s'ennuyaient. Je le voyais bien sur leur visage. N'en parlons pas du MSM ! Mais même ses propres collègues s'ennuyaient. L'honorable Li Kwong Wing, tellement qu'il ne sait pas sur quel pied danser, parce qu'il voit que son *leader* a dit que ce n'est pas le Budget de Xavier Duval, c'est le budget du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, et puis ils ne savent plus quoi dire, parce qu'on sait pourquoi ils sont en train de faire tout ces petits pas de danse. Mais, qui n'aboutira à rien comme d'habitude.

M. le président, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a dit qu'il n'a pas vu 'Maurice Ile Durable' comme mots dans le Budget. Désolée ! A la première page, deuxième paragraphe, après que le ministre des Finances ait dit '*I move that the Appropriation Bill 2014 be read a second time*' - le premier paragraphe, c'est-à-dire paragraphe 2 - *he says, and I quote* -

"Mr Speaker, Sir, my third Budget builds on our past achievements and sticks to our vision of the future - that of becoming a high income nation, without absolute poverty, of Maurice Ile Durable and of a democratised economy."

I did a quick search, because I don't have it on word document. The word 'sustainability' or 'Maurice Ile Durable' or 'green economy' appears on pages 12, 14, 15, 43, 44, and then I got tired and I stopped. On page 12, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is clearly said that there are Rs6 billion for Maurice Ile Durable projects. I don't know where hon. Li Kwong Wing saw *qu'on a retiré le fund*. *Il y a R 6 milliards pour les MID projects*. Donc, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a été très confus dans son discours.

Allons voir ce que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a dit sur les indicateurs macroéconomiques, et je vais faire vite parce que vraiment il n'y a pas lieu de s'attarder sur toutes les contradictions dans le discours de l'honorable Li Kwong Wing. Je dois dire qu'il n'a pas parlé de *public sector debt*, de *Budget deficit*, mais il a été un peu contradictoire. Mais allons commencer sur ce qu'il était en train de dire sur la croissance.

M. le président, il a lui-même dit qu'en 2000 la croissance dépassait 10%. C'est lui qui l'a dit ; pas moi. Il a dit dans son discours, j'ai noté, que la croissance en 2000 a dépassé 10%, c'est-à-dire quand le gouvernement sous le leadership du Premier ministre était là. Et regardez comment ça a évolué, M. le président ! En 2000, donc, comme il a dit lui-même, plus de 10%. Allons voir l'évolution; 2001 - 5.2%, 2002 - 1.8%, 2003 - 4.4%, 2004 - 4.8%, 2005 - 2.3%, M. le président.

Je pense que n'importe quel enfant d'école pourrait dire que quand on commence avec 10% et on fini avec 2.3%, son leader avait raison, ils avaient mis le pays en état d'urgence économique. Eux-mêmes ont reconnu ça. Donc, c'est pour ça que je dis que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a été malheureusement un peu confus.

Autre chose, j'ai souri quand il a donné un certificat de compétence à l'ancien ministre des Finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth. Et, encore une fois, il se contredit avec son propre *Leader*, parce que je prends le discours de l'honorable Paul Bérenger en 2010, et voilà ce qu'il a à dire. *I quote* -

« J'ai une longue carrière de parlementaire - je crois que je suis le plus ancien - et je n'ai jamais vu un budget être reçu de cette façon par la Chambre en général. Jamais ! Sans précédent ! C'était fade ; c'était des petits bouts collés ; *cut and paste*. Je n'ai jamais, de ma carrière de parlementaire, vu un budget être reçu de cette façon. *More and more people are finding that the devil is in the detail, (...).* »

Mais c'était un certificat d'incompétence de votre propre *Leader*, et aujourd'hui, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing dit que 'ah, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth avait 3.5%'. Mais complètement contradictoire ! Complètement contradictoire avec le *Leader* de l'opposition, l'honorable Paul Bérenger lui-même. Mais on sait pourquoi vous êtes en train de danser par un pied ici, un pied par là-bas. Parce qu'il y a des promesses mirobolantes de la part de votre

béquille ! Votre béquille est en train de vous faire encore croire, encore mirobolier des trucs qui ne vont pas arriver !

(Interruptions)

'Atane même!'

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair, and I want some silence now!

Ms Deerpalsing: *Mr Speaker, Sir*, allons voir ce que ce budget représente. L'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé du taux d'*unemployment*. Encore une fois, je ne vais pas m'attarder, parce que si je prends tous les indicateurs macroéconomiques de 2000 à 2005, tous, sans exception, *we are better and way better on all of them. I am not going to take all of them because it's going to take too much time. But, let me take unemployment, for example.* En 2000, *unemployment* est à 6.5% quand ils arrivent au pouvoir ; 2001 - 6.8%, 2002 - 7.2%, 2003 - 7.7%, 2004 - 8.4%, 2005 - 9.6%. N'importe quel petit enfant d'école primaire peut vous dire que 6.8% c'est plus que 6.5%, que 7.2% c'est plus que 6.8%, que 7.7% c'est plus que 7.2%, que 8.4% c'est plus que 7.7%, et que 9.6% c'est beaucoup plus que 6.5%. Donc, M. le président, *the facts are there and speak for themselves, unfortunately, for* l'honorable Li Kwong Wing, pour qui j'ai beaucoup de respect, mais je comprends la situation dans laquelle il se trouve. Le pauvre a dû faire des lectures un peu inhabituelles.

Allons voir, M. le président, un autre indicateur dont il a parlé. Il a parlé de *Foreign Direct Investment*. M. le président, 2001 à 2004, ils ont eu un *paltry figure of 5.7 billion*, c'est-à-dire, *1 billion a year*. Aujourd'hui, *investment is forecast* –enfin, ce que le ministre des Finances a dit pour cette année - 10 milliards. Donc, je crois que n'importe quel enfant du cycle primaire peut dire que 10 milliards c'est beaucoup plus, c'est 10 fois plus qu'un milliard par an. Donc, ça aussi, c'est malheureusement la réalité des chiffres. Je n'y peux rien.

M. le président, l'honorable ministre des Finances l'a bien dit, le mot clé de ce budget c'est '*empower*'. Comme je l'ai dit au début, depuis 2005 avec l'arrivée au pouvoir de ce gouvernement dirigé par l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, le *empowerment* a eu encore plus de *boost*. Mais n'oublions pas, M. le président, que *empowerment* de ce peuple de l'île Maurice commence avec l'histoire même du Parti Travailleiste. Nous avons la chance et je le dis tout le

temps aux jeunes avec qui j'ai l'honneur de travailler maintenant et je remercie l'honorable Premier ministre de m'avoir donné cette mission. Je le dis tout le temps aux jeunes, nous avons la chance et l'honneur d'être dans un parti qui a une histoire noble. La naissance, l'existence, la raison d'être même du Parti Travailliste est une source des plus puissantes inspirations et c'est cette inspiration qui doit nous motiver et continuer à guider nos actions comme on le fait sous le *leadership* de l'honorable Premier ministre depuis 2005.

(Interruptions)

Justement comme le dit l'honorable Hervé Aimée on ne fait pas que parler. Là, je viens de vous donner les indicateurs - quand vous étiez au pouvoir...

(Interruptions)

Je suis désolée, c'est la réalité des chiffres. Maintenant si on regarde ce qui se passe depuis 2005, comme je le dis, nous avons un gouvernement qui mise sur le capital humain parce que c'est le capital humain qui donne le *social sustainability*. C'est cela qui a été *at the core of the vision of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. From the very first start, he always puts emphasis on the human capital of this country.* Why ? Because, it is only healthy and educated people who can create growth. If you do not have healthy people, you do not have educated people, you cannot have growth. No matter what you have, you cannot have good institutions without educated and healthy people. You cannot have consumption growing if you do not have educated and healthy people. So, this is at the core of the vision of the Labour Party and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me quote from the Global Competitiveness Index report 2013-2014 and here they say –

“Social sustainability as a key to longer term competitiveness (...)”

And we are talking about longer term competitiveness, *puisque l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé de competitiveness.*

“Social sustainability as a key to longer term competitiveness and thus to sustainable growth requires these pillars of human capital and good institutions.”

This is what this Government is working about.

M. le président, nous avons donc la fierté d'exister dans ce gouvernement avec un fil d'Ariane depuis 2005 - une île Maurice pour tous. Une île Maurice pour tous c'est exactement ce que chaque budget a amené, *le building block to increase the space for more and more people. I will talk about this in a little while.*

M. le président, quand on est en train de voir ce que le présent budget prévoit pour le *Home Ownership Programme* à la page 55, paragraphe 472, on voit bien que *part of this Home Ownership Programme is about the middle class*. But we also have a huge chunk of this Home Ownership Programme which touches the poor and the lower middle class.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when you look at economic mobility - let me just share with you something which I think is very interesting and which I think would interest all hon. Members of this House. There is a very interesting article in the Wall Street Journal which, I think, was published just yesterday and it talks about a research of the economic mobility project of the Pew Charitable Trust in the USA and, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, as we all know and hear about the American dream. *Mais, M. le président, savez-vous que 43% des américains raised in the bottom quintile of household income, remain there a generation after. C'est la même chose pour d'autres pays. Je ne vais pas entrer dans tous les détails mais this research uses about 40 years of data. It is a pretty comprehensive research. Ce que je veux dire, M. le président, ce papier nous montre qu'il y a deux ou trois choses qui peuvent apporter economic mobility and home ownership. Home equity is one of them. It is an essential one, in fact. Quand on est en train de parler aux paragraphes 486 et 487 sur le home ownership de 17,000 familles - et je pense que l'honorable Nagalingum en sait quelque chose sur certaines familles à Rose Hill qui sont sur des sites and services et qui avaient des contrats, qui étaient en train de payer et se trouvaient totalement engorgés. C'est grâce à eux, - et je leur rend hommage - à leur combat, qu'aujourd'hui 17,000 familles vont payer que R2,000 comme frais de papier et devenir propriétaires de leurs maisons. Si ce n'est pas ça une mesure d'empowerment, c'est quoi ?*

(Interruptions)

Je viens de mentionner justement combien le *home equity* pèse sur le *economic and social mobility*. Ce n'est pas moi qui le dit, c'est une recherche du *Pew Institute* qui comprend 40 années de *data*. *This is a major thing*. Cela va toucher 17,000 familles. Avec seulement

R 2,000, ils deviennent propriétaires. J'en passe sur toutes les autres mesures du *National Home Ownership Programme*, M. le président.

M. le président, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing avait parlé du *GDP growth* et je dois vous dire que j'ai été un peu surprise - d'ailleurs comme je l'ai été quand j'ai entendu l'honorable *leader* de l'opposition, juste après le budget, parler de *Sub-Saharan*. D'ailleurs, en passant, je dois ouvrir une parenthèse pour dire que j'ai été assez étonnée et choquée d'entendre l'honorable *leader* de l'opposition parlé « d'Afrique noir ». Si cela n'est pas une expression dinosaure, je ne sais pas ce que c'est. Si jamais c'était l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qui avait parlé « d'Afrique noir », je ne sais pas ce qu'on aurait dit.

(Interruptions)

En passant, je le dis. J'ai été choquée, je le dis. On ne dit plus « l'Afrique noir » en parlant du Sub-Saharan Africa. Cela démontre combien ils sont figés dans le temps, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

C'est une expression dinosaure. Je sais que cela fait mal ! Que vous le voulez ou non, c'est une expression dinosaure ! On n'utilise plus les mots 'Afrique noir'. Si vous ne comprenez pas pourquoi, allez faire votre éducation !

(Interruptions)

Si, il l'a dit ! Je peux vous donner l'enregistrement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Ms Deerpalsing: L'honorable *leader* de l'opposition a utilisé les mots 'l'Afrique noir'. Je vais vous donner l'enregistrement.

M. le president, voilà la charte pour le *rate of growth, GDP per Capita in PPP terms*. Depuis 1990 à 2012, le Sub-Saharan Africa. Regardez la ligne au bas, ça reste presque constant de 1990 à 2012 et regardez pour l'île Maurice, la ligne qui monte. Donc, il n'y a pas de comparaison et, bien sûr, si en 2013 et 2014, l'Afrique subsaharienne commence à monter, c'est from a low base.

Donc, il n'y a pas de comparaison et, bien sûr, demain si en 2013 et 2014 l'Afrique subsaharienne commence à monter, c'est from a low base, therefore obviously - et l'honorable Li Kwong Wing comprend ce que je suis en train de dire. When you start from a low base...

(Interruptions)

Exactly! It is about absolute and relative growth. You know exactly what I am talking about.

M. le président, ce qu'il faut noter ce qu'on n'est pas en train de parler juste de *growth for the sake of growth* parce que quand vous prenez d'autres pays, comme l'honorable Li Kwong Wing l'a pris et comme l'honorable leader de l'Opposition a fait des commentaires sur, par exemple, le Niger. *Nigeria is a petrol producing country. You cannot compare Mauritius with Nigeria. I mean, if you want to compare Mauritius with Nigeria, you can also compare on the competitiveness index. On the competitiveness index, Mauritius has moved up, I think, nine places, whereas Nigeria is at the bottom rank at 142, I think.* Donc, on ne peut pas comparer ces deux pays. Ce n'est pas la même comparaison.

Donc, nous ne sommes pas - au cas où les membres de l'Opposition ne l'auront pas constaté par eux-mêmes - dans un pays qui produit du pétrole, qui a des mines d'or et des diamants.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! *We are a small country with only our human resources* et donc notre capital humain qui est notre source de croissance. Donc, c'est pour cela, M. le président, que je dis qu'on a, à travers ce budget, *another very significant step as hon. Duval has said to empower and empower our people in this country. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I say this - I will come to the democratisation of the economy and the SME's in a minute.*

Mais je dois dire quand j'ai écouté l'honorable Li Kwong Wing et comme je dis, je comprends pourquoi il doit dire certaines choses. Il n'a pas le choix. Il doit essayer d'esquiver des pas de dance, mais, M. le président, quand vous avez trois quart de majorité dans cette Chambre, un gouvernement qui a trois quart de majorité dans cette Chambre peut changer la constitution matin, midi, soir, pendant tous les jours, tous les 365 jours, des cinq années qu'il est au pouvoir. Et vous savez qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire avec ça, pas ce que eux ils ont fait.

(Interruptions)

Today, Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is pathetic that they are groaning about private TV, they are talking about electoral reform that they could not do it. Of course, they blame the MSM because they could not do it.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! This is exactly what I said. But ILLOVO, that, they were able to do; closing of the Economic Crime Office, that, they were able to do.

M. Le président, je ne comprends pas comment ils peuvent ne pas se regarder quand ils parlent, quand on sait que dans ce pays il y a eu R 800 millions de monnaie, de pension qui a disparue à la MCB. Sous quel gouvernement ? R 800 millions d'argent de pension qui a disparu de la MCB. L'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé de crime, est-ce qu'on a oublié qu'il y a eu mort d'homme dans le caveau de la MCB, sous quel gouvernement ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I want some order! I say some order and address the Chair. No cross talking, address the Chair.

Ms Deerpalsing: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what I am doing.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: And I say order now! Yes.

Ms Deerpalsing: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: But you address the Chair.

Ms Deerpalsing: I am addressing you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Il y a eu mort d'homme dans l'espace le plus supposément *secure* dans le caveau de la MCB. Sous quel gouvernement, M. le président ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say no interruption!

Ms Deerpalsing: M. le président, il y avait eu le meurtre de Vanessa Lagesse ; il y avait eu le meurtre de Nadine Dantier ; il y avait eu ce petit garçon...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : No interruption !

Ms Deerpalsing : ...qui a été brulé, mais je ne comprends pas les membres de l'Opposition. L'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé...

(Interruptions)

I did not interrupt your colleague, so have the decency to be a gentleman.

Mr Speaker, Sir, of course, I understand that it hurts to hear all these things. I understand because when you have the super *conseiller* of the ex-Prime Minister himself who tells you that there were some shady deals that happened that something, from one third, became two-thirds because of a simple visit to the then Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. What else do you think, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the population will understand by all these?

La vérité, je sais, leur fait mal mais il se trouve que, M. le président, le ILLOVO deal a bel et bien été fait sous l'ancien gouvernement. Pourquoi je suis en train de dire ça parce que justement je viens avec la démocratisation de l'économie, parce que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé de comme-ci la démocratisation de l'économie *is stalled*. We are not, Mr Speaker, Sir, in those days. We are not in those days, when a gentleman from the big private sector walks into the Prime Minister's Office and a deal is changed from one third to two-thirds. We are not in those days! We are in the days...

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: *Cela fait mal, je sais.*

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Ms Deerpalsing: Oui, M. le président, cela fait mal.

Mr Speaker : Talk to me !

Ms Deerpalsing : Yes, I am talking to you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Je sais que cela leur fait mal.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Ms Deerpalsing: Je sais que cela leur fait mal. Je n'ai pas interrompu l'honorable Li Kwong Wing, mais je sais que cela leur fait mal mais je n'y peux rien. C'est la réalité des choses encore une fois.

M. le président, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé de DBM *in terms of the democratisation of the economy*. Dans la démocratisation de l'économie, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a justement parlé de la DBM. Effectivement, M. le président, si l'honorable Duval aurait dû lire tout ce qui existe, tous les instruments qui existent, on aurait encore été là.

Donc, M. le président, il se trouve que c'est sous ce gouvernement dirigé par l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qu'il y a eu en 2006, au début et ça a continué, le *DBM Booster Loan Scheme* de R 150,000 *without any guarantee at all*. Et il se trouve qu'il y a eu 3,500 PME qui ont pris l'opportunité, dont 60% de ces 3,500 étaient des femmes. Je vais retrouver les chiffres. Il se trouve que le *value added* - des SMEs et les chiffres sont parlant. Et ça c'est sur le *website* du CSO ; les membres de l'Opposition peuvent aller vérifier et je dis ce que le CSO dit au niveau des SMEs –

« The total value added generated by the small units covered was estimated to Rs42 billion than from when I was before Rs23 billion and we are talking about a jump of 82% ».

Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, M. le président? Il y a eu un jump de 82% in the total value added of SMEs, the total value added to the economy. A jump of 82%, I say it again and I repeat and all Members of this House can go and check it on the website of the CSO. There has been an 82% jump in the total value added of SMEs is the economy compared to what it was before. Si ce n'est pas cela le boost au PME c'est quoi ? Quand l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé du président des PME, je dois dire qu'il y avait monsieur Michel Mootoosamy qui était président des PME à l'époque où l'ancien ministre des finances - il était ministre à cette époque et l'honorable Bérenger était Premier ministre. Qu'est-ce que monsieur Michel Mootoosamy avait

dit, qu'est-ce qu'il avait révélé, dans le budget présenté auparavant, que la part qui avait été mise pour les PME est R200 millions. Qu'est-ce qui avait été dépensé? Vingt millions. C'est ce que monsieur Michel Mootoosamy a décrit.

(Interruptions)

Allez voir les archives. Je suis désolée mais encore une fois voilà la réalité des chiffres. Je n'ai pas à aller voir monsieur Michel Mootoosamy ou Amar Deerpalsing ou qui que ce soit, je regarde 82% *jump in the total value added of SMEs to this country's economy*. Je n'ai rien de plus à dire. 82% *jump of the SMEs total value added* – cela veut tout dire. Cela veut dire qu'on a fait un grand pas dans la démocratisation de l'économie de ce pays M. le président. La démocratisation de l'économie c'est un projet de longue haleine mais déjà on a fait des gros pas dans cette direction avec le gouvernement de Dr. Navin Ramgoolam et ça ce sont les chiffres qui parlent d'eux-mêmes, M. le président. Maintenant, M. le président, la démocratisation de l'économie c'est aussi l'architecture institutionnelle parce que j'entends beaucoup parler de: ah on n'a pas avancé etc. Comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, M. le président, quand vous avez la majorité de trois quarts dans cette Chambre, ils auraient pu mettre le Truth and Justice Commission; ils auraient pu mettre le Competition Commission. Ils auraient pu mettre le Equal Opportunities Commission. Ils auraient pu mettre un Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal. Est-ce qu'ils l'ont fait, M. le président? Ces mêmes personnes qui crient sur tous les toits de toute sorte de soi-disant injustice etc depuis quarante ans. On a la majorité de trois quarts dans cette Chambre et on ne vient pas le faire. Qui a fait cela? Sous quel Premier ministre est-ce que la Competition Commission Bill a été votée dans cette Chambre? Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Sous quel Premier ministre la Equal Opportunities Bill a été votée dans cette Chambre? Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Sous quel Premier ministre le Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal a été mis en chantier dans ce pays? Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Sous quel Premier ministre la Truth and Justice Commission a été mise en chantier? Il y a encore beaucoup à faire mais sous quel Premier ministre ça a vu le jour? C'est encore Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Donc, M. le président, on peut parler en long et en large *till the cows come home*. C'est facile de parler dans l'Opposition mais c'est quand vous avez la chance, l'opportunité d'être ici dans cette Chambre dans un gouvernement que vous montrez *the mettle of what you are made of and this is what hon. Xavier Duval and hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam have shown - what we have been able to do, without the majority that they had*. Cela va rester dans l'histoire M. le président. C'est un gouvernement qui

n'avait pas les mêmes moyens qu'eux qui a pu faire tout cela. Pourquoi c'est important M. le président? Pourquoi c'est important pour la démocratisation de l'économie qu'il y ait l'Equal Opportunities Commission, la Competition Commission et laissez moi vous dire M. le président the Competition Commission Bill to set up the Competition Commission était préparée, était ready. Cela a été retiré. Cela n'a pas été votée par un gouvernement avec trois quarts de majorité, vous savez pourquoi M. le président, parce qu'il y a eu le lobby du grand capital. Ça n'avait jamais vu le jour pourtant ça avait été préparée. Il ne fallait que juste la porter ici, la lire, première, deuxième, troisième lecture et l'adopter. Il ne fallait que faire cela avec un gouvernement de majorité de trois quarts. Ils n'ont pas pu faire cela parce que le lobby du grand capital était trop fort. Nous ne sommes plus, Dieu merci, de ces jours *and we will never be in those days again Mr Speaker, Sir*, parce que le peuple de ce pays sait très bien où l'intérêt public se trouve et où l'intérêt des clans familiaux et du gros capital se trouve. Le peuple je pense peut faire bien la différence. M. le président, quand vous regardez ce que ce gouvernement fait pour les SMEs, tout le *plethora of measures* que l'honorable Xavier Duval a emmené encore une fois pour les PME dans ce budget; quand vous regardez à la page 32 paragraphe 288 encore des chiffres qui sont très parlants. L'honorable Xavier Duval nous a dit que dans son précédent budget, on avait mis en place le *SME Financing Guarantee Scheme* et qui a *exceeded expectation* :

'In less than 2 years, close to 2,000 applications have been approved for an amount of Rs2.5 billion.

This is real take up of money par 2000 applications pour deux milliards de roupies. This is real. Ce n'est pas de l'invention cela. 2000 applications pour deux milliards de roupies which were taken up for the SME financing guarantee scheme. Paragraphe 292, quand on est en train de regarder les *loans without guarantee*, le ministre des finances annonce :

292. Instead, Government will guarantee these loans directly to commercial banks up to 70 per cent of any amount of loss incurred.

Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, M. le président ? Tout le monde sait. Je crois que le ministre de tutelle est d'accord avec moi. L'honorable ministre des finances en sait quelque chose aussi. Les

PMEs quand ils vont commencer leur business - disons qu'ils n'ont que leur maison et ils doivent mettre ça en collatéral, qu'est-ce qui se passait M. le président? Ils vont à la banque. La banque value their property and what do they do? They discount it by 68% plus the floating charge. Donc, cette mesure que le ministre des finances a apportée est une mesure révolutionnaire qui encore une fois donne un boost extraordinaire au PME et c'est pour cela que je fais un appel pressant aux membres de l'Opposition peut importe qui c'est. Tenez un discours responsable et tenez surtout un discours d'empowerment au peuple de ce pays. Dites aux gens d'aller prendre les opportunités. Arrêtez de faire des discours fatalistes aux gens qu'il n'y a pas d'espoir comme l'a dit l'honorable Li Kwong Wing. Ne faites pas cela. Je dis, M. le président, qu'il ne faut pas faire cela parce que quand on fait des discours fatalisants on enferme les gens dans des ghettos, c'est-à-dire, on ne veut pas qu'ils sortent. Il y a toutes ces mesures ici, toutes ces opportunités à prendre. Il faut encourager le plus grand nombre de personnes, peu importe qui c'est, de prendre les opportunités qui sont mises à leur disposition dans ce budget révolutionnaire en ce qu'il s'agit des mesures pour les petites et moyennes entreprises.

(Interruptions)

Chacun a sa liberté de pensée. Tout le monde me connaît, que ce soit ici ou dans ma famille, que personne ne peut m'imposer mon point de vue. J'ai mon point de vue, j'ai mon esprit. *I have my free mind and I speak my mind.*

M. le président, dans ce budget, comme je dis, il y a plein de mesures, j'en ai mentionné deux ou trois. *Every single paragraph that you have here, in this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, under the SMEs, under the Demoralisation of the Economy goes even further and further towards democratising the economy, contrary to what they did when they were in power.*

M. le président, je crois que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing a parlé de certaines choses que je devais répondre, mais je ne vais pas élaborer sur plein de choses qu'il a dit, parce que, franchement, il était complètement contradictoire dans tout ce qu'il disait.

M. le président, quand on regarde maintenant, comme l'a dit l'honorable ministre des Finances, *about empowering people, about this human capital in which we are investing*, aujourd'hui, comme l'a dit Monsieur Dev Virahsawmy, c'est ce gouvernement...

(Interruptions)

Oui, ils peuvent crier 'Ayo ', mais M. Dev Virahsawmy, contrairement à ceux qui viennent d'être élus - si je ne me trompe pas - est un des militants fondateurs de *way back then*. M. Dev Virahsawmy, aujourd'hui, vous dit que c'est ce gouvernement avec le *Nine-Year Schooling* - comme l'a annoncé l'honorable Xavier Duval dans ce budget - qui emmène cette révolution. Contrairement, M. le président, comme je vous ai dit, ils avaient la majorité de trois-quarts pendant pas un ou deux ans mais trois, quatre ou cinq ans. 365 jours dans un an, je crois, il n'y avait pas moins. Ils avaient la majorité de trois-quarts. C'est ce gouvernement qui est en train de venir révolutionnaliser ce concept. Je suis très contente qu'on est en train de moderniser et de faire de sorte que les enfants de ce pays n'aient plus à subir la CPE.

Je suis très contente que cela a été annoncé et je souhaite bonne chance à l'implémentation de ce projet parce que je pense que l'île Maurice moderne demande justement que les enfants qui ont des intelligences multiples soient encadrés et reconnus. Je crois qu'il faut sortir des sentiers battus des anciens concepts - je dois dire dinosaure - où on pense qu'il y a des enfants qui sont faibles et des enfants qui sont forts. Il n'y a pas des enfants qui sont faibles et des enfants qui sont forts. Chaque enfant qui est né à un potentiel et c'est un système qui permet à l'épanouissement de ce potentiel. C'est exactement de cela que parle le Premier ministre dans tous ses discours. C'est de donner la chance pour que chacun puisse *achieve their potential*. *This is what the hon. Prime Minister always says, that he wants a country where each and every child has the chance to achieve his or her potential with which he or she is born with*. Et cela va directement dans cette direction. C'est pour cela que je dis que *this budget is another building block towards more chances for people, towards people to get the opportunity to reach their potential*.

M. le président, encore une fois, c'est une preuve que ce gouvernement a à cœur, non seulement *the economic background, the economic architecture of this country, but also the human capital*. En parlant de *human capital*, en parlant du *caring Government*, un gouvernement qui *'Put People first'*, M. le président, j'ai parlé des 17,000 familles qui vont devenir propriétaires. *What does it build on? It builds on* les 19,000 familles. C'est toujours nous-mêmes qui avons fait cela. *The owners of the ex-CHA, 19,000 families became owners of their house, home ownership which is so important for social and economic mobility*. Les 17,000 familles, *it builds on the other 19,000 families, which we have done, without a majority of three quarters in this House. They said it could not be done*. Pour ces 17,000 familles dont je parle, l'honorable

Mme Ribot et l'honorable Nagaligum savent de quoi je parle. Surtout les 57 familles dans le *site and services* à Camp Levieux...

(Interruptions)

Ils étaient allés voir et tout le monde dans l'Opposition dit qu'on ne pouvait pas faire. Comme le Premier ministre d'alors l'a dit, tout le monde a dit : on ne pouvait pas faire cela. Mais voilà que ce gouvernement, ce Premier ministre démontre ce qu'on peut faire sans une majorité de trois-quarts dans ce pays. Et pour qui ? Pas pour Illovo ! Pour les 17,000 familles et les 19,000 familles qui deviennent propriétaires de leur maison. M. le président, on parle d'un *caring Government which looks after the most vulnerable parts of society*. Dites-moi, M. le président, quel pays au monde que vous connaissez où il y a des subsides par milliards - je suis sûr que L'honorable Mme Bappoo va parler là-dessus – sur le gaz, sur la farine et sur le riz ; le transport gratuit pour les écoliers et pour les aînés ; le *Welfare State* ; la santé gratuite, l'éducation gratuite ; la pension du troisième âge.

Je vais vous dire encore une chose, M. le président. J'ai encore à voir, je ne connais pas dans quel pays au monde il y a ce concept de treizième mois. Dites-moi, M. le président, dans quel pays au monde vous connaissez que les gens *earn* treize mois de salaires pour travailler pour 10 mois ? Dans quel pays au monde il existe ce système où les travailleurs gagnent 13 mois de salaires pour *effectively* 10 mois de travail, allons dire 12 mois ? *On top of that*, le transport gratuit pour les écoliers et les aînés, les subsides sur le gaz, le riz et la farine.

Aujourd'hui, l'honorable Xavier Duval a annoncé - *on top of all this*, M. le president - *income support for those who were not in the social register*. Ce que le vice-Premier ministre, Ministre des Finances, l'honorable Xavier Duval, a annoncé pour les *income support*, c'est révolutionnaire encore une fois. Pourquoi on fait cela, M. le président ? M. le président, pour pouvoir donner la chance aux personnes de se mettre debout et de vraiment s'épanouir, parce que, on veut une île Maurice pour tous. C'est pour cela qu'on le fait. *Why are all these mesures being taken? Because it is in one line, one vision of the Prime Minister*, une île Maurice pour tous, pour que tout le monde puisse prendre l'opportunité qu'on leur donne et qu'ils puissent s'épanouir. Parce que quand tout le monde s'épanouit, le pays s'épanouit et le pays peut marcher *proudly* sur le chemin de la modernité pour l'avenir de ce pays.

M. le président, je voudrais juste dire deux mots sur la jeunesse mauricienne. Comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, je remercie chaleureusement le Premier ministre de m'avoir donné l'occasion, au niveau du Parti Travailleiste, de m'occuper des jeunes. Je dois vous dire que j'ai été agréablement surprise par l'enthousiasme et le dynamisme de ces jeunes. Désolée pour l'honorable Li Kwong Wing qui a dit que, lui, il trouve qu'il n'y a *no hope*. Enfin, je comprends pourquoi il dit qu'il n'y a *no hope, because there is no hope for them*. Ces jeunes, que je côtoie, sont remplis d'espoir pour leur pays, remplis de dynamisme, remplis d'enthousiasme pour servir le pays et j'en suis fière. Ils ne sont pas là juste pour le pouvoir mais pour servir leur pays et ce n'est certainement pas des gimmicks comme 'voter à l'âge de 16 ans' qui va leur impressionner. Ces jeunes sont remplis de dynamisme, d'espoir et d'enthousiasme pour travailler pour leur pays et ils vont le faire et continuent à le faire et j'en suis très fière.

M. le président, maintenant je vais dire deux mots sur deux mesures du budget qui concernent directement ma circonscription et celle de l'honorable Duval, mon colistier. Nous avons dans ce budget notre marché de Quatre Bornes et nous en sommes très fiers. Il y a une dotation de R 150 m. qui a été mise pour ce marché qui ne sera pas juste un marché, j'en ai déjà parlé dans le passé, M. le président. Ce sera un centre pour les citoyens pour tous les *citizens services* donc, l'honorable Duval et moi sommes très à cheval sur ce projet et on va le suivre ensemble pour que cela soit réalisé dans le plus bref délai. Nous avons plusieurs autres choses. Nous avons aussi un *multisports complex* qui a été mentionné dans le budget pour les habitants de La Source, Quatre Bornes qui va comprendre une piscine et d'autres facilités sportives pour les habitants de La Source, Quatre Bornes. Nous en sommes très fiers, l'honorable Duval et moi-même. Cela aussi on va le suivre et travailler ensemble pour qu'on puisse le réaliser dans le plus bref délai. Il y a plein d'autres projets qui sont *in the pipeline for Quatre Bornes*. Malheureusement et heureusement on a eu les travaux de la *Wastewater* qui sont en phase de se terminer, *we look forward for them to finish their work and we put our Constituency in the best possible shape after this*.

M. le président, je voudrais, avant de conclure – il y a quelque chose qui me tient à cœur et que je pense est peut être un peu délicat mais, comme tout le monde me connaît - je vais le dire *I am going to face it squarely!* M. le président, il y a un *whispering campaign about poverty in this country. There is a whispering campaign. There are undertones about what people talk*

about whether outside this House or inside this House on the Opposition benches. I just mentioned it earlier. M. le président, quand on est responsable, quand on est dans cette Chambre et qu'on est député ou ministre, nous sommes les 70 personnes dans cette Chambre dotées d'une certaine responsabilité dans notre discours. Il ne faut pas qu'on fasse un *dismal discourse*. Il ne faut pas qu'on ait un narrative qui bloque les gens. Il faut, au contraire, *that we unblock the potential of people*. Mais malheureusement je constate, M. le président, comme je vous ai dit tout à l'heure qu'il y a un *whispering campaign*. Le *whispering campaign* c'est quoi ? Allons le dire ouvertement ici : le *whispering campaign* c'est que les pauvres sont que la communauté Créole dans ce pays. C'est ça le *whispering campaign*!

Quand j'entends dire qu'il n'y a pas assez qui est fait etc., *the underlying undertone is that this Government* est en train de faire de la discrimination contre une communauté. *Let us break this myth* pour commencer parce que c'est un *narrative* très *dismal* parce que cela enferme les gens dans un ghetto. Cela ne libère pas les gens. *Let us break this myth, Mr Speaker, Sir.* L'honorable ministre des Finances et l'honorable ministre de l'Intégration sociale savent de quoi je parle. La pauvreté n'est pas dans une seule communauté dans ce pays. Au contraire il y a plus de pauvres dans d'autres communautés que la communauté Créole. C'est un fait, M. le président. *Because there is a report – this is what I am saying – there is a report. Even when hon. Sithanen was here, he said it publicly in this House. So, let us break this myth and let us not make all these assumptions and allusions because we know what the whispering campaign is. We know what the whispering campaign is and it is this Government, as I said earlier,* c'est sous ce gouvernement, sous ce Premier ministre que le *Truth and Justice Commission* a été mis en place. C'est sous ce gouvernement, c'est ce Premier ministre qui a brisé et ouvert la porte aux gens qui sont discriminés dans le Public Sector à travers le Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal. C'est ce gouvernement ! C'est l'honorable Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam qui a mis cet Appeal Tribunal debout ! C'est ce gouvernement qui a mis *l'Equal Opportunities* debout ! C'est ce gouvernement qui a créé le ministère pour l'intégration sociale.

So, let us stop this whispering campaign which does nothing to liberate people from their misery. Au contraire plus on dit aux gens que vous n'avez pas d'espoir, que vous êtes discriminés *against*, plus les gens intériorisent une fausse conception et pensent qu'ils sont bloqués. On a une responsabilité et c'est irresponsable de tenir ce *whispering campaign*. C'est

irresponsable de dire aux gens que : « vous n'avez pas de chance dans ce pays parce que ce gouvernement est au pouvoir ! » C'est irresponsable parce qu'on n'est pas en train d'aider ces gens. Au contraire on est en train de les enfermer dans un ghetto au lieu de les libérer et de leur dire que « ce gouvernement est en train de mettre tous ces outils à votre disposition, prenez ces outils et allez à l'Equal Opportunities Commission. »

Je dois vous dire, M. le président, même de notre côté je connais des gens personnellement qui ont subi des discriminations dans tel ou tel organisme public qui sont du côté du Parti travailliste mais ce qu'ils me disent, M. le président, c'est « Je ne vais pas aller à l'Equal Opportunities Commission attention que je vais faire le gouvernement perdre des points. » Je leur dis « Non, pourquoi vous pensez que le Premier ministre a mis *this Commission* sur place ? Il faut y aller. Il faut prendre les outils que le Premier ministre a mis dans vos mains. Ce n'est pas une question de faire le gouvernement perdre face. Ce n'est pas cela l'objectif du Premier ministre. Ce n'est pas cela l'objectif de ce gouvernement. C'est justement prendre tous les outils que ce gouvernement est en train de mettre à la disposition des gens pour que chacun ait sa place dans ce pays et puisse s'épanouir. »

Peu importe qui c'est, peu importe de quelle couleur politique on est, il faut utiliser ces outils. C'est en utilisant ces outils qu'on peut moderniser et changer la mentalité des gens dans ce pays. Vous savez, M. le président, j'entends beaucoup les honorable membres de l'Opposition en parler. Vous savez, M. le président, il y aura toujours des *bad apples*. Il y aura toujours des gens qui ont l'esprit tordu et qui auront des préjugés envers X, Y ou Z. Il y aura toujours cela. De la nuit des temps cela existe. Je ne parle pas que de l'Ile Maurice. Je parle même des Etats Unis, de la France. Vous savez la discrimination que certains Hispaniques ou autres subissent dans d'autres pays, en France ou ailleurs. M. le président, dans n'importe quel pays - et Maurice ne fait pas exception - l'humain est rempli de préjugés. Il y a une différence entre les préjugés et la discrimination individuelle et une discrimination et préjugé systémique. *What we are fighting against, what a Government can fight against is systemic discrimination, is systemic prejudice. We cannot fight against individual minds* qui sont tordus. On ne peut pas ! On peut essayer de faire du *awareness*. Mais vous n'allez pas changer un esprit tordu qui est rempli de préjugés. On ne peut pas changer des gens qui ont des esprits tordus et qui sont remplis de préjugés. Ce qu'on veut combattre, ce que ce Premier ministre est en train

de combattre depuis le jour qu'il est entré en politique c'est le *systemic discrimination*. C'est une ligne droite que le Premier ministre a toujours prise.

Aujourd'hui, as we speak en 2013, and as we speak entering in 2014 and in 2015, et quand il sera de retour comme Premier ministre en 2015, c'est la même ligne droite que ce Premier ministre va suivre, c'est-à-dire, empower people, give people the chance, every child of this country should get the chance to realise their potential. Et, c'est pour ça, M. le président, que ce gouvernement, avec le Premier ministre et l'honorable Xavier Duval are to be commended for what they have done through this Budget, by going even further in giving the tools of empowerment to everyone, Mr Speaker, Sir. The appeal that I have made is that for everyone to take up these opportunities.

After eight years, M. le président, ce que ce budget démontre, ce que l'honorable Xavier Duval a démontré à travers ce budget, c'est qu'après huit années, we are still the ones who are bringing innovation. We are still the ones who are innovating, bringing new measures, bringing new things for people to take opportunity, to realise their potential, to empower them. We are the ones who are bringing the innovative measures still after eight years, not like the previous Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, which left in 2005 avec un certificat d'incompétence contre eux-mêmes, où ils avaient dit que le pays était en état d'urgence économique.

M. le président, il y a une petite nuance que je devais faire et que j'ai oubliée, dont je viens de me souvenir. L'honorable Li Kwong Wing a dit qu'en 2000 - *rightly so* - le taux de croissance avait dépassé 10%, c'est-à-dire, le gouvernement, sous le leadership de Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, avait créé une croissance de plus de 10%. Lui-même l'a dit. Et quand ils sont venus, de 2000 à 2005, s'il vous plaît, M. le président, il n'y a pas eu de crise mondiale comme on a eu récemment. On n'a pas eu, comme en 2008, *the collapse, the financial crisis in the world*. On n'a pas eu le *petroleum price crisis*, on n'a pas eu le *food crisis*. De 2000 à 2005, il n'y avait rien, il n'y avait pas de turbulence. Pourtant, ils ont réussi à faire une croissance de 10% devenir 2.3%; sortir de 10% pour arriver à 2.3%. M. le président, au moins ils ont eu l'honnêteté de reconnaître qu'ils avaient mis le pays en état d'urgence économique. Cela va rester pour l'histoire, M. le président. Mais c'est ce que je suis en train de dire, M. le président. Après huit années sous le *Prime Ministership* du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, *it is this Government which is bringing innovation, which is bringing hope and new sectors like the Ocean Economy,*

like all these other petroleum hub and so on, new ideas for the rejuvenation of growth in this country, and for hope in this country.

I will conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, with a quote from Thomas Carlyle which says - and this is so characteristic of this Government with hon. Xavier Duval and hon. Prime Minister -

“Permanence, perseverance and persistence against all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities; it is this, that in all things, distinguishes the strong soul from the weak.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, with this, I have no doubt, after listening to what they have had to say so far, that the strong souls are on this side of the House, and unfortunately, the weak souls are on the other side of the House.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Jhugroo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 13 November 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Now, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

MATTERS RAISED

(8.05 p.m.)

SAINT HILAIRE, QUATRE SŒURS & BOIS DES AMOURETTES – FOOTBALL GROUNDS

Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): Merci, M. le président. Le sujet que je vais aborder concerne le ministre des Infrastructures publiques et aussi le ministre des collectivités locales.

Ça concerne les trois terrains de foot de ma circonscription. Et là, je parle du terrain de foot du village de Saint Hilaire, de Quatre Sœurs et aussi du village de Bois des Amourettes. D'abord, ces deux terrains de foot du village de Saint Hilaire et du village de Quatre Sœurs.

M. le président, ces deux terrains de foot sont en réaménagement en permanence ; pendant plus de trois ans. Il y a des travaux qui ont commencé à l'extérieur, le *fencing*, le sol, et ça fait plus de trois ans que ça dure. Donc, trois ans que les habitants de ces deux endroits sont privés d'un terrain de foot.

Entretemps, ce sont les contracteurs qui empochent des millions, alors que les joueurs restent sans terrain de foot. Maintenant je comprends pourquoi le niveau de foot à Maurice baisse. Donc, je demande si le ministre concerné peut aller faire une visite, faire un constat de visu, pour voir l'état de ces deux terrains, et pourquoi ça prend autant de temps pour réaménager ces deux terrains de foot. Ça a trop duré, et je pense qu'il est grand temps que les habitants sachent quand les travaux seront terminés, et quand ils pourront se servir de ces deux terrains de foot. Donc, j'ai parlé du réaménagement des terrains de foot du village de Saint Hilaire et du village de Quatre Sœurs, qui concerne le ministre des Infrastructures publiques.

Il y a aussi le terrain de Bois des Amourettes. On sait déjà que c'est un village avec une école ZEP, ce qui veut dire que c'est un village pauvre. C'est un terrain de foot qui n'est jamais tondu complètement. Ni le *Village Council*, ni le *District Council* ne peut tondre le gazon du terrain complètement, d'un seul coup. Ils le font une moitié un mois, et l'autre moitié le mois suivant. Donc, jamais le terrain n'est praticable, et ça dure depuis des années. Je demande au ministre des Collectivités locales de s'assurer que des fonds soient mis à la disposition du *Village Council* et du *District Council*, pour pouvoir au moins avoir les ressources nécessaires pour permettre de tondre le gazon de ce terrain, afin de permettre aux joueurs de la localité de faire

usage de ce terrain. Donc, je compte sur l'indulgence de ces deux ministres afin que les travaux soient faits comme il faut.

Merci beaucoup, M. le président.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can assure the whole House that in most of the football playgrounds in Constituency No. 11, either through the Local Government or through my Ministry, a lot of work has been done, is being done, and regular monitoring has also been done. I can give you many examples. For examples, at Grand Sable recently, we had paid a site visit. We had also been at Quatre Soeurs. There are small problems which we are going to look into. But to come and say that everything is not attended to, I don't believe that. This is not the truth.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member can rest assured that I am going to take care of all his *doléances*.

CUREPIPE - FRÉDERICK BONNEFIN & GABRIEL FROPPIER STREETS – TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to invite the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to take a look at the crossroad of two roads in Curepipe, which is Fréderick Bonnefin and Gabriel Froppier. It is quite a dangerous crossroad. It gives access on one side going to a major supermarket, and on the other side leading to Cité Atlee. A lot of accidents, quite dangerous ones occur. Not only should traffic lights be required as I have just heard the hon. Vice-Prime Minister say that he will be getting traffic lights in January and I am tempted to ask for a share of those lights - and maybe even to have some form of pedestrian crossing. There are lots of kids around and very busy cross road. Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the previous request which was made regarding Dubreuil road is being looked into and this request also will be looked into because we are laying much emphasis on prevention of accidents on our roads.

CHINA TOWN, PORT LOUIS – LAW AND ORDER

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tonight I will raise an issue which will be addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Home Affairs. It concerns the situation of law and order at China Town in Port Louis which is found in my Constituency.

M. le président, une rencontre a eu lieu mercredi dernier entre les cadres de la Police et les habitants de la communauté chinoise de China Town. Le but était pour les habitants d'exposer leurs craintes et sentiments d'insécurité après le meurtre barbare d'un cuisinier chinois commis la semaine dernière. Le ton était plus que colérique de la part de ces gens qui habitent China Town parce que juste avant la mort de ce cuisinier chinois, deux de ses confrères avaient rapporté deux cas de vols avec violence à la Police. D'ailleurs, une de ces deux personnes est toujours hospitalisée. Le motif de l'attaque des étrangers chinois est surtout le vol et, en l'absence de patrouille policière, ceux qui ont pris la parole à cette réunion, soutiennent que l'endroit a perdu ces attraits lors des festivals chinois. Donc, en conséquence, ils se sentent comme des citoyens mauriciens de deuxième grade.

M. le président, ils reprochent l'absence de patrouille policière dans cette partie de la ville, ce qui ravive un sentiment d'insécurité au China Town et aussi, plus récemment, depuis l'avènement des maisons de jeux, il y a une prolifération de ces maisons de jeux dans les quartiers de China Town. Et pour les commerçants de China Town, la présence des *betting houses*, depuis ces dernières années, n'a fait que rehausser le sentiment d'insécurité de cette partie de la capitale. Aussi, ils demandent à ce qu'il y ait une patrouille policière là-bas et surtout la fiabilité des caméras de surveillance qu'il faut revoir complètement. Parce que, M. le président, quand ce crime odieux a été commis, les caméras de surveillance ne fonctionnaient pas.

M. le président, je me fais le porte-parole de ces personnes qui sont de ma circonscription pour demander au Premier ministre de prendre des actions urgentes pour pouvoir redresser la situation.

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yes, we are all really shocked by this brutal murder and we associate ourselves with all the sympathies that have been expressed. The hon. Prime Minister is well aware of the situation and is following the matter closely. Measures are being taken and will be further strengthened. The hon. Member can rest assured that I will communicate the matter to the hon. Prime Minister.

CAMP LEVIEUX - BUS STATION

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate a request that I already made in the past. It is addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very often, at NHDC, Camp Levieux, as there is no bus station, there are six to seven buses lining up waiting for the time to depart on a new trip. Those buses go up the pavements and children have to walk aside to allow the buses to park. You will agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this can turn out to be very dangerous and we should not wait for an accident to happen before we act.

I will kindly ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to explore the possibility of setting up a bus station at Camp Levieux. Moreover, the drivers and conductors of the buses in waiting have no toilets around and have no choice than to relieve themselves in the bushes around. I will, therefore, ask the hon. Minister to see to it that the bus station is also provided with proper toilets.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, this question was raised earlier also. I can assure the hon. Member that we are going to make provision in the Budget – I won't say a big station - for a mini station to be constructed there.

BEL OMBRE & ST FÉLIX SUGAR ESTATES - EX-WORKERS - VRS 2

Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue in regard to the ex-workers of Bel Ombre and St Félix

Sugar Estates addressed to the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and Attorney-General. It is a pity that he is not there though he has been made aware that I will raise this issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are in presence of 472 families, 236 ex-workers of St Félix and 236 ex-workers of Bel Ombre who are still waiting for their VRS 2 since 2006/2007. This is taking too long and it is not fair. Why? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these workers have devoted their life to the economic success of these sugar estates and our country, and they should get what they deserve. It is also important to keep in mind that these workers have their rights and when the St Félix and Bel Ombre Sugar Estates closed down, they should have been compensated in accordance to the Blueprint within a fair delay. We are now in 2013, some of these workers have passed away and others are under high level of stress as time passes by.

The hon. Minister, if he was here, would understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that these workers are approaching old age and they fear that they may not receive their due before they die, which is, of course, very sad. I would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister to look into this issue on humanitarian grounds. These workers deserve their VRS 2 and it is their rights to be compensated accordingly. It is not fair that they have to keep waiting when the sugar estate has decided to provide them with an option to quit working. Imagine the amount of money they would have made if they would still be working.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is high time for the hon. Minister to put an end to the misery of these workers. From my information, all documents in regard to the ex-workers of Bel Ombre Sugar Estate have been sent to the Prime Minister's Office. Can the hon. Minister check this information and resolve the problem immediately?

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for having raised the issues concerning VRS at St Félix and also at Bel Ombre, I understand.

As far as St Félix is concerned, there are two categories of workers; one is employees, i.e. labourers and it concerns some 144 beneficiaries. They are entitled to land compensation and a plot was identified in that regard, I think. Originally, sometime back in 2008 and, later on, it was

found that the land was not suitable because it was prone to flood and the beneficiaries were not happy about it. They declined that particular site. So, together with the estate they found another site which they agreed upon. Procedures, I understand, are ongoing and the estate has applied for a Letter of Intent from *Morcellement* Board. This is the case for the 144 employees' beneficiaries who were labourers at St Félix.

There is a second case at St Felix which concerns the Blueprint. I do not know the exact number of workers under this scheme; they had also taken VRS. Apparently, in this case, all the works on site has been completed and now there is the offsite work which needs to be done. There is a water tapping problem. There is a connection of water pipe which has to pass through land belonging to private owners and they have to give way leave. Apparently, one of the planters has refused to give way leave. With the pressure put by MCIA and the negotiations made by MCIA, he has agreed to give way leave on his land, but they are waiting for his signature. Apparently, the owner is abroad. So, this has been sorted out, and MCIA is also impressing upon the estate to apply for *Morcellement* permit from *Morcellement* Board.

As far as Bel Ombre is concerned, my information is that all the infrastructural works, as advised by the *Morcellement* Board as per conditions which were put in the Letter of Intent (LOI), have been completed to the satisfaction of the estate, MCIA and also the employees. It is the *Morcellement* permit, the final permit, which will allow the parcelling and distribution of those lands to the beneficiaries. The matter is pending at the stage of *Morcellement* Board. I have taken cognizance of the facts as they are. The matter is pending at the level of the *Morcellement* Board. They cannot proceed because apparently the land which was identified and agreed upon where work has already been completed - infrastructural and offsite, now when it came to the level of issuing a *Morcellement* permit - it was found out that the land does not belong to Bel Ombre, but it belongs to a subsidiary company of Bel Ombre. And to do the *lotissement* under the law, they have to transfer the land in the first place from the subsidiary company to Bel Ombre so that they can proceed with the project. At the same time, I have been told that the shareholders now in the subsidiary company...

(Interruptions)

No, they are not fighting! They are non-Mauritian citizens. So, they cannot transfer because they need permission and authorisation from the Prime Minister's Office. So, it is a bit complicated. We have impressed upon the owners, Bel Ombre and also the subsidiary company to do the needful. It is much more complicated than what we can see from outside, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, I have impressed upon the MCIA to look into the matter and see to it that this is done in a fast track manner.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

CONSTITUENCY NO. 12 – ROADS - CONSTRUCTION

Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point that I am going to raise tonight concerns the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, and also, the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

Les problèmes que je vais soulever - mon très bon ami, l'honorable Thierry Henry est au courant - concernent la circonscription numéro 12, surtout Mahebourg. Chaque année, M. le président, on dépense des centaines de millions de roupies pour la construction et l'entretien des routes.

Je me pose la question, M. le président : est-ce que les habitants de Mahebourg ne contribuent pas dans la caisse de l'État? Et si oui, pour quelle raison les routes des différentes périphéries ne sont pas asphaltées depuis plusieurs années, les trottoirs qui sont endommagés et qui représentent un vrai danger pour les piétons? Si en cas d'urgence, M. le président, une femme enceinte passe par ces routes, ce n'est pas nécessaire pour elle d'aller accoucher à l'hôpital. C'est sûr qu'elle peut avoir son bébé en route. Cela démontre l'état de ces routes qu'on a à Mahebourg. Je vais mentionner quelques unes; Rue Des Flamands, Rue Des Hollandais, Rue Marianne, Rue l'Hôpital, Rue de Labourdonnais, Rue de La Chaux, Rue des Créoles et Rue Maurice.

Les trottoirs de la rue de l'Hôpital sont si endommagés que cela représente un danger pour les piétons. Il y a un autre danger pour les piétons à l'angle des rues Labourdonnais et Flamands à Mahebourg en face de la place des taxis où il y a deux grilles en métal qui bougent

comme *laké bef* à chaque fois qu'un piéton pose ses pieds dessus. Donc, je vais faire un appel au ministre concerné pour qu'une attention spéciale soit donnée à ma circonscription, surtout pour le village de Mahebourg.

Merci, M. le président.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, what the hon. Member is stating appears that that region is completely in a dilapidated situation, but we already have a PPS who looks after all the non-classified roads as well as the classified roads. I have, myself, been on that site many times. Hon. Dr. Vasant Bunwaree also repeatedly makes regular visits and, time and again, we have been tarring the roads and footpaths have been constructed. This year, we have spent more than Rs100 m. on drain works. So, it is untrue to come and say that they need special attention. We are going to give attention to all different corners of the country and, as and when required, those roads will be tarred. Even my hon. good friend, the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands shares the same opinion as me.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle! Kindly be as brief as possible because we are running short of time.

JOHN KENNEDY AVENUE, VACOAS - RUMBLES

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Exactly, I am going to be brief, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My request ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mrs Labelle: I would like to submit a request to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the request is from the inhabitants of John Kennedy Avenue, Vacoas. It concerns the rumbles that have been installed there. True it is, there had been a request to install a slowing device, but the rumbles are causing a lot of inconveniences.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, very often, drivers do not slow down on rumbles because when you slow down, you have more shocks. So, they just speed up on rumbles causing a lot of inconveniences and vibrations, which I am being told are causing damages to the structure of houses. So, people come to me and say that there are damages to their houses.

My request is: if we can replace the rumbles by humps because with humps people will have to slow down. I do not know, I am not an engineer, I do not know what has to be done, but these rumbles are causing a lot of inconveniences. I am making a request to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to look into the matter.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, that is the reason why we try to avoid putting rumbles and the old system is already now outdated. So, we are going to see for other traffic calming measures and I will request the officers from the TMRSU to have a look at it before removing those rumbles. And, if need be, speed cameras will have to be installed in that region. I know that there is a lot of traffic in that region.

SODNAC - WELLNESS PARK

Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, je souhaite aborder un problème ayant trait à ma circonscription, concernant le *Wellness Park* de Sodnac dont la responsabilité tombe normalement sous l'*Employees Welfare Fund* qui est sous la responsabilité du ministère des finances, mais l'aspect entretien tombe sous la Municipalité de Vacoas/Phoenix. Donc, peut-être que l'honorable ministre du *Local Government* peut aussi aider là-dessus.

M. le président, depuis l'ouverture du *jogging track*, il est un fait que bon nombre d'habitants de Quatre Bornes et de Vacoas fréquentent ce parc. Les habitants qui terminent une journée de travail n'ont malheureusement pas le temps d'utiliser le *leisure park* en raison de l'absence des points de lumière. Et là, je suis sûr que l'honorable ministre des sports sera d'accord avec moi. Donc, ma proposition c'est de pourvoir des points de lumière sur tout le trajet du *jogging track*. La question est toute aussi importante tôt le matin car bon nombre de

personnes, à quatre ou cinq heures du matin sont dans l'obscurité totale du fait de l'absence des points de lumière. Ma requête va au ministre pour que le nécessaire soit fait pour pourvoir des points de lumière.

Il existe différentes options et je pense qu'une des options est l'installation de points de lumière à base d'énergie solaire et aussi d'étendre les heures de fermeture et d'ouverture. L'heure de fermeture est à 19 heures 30 qui est largement insuffisante vue l'évolution des mœurs aujourd'hui. Les gens terminent le travail à six heures ou sept heures de l'après midi et pour pouvoir utiliser le centre peut être que l'heure d'ouverture aurait du être étendue jusqu'à au moins 21 heures.

Donc, voila ma requête va dans ce sens là de pourvoir des points de lumière et aussi d'étendre les heures d'ouverture et de fermeture.

Merci.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): M. le président, je suis parfaitement au courant de cet aspect que l'honorable membre nous a informé maintenant. Je me souviens que l'inauguration avait été faite en grande pompe. Il y avait plusieurs *stakeholders* qui voulaient être le parrain mais malheureusement après c'est resté à l'abandon. Dedans il y a les municipalités de Quatre Bornes et Vacoas/Phoenix, et le Special Mobile force mais je vais quand même faire le suivi.

The Deputy Speaker: I remind the hon. Members that we have only five minutes left.
Hon. Lesjongard!

GRAND BAIE - VOILIER A TROIS MATS - EYE SORE

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):
Merci M. le président de me donner la parole mais permettez-moi de vous dire s'il y a à exercer un contrôle sur le temps alloué aux intervenants il faut le faire dès le départ, pas vers la fin.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry, I can't go beyond thirty minutes for sure that is why I am reminding you about the shortage of time that we have. If we were short of time, I'll be reminding you right from the start. Please go ahead !

Mr Lesjongard: Je vous comprends très bien M. le président. M. le président, je me fais le porte-parole des habitants de Grand Baie surtout ceux qui sont tout autour du lagon de Grand Baie et aussi les gens qui fréquentent cette partie de Grand Baie. Il y a un mois on a fait couler un voilier à trois mâts dans le lagon et là, je ne sais pas si c'est le Premier ministre, le ministre du tourisme ou le ministre responsable de la pêche qui est responsable pour qu'on regarde les choses comme il le faut. C'est un *eye sore* et c'est un danger dans le lagon. Depuis un mois c'est comme cela. Le comble, M. le président, c'est juste en face du National Coast Guard et à quelques mètres de la station de police de Grand Baie. Alors M. le président, il y a des pêcheurs qui fréquentent ce lagon. Il y a des gens qui vont se baigner dans ce lagon. Il y a des touristes dans les alentours alors je vais demander à qui de droit, le ministre responsable, de faire le nécessaire afin d'éliminer cet *eye sore* et aussi de faire le nécessaire afin de prévenir tout danger qui peut surgir dans le lagon.

M. le président, merci.

The Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues (Mr J. Von-Mally): Je remercie l'honorable membre. Je prends bonne note de ce qu'il vient de dire et on va faire en sorte d'éliminer cet *eye sore* le plus vite possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Nagalingum!

ROCHES BRUNES – LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): I would like to raise an issue which would be addressed to the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands.

Sir, MPs of Constituency Number 19 have received numerous representations from the residents of Allée Mangues, Mont Roches, Morcellement Roches Brunes and other annexed areas who are being deprived of infrastructure for leisure activities like indoor games and meeting place for social gatherings and other related activities. The Council has identified an unoccupied plot of land located at corner Independence and Chady streets Roches Brunes. There is a location plan that I will submit to the Minister. It would be, therefore, appropriated if the hon. Minister would kindly consider vesting this plot of land to the Municipality of Beau Bassin Rose Hill.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already instructed my officers to look at the status of this land since the hon. Member sent me a request this morning. We will look into it and take appropriate action. If we can have it vested with the Municipality we shall do.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier!

CITE JONCTION, PAILLES - AMPHITHEATRE

Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My plea today is addressed to the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure in his capacity as responsible Minister for the NDU.

It is in favour of the inhabitants of Cite Jonction, Pailles. In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a small plot of land at Cite Jonction where the NDU constructed years back a kiosk and this land has never been vested to the appropriate authority since then. These days, Pailles was under the jurisdiction of the Black River District Council. This kiosk now has been torn down and it is an eye sore. The inhabitants decided to seek funds from a private company, in fact, the ENL which accepted to erect there an amphitheatre *pour les jeunes de la région*. Unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the project started with the approval, in fact, of the Municipality of Port Louis, the NDU issued a letter to ask the ENL to stop works because, according to our information, it is one inhabitant there who was trying to use this plot of land for his own benefit to erect a parking so he has pressurised on the NDU to stop this work.

My appeal today to the hon. Minister is to see to it that a proper authorisation is given and any necessary clearance given to the Municipality also so that the project can continue and furthermore vested to the Municipality of Port Louis so that they can have a proper maintenance after the work of the project Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I know that hon. Mrs Perraud is already aware and is willing to help, but I think the Minister is the right authority to give us a helping hand in this project.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the PPS is aware of the situation, I am going to look into the issue and see to it that things are cleared.

At 8.38 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 13 November 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

SOMALIAN PIRATES - IMPRISONMENT

(No. B/837) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the prison where the Somalian pirates are presently imprisoned, he will state the measures, if any, taken to reinforce the internal security thereof.

(Reply not available)

POLICE STATIONS - VEHICLES

(No. B/838) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if -

- (a) an increase in the number of vehicles attached to the Police Stations thereat is being envisaged and if not, why not ,and
- (b) he has been informed that unhygienic conditions prevail at the La Ferme Police Station and, if so, indicate if any assessment of the health and safety conditions thereof has been carried out and, if not, why not.

(Reply not available)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NEW TERMINAL - COMMERCIAL SPACES

(No. B/839) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the new terminal at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., information as to the procedure followed for the allocation of shopping and catering commercial spaces thereat and table a list of the operators.

(Reply not available)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – CONTROL TOWER

(No. B/840) Mr N. Bodha (Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the new terminal at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Civil Aviation Department, information as to if a new control tower is required with the coming into operation thereof and, if so, where matters stand

(Reply not available)

Mr J. M. H. - VISIT TO MAURITIUS

(No. B/842) 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 one Mr J. M. H., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if he was in Mauritius, in April 2013, allegedly accompanied by his *tueurs à gage*, and if so, indicate if international cooperation was sought and obtained in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

(Reply not available)

POLICE SERGEANTS – PROMOTION

(No. B/843) 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 Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Sergeants recently promoted to the rank of Sub-Inspector, indicating the –

- (a) number of Police Officers who were eligible for promotion to the rank of Sub-Inspector,
- (b) criteria used for the promotion exercise.

(Reply not available)

MAURITIUS OCEANOGRAPHY INSTITUTE – DIRECTOR

(No. B/844) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Oceanography Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the date on which the former Director thereof vacated office, and
- (b) if a new Director thereof has been appointed and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Reply not available)

JUDICIARY – MEMBERS – PRIVATE WORK

(No. B/845) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis) West asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Judiciary, he will state if consideration will be given to proposals for amendments to the existing legislation to be introduced to ensure that the members thereof be not eligible to undertake private work.

(Reply not available)

CIVIL SERVICE - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/867) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre D’or) asked the Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms whether, in regard to the civil service, he will state the number of officers recruited, since 2005 to date on a yearly basis

(a) by the Public Service Commission, and

(b) under the Service to Mauritius Programme.

Reply: The information is being compiled.

ANSE LA RAIE VILLAGE – HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

(No. B/868) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre D’or) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Anse La Raie Village, he will state if his Ministry has received any application for hotel development thereat and, if so, indicate when and the outcome thereof.

Reply: My Ministry regularly receives applications for lease of land for tourism related projects including hotel development. These applications are examined on the basis of established criteria, norms and standards. Particular attention is given to the scope of the proposal, its economic viability, the amount of investment, including Foreign Direct Investment, social contribution, and shareholding structure of the applicant body, job creation etc.

I wish to inform the House that in the region of Anse la Raie Village, several applications have been received for hotel development. So far, my Ministry has allocated one Industrial Site Lease for hotel development to Tirupa Tourism Enterprises Ltd. In February 2008, Tirupa Tourism Enterprises Ltd applied for the lease of an approximate extent of 11 Arpents at Anse La Raie for the setting up of a Four Star Luxury Hotel. After approval, a letter of reservation was issued in April 2009 to the promoter. The period of reservation has been extended up to 31 January 2014 as the application for the EIA licence is being processed.

ANJALAY COOPEN STADIUM - PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT - INSTALLATION

(No. B/869) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Anjalay Coopen Stadium, he will state if the project for the installation of protective equipment on the turf thereof to enable the organisation of major concerts thereat has been implemented and if so, when and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

SAVANNE AND BLACK RIVER – HOUSING - ASBESTOS

(No. B/870) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the houses containing asbestos, he will state the number thereof located in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, indicating the measures taken, if any, for the removal thereof.

(Withdrawn)

BAGATELLE DAM PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/871) 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 Bagatelle Dam Project, he will state –

- (a) the name of the consultant therefor;
- (b) the cost of consultancy services;
- (c) the names of the
 - (i) members of the evaluation committee, and
 - (ii) negotiating team, indicating their respective field of expertise and experience
- (d) the total cost thereof;
- (e) if the advice of the State Law Office was sought and obtained prior to the award of the contract, and

(f) if works onsite were stopped and if so, indicate

(i) when;

(ii) the reasons therefor, and

(iii) the amount of money, if any, requested by the contractor as penalties for stoppage of works.

(Withdrawn)

PAILLES TREATMENT PLANT - CONTRACT

(No. B/872) 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 and Operate the upgraded Pailles Treatment Plant, he will -

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

(i) Central Procurement Board, information as to if the latter recommended the cancellation of the tender floated in relation thereto and if so, indicate the reasons therefor, and

(ii) Central Water Authority, information as to if the latter awarded the contract therefor to Joint Venture Sotravic Ltee and Berlinwasser International through the emergency procurement procedure and if so, indicate the reasons therefor, and

(b) state if the advice of the State Law Office was sought and obtained prior to the award of the contract.

(Withdrawn)

DIABETES - TREATMENT

(No. B/873) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Diabetes Type 1 and Type 2, he will state, in each case, the -

(a) number of Mauritian adults and children

(i) presently living therewith, and

(ii) expected to live therewith by the year 2020, and

(b) treatment cost per patient.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD PROJECT - CONSULTATIONS

(No. B/874) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the new Mauritius National Identity Card Project, he will state if he will consider the freezing thereof, pending the holding of consultations with all the stakeholders concerned therewith and the reaching of a consensus in relation thereto.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the implementation of the MNIS project is well on track and we shall continue to provide the public with a rapid service and with the relevant information to be able to complete the conversion exercise within the project scheduled time limit that is 15 September 2014. Government has no intention to freeze such an important and innovative project which forms part of our strategy to transform and modernise the country.

JUDICIARY – MEMBERS – PRIVATE WORK

(No. B/845) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis) West asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Judiciary, he will state if consideration will be given to proposals for amendments to the existing legislation to be introduced to ensure that the members thereof be not eligible to undertake private work.

(Reply not available)

STREET VENDORS - MEASURES

(No. B/876) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the street vendors, he will state if any solution has been found in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the time frame set therefor and, if not, why not.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the problem of hawkers in all local authorities is manageable except in the City of Port Louis where no permanent solution has been found so far.

With regard to the City of Port Louis, on 16 August 2012, an agreement was reached between the Plaintiff and the Defendants and delivered before the Mediation Judge.

In terms of the agreement, the Defendants undertook, *inter alia*, to endeavour to prohibit the hawkers from operating their trades within a list of commercial areas of Port Louis.

The implementation of the Agreement by the Defendants, i.e. the City Council of Port Louis, would imply that the hawkers in those streets would lose their jobs and will not be able to meet the needs of their family.

The matter was discussed with my colleagues at Government level, and, on 31 August 2012, Government set up a Ministerial Committee to examine how and where those hawkers could be relocated.

The Ministerial Committee accordingly examined alternative sites, and decided that some preliminary works should be carried out in the sites to accommodate the hawkers.

In the course of the meetings of the Ministerial Committee, the City Council of Port Louis produced a list of 1050 hawkers who were affected by the Court judgment. The Committee agreed that these hawkers should be accommodated into the alternative sites to be identified.

The intention and reasoning of the Ministerial Committee was to enable the Municipal City Council of Port Louis to comply with the Court judgment in a humane manner and enabling those hawkers to continue to earn a living.

The discussions, decision and deliberations of the Ministerial Committee were known to the City Council Port-Louis as the then Lord Mayor and officers of the Council were members of the Committee and were party to the decisions reached.

The Ministerial Committee agreed that two sites would be reserved to accommodate the hawkers, one at Decaen, ex-CWA Building and the other at Immigration square. The two sites were cleared of encumbrances and ground markings were made by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure so that the stalls could be allocated to the 1050 hawkers.

On 14 December 2012, Government decided that arrangements should be made for the allocations of these stalls to the hawkers who had replied to the expression of interest launched by the City Council of Port-Louis on 25 October 2012. In effect there was a decision of the Council on 16 and 19 November to allocate 425 stalls in the two sites.

In letters dated 23 January and 20 February 2013 my Ministry confirmed to the City Council of Port-Louis that the two sites have been vested in my Ministry by the Minister of Public Infrastructure for use by the City Council of Port-Louis to relocate temporarily the hawkers of the 14 streets.

However, instead of allocating the sites to the 1050 hawkers, the City Council of Port-Louis, at its meeting of 27 December 2012, decided to cancel the decision taken by the former Council and invited a new expression of interest in terms of section 57 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2011. As a result of this exercise about 1700 persons registered their interest at the City Council of Port-Louis to obtain a stall in one of the two sites. In view of the fact that the number of persons interested in the stalls exceeded the number of available stalls, the City Council of Port-Louis proceeded with a drawing of lots. This caused a lot of dissatisfaction among those hawkers.

The Ministerial Committee met again on 06 October 2013 and, after examining the matter, was of the view that the entire exercise carried out by the City Council of Port-Louis was flawed inasmuch as it has not addressed specifically the relocation of those very hawkers in the 14 streets in Port-Louis and mentioned in the judgment. Further, the City Council of Port-Louis has failed to implement the decision of Government taken on 14 December 2012. The Ministerial Committee also viewed that the City Council of Port-Louis was wrong in opening the

invitation to the public. The Committee finally took the view that more than 9 months have lapsed and the Council was still unable to relocate the hawkers away from the 14 Streets of Port-Louis.

I had given good opportunity to the City Council of Port-Louis to take a decision in the best interest of the hawkers and had hoped that common sense and humanity would prevail. I had personally met the Lord Mayor and had shown him the way forward to accommodate the hawkers in the best harmony of the city.

I met the Lord Mayor and discussed with him as Minister having responsibility for local government matters under the Constitution. I have asked him not to pursue the allocation exercise any further and to wait for further discussions between our two organisations.

GINI COEFFICIENT – FIGURES

(No. B/875) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Gini coefficient, he will state the figures thereof over the past three years, indicating if there has been any deterioration of the poverty gap.

(Reply not available)

LAW PRACTITIONERS VOCATIONAL COURSES

(No. B/877) Mr P. Roopun (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the Law Practitioners Vocational Courses for 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council of Legal Education, information as to –

- (a) the number of students enrolled therefor;
- (b) the subjects taught, indicating in each case, the number of hours of the course ,and
- (c) if the Council is in presence of any complaint in connection therewith.

(Reply not available)

MITD - MRS Y. M. - RECRUITMENT

(No. B/878) Mr P. Roopun (Third Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to Mrs Y. M., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Institute of Technology and Development, information as to if the Committee, set up to inquire into the circumstances which led to her recruitment on the basis of a faked certificate while disregarding her previous conviction, has completed the inquiry carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the findings thereof.

Reply: In my reply to the Private Notice Question on 17 November 2012 regarding, *inter-alia*, the case of Mrs Y.M., I informed the House that the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) had been requested to carry out an enquiry on the circumstances which led to her recruitment as Instructor (IT) with fake certificates and to situate responsibilities.

In fact, a letter dated 09 November 2012 had already been issued to the MITD for the conduct of an enquiry.

During the course of my reply to the PNQ, I had indicated that the enquiry was placed under the general supervision of the Special Committee which has been set up by the MITD Board to oversee the running of the Institute.

In the context of the enquiry being initiated by the Special Committee, the MITD had arranged for the Internal Audit Section of the Institute to carry out a procedural audit so as to enable the Special Committee to determine the circumstances that led to her recruitment.

The Special Committee has taken note of the Report of the Internal Auditor but as stated in my reply to PQ B/632 of 30 October 2012, both the Police and ICAC had initiated an enquiry into the matter and as such the Committee is awaiting the outcome of the Police enquiry as well as the ICAC investigation.

Nonetheless, it must be highlighted that Mrs Y. M. is no longer an employee of the MITD as she has resigned from her post on 11 June 2012.

I wish to reassure the House that my Ministry is following up the issue very closely and as soon as the full investigation is completed, appropriate action will be envisaged.

EIILM UNIVERSITY - OPERATION

(No. B/879) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the EIILM University, he will state if his Ministry has ascertained -

- (a) the identity of the owners and managers thereof;
- (b) if it is operating with the green light of the University Grants Commission of India, and
- (c) if it is complying with the conditions set down by the Tertiary Education Commission with a view to safeguarding the interests of the students enrolled thereat.

(Withdrawn)

STATISTICS MAURITIUS – MINIMUM WAGE

(No. B/880) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, he is aware of the latest figures of Statistics Mauritius pertaining to income disparities and social inequality generally and, if so, state if he has recommended to Government the urgent revision of the prescribed minimum wage in the relevant sectors of employment and/or measures of direct income support.

(Reply not available)

DOCTORS' REGISTRATION EXAMINATION - BOARD OF EXAMINERS

(No. B/881) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Doctors' Registration

Examination carried out by the Medical Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to -

- (a) the composition of the Board of Examiners therefor, indicating the
 - (i) criteria used for the selection of the examiners and
 - (ii) examination syllabus circulated therefor.
- (b) if same ought not to have been held prior to the internship training, and
- (c) if the candidates who graduated from the University of Mauritius ought not to have been exempted therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

MARE CHICOSE LANDFILL - FIRE OUTBREAK

(No. B/882) 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 fire outbreak at the Mare Chicose Landfill, on or about 21 October 2013, he will state –

- (a) if the causes thereof have been established;
- (b) the time taken to contain the fire, and
- (c) if a rescue plan was put in place to advise the inhabitants of the surrounding villages on the elementary precautions that had to be taken in the circumstances.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that on the very day that the fire broke out at Mare Chicose landfill site, I personally effected a site visit to take stock of the magnitude of the incident and to give appropriate instructions. During the days following the fire outbreak, I effected three additional visits to ensure that appropriate actions were being taken and that the situation was under control.

Coming to the possible causes of the fire, I wish to inform the House that these are not yet known as a Police enquiry is ongoing. However, I am informed that the landfill fires are not unusual and most of the times are of an accidental nature.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am told that landfill fires can be of two types: surface and sub-surface. They normally take considerable time to be subdued. In the case of the Mare Chicose Landfill fire, I am informed that, upon a fire alarm being received from the landfill operator, a fire and rescue team from the Mahebourg Fire Station arrived on site within 15 minutes. In view of the magnitude of the fire, assistance was thereafter sought from other five stations, namely Curepipe, St. Aubin, Quatre Bornes, Coromandel and Port Louis.

It took around twelve days for the fire to be completely extinguished on 01 November 2013. The situation is being closely monitored to ensure that any sub-surface fire, if present, is dealt with promptly.

As regards the last part of the question, I am advised that -

- (a) at the level of Multi-stakeholder Monitoring Committee, headed by my Ministry, an Evacuation Plan has also been worked out in the event that the gas/fumes emanation exceeded the threshold levels within the surrounding localities;
- (b) since the fire outbreak on 21 October 2013, officers of the *Police de l'Environnement* have effected regular monitoring exercises in order to sensitise the inhabitants of Mare Chicose as well as of the nearby villages, including Cluny, Nouvelle France and Union Park, to be on alert in case the magnitude of the fire would require evacuation;
- (c) spot checks using Portable Gas Analyser (PGA) were carried out by the National Environmental Laboratory in order to assess ambient air quality at the Mare Chicose site and in the surrounding residential zones namely, Mare Chicose, Rose Belle, Union Park and Cluny. Ambient air quality was also measured at Union Park and Nouvelle France Government Schools, at Floreal and Forest Side State Secondary Schools and at J. Nehru Hospital;
- (d) it was observed that all sites, including residential sites, measured had ambient air parameters within the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) standards and the Mauritius Ambient Air Quality Standards. No smoke was observed at Rose Belle, Union Park, Cluny, Nouvelle France and Forest Side. No burning smell was felt at Forest Side, Curepipe and Trou aux Cerfs;

- (e) inhabitants of Mare Chicose and nearby villages (Deux Bras, Cluny, Union Park, New Grove and Rose Belle) were advised by the personnel of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life on the precautions to be taken to limit exposure to smoke and to report to any Community Health Centre in case of any health problem and to contact SAMU for any emergency;
- (f) two sessions of medical consultations were held on 26 and 30 October 2013 for the inhabitants of Mare Chicose Village. There were 18 attendance with very few complaints related to smoke;
- (g) water samples for both bacteriological and chemical analysis were taken on 28 October 2013 at Cluny Bore Hole, Riche en Eau Service Reservoir and Mare Chicose Landfill. No bacteriological contamination was revealed;
- (h) all the Area Health Centres have been contacted and no casualty related to the fire incident has been reported.

Accordingly, there was no need to resort to evacuation and to unduly alarm the inhabitants of the surrounding villages.

PONT COLVILLE DEVERELL – BRIDGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/883) **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 construction of the bridge at the Pont Colville Deverell by Sinohydro, he will state where matters stand, indicating –

- (a) if works will be completed by the contractual date therefor ;
- (b) the reasons why the new additional bridge is not levelled with the old one, and
- (c) if the speed limit will be 110kms/hr after completion thereof.

(Withdrawn)

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION UNIT (AREU) – REPORT

(No. B/884) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Attorney General whether, in regard to the subletting of

agricultural land, he will table copy of the report submitted by Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU), in or about December 2012, and state the actions, if any, initiated following the submission thereof.

(Reply not available)

NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD REGULATIONS 2013 - PUBLICATION

(No. B/885) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Mauritius National Identity Card (particulars in register) Regulations 2013, with retrospective effect as from 16 September 2013, he will state the reasons for the publication thereof on 3 October 2013.

(Withdrawn)

TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION – DIRECTOR - POST

(No. B/886) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the post of Director at the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the -

- (a) date of the advertisement inviting applications therefor;
- (b) eligibility criteria therefor ;
- (c) names of the
 - (i) applicants therefor, and
 - (ii) selected candidate, indicating the date of appointment and salary and other benefits drawn.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES WRESTLING REGIONAL COMMITTEE - SUSPENSION

(No. B/887) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Rodrigues Wrestling Regional Committee, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Wrestling Federation, information as to the reasons for the suspension thereof by the federation, in September 2013, and
- (b) state if the federation was entitled to suspend the committee, indicating the measures, if any, taken by his Ministry in relation thereto and outcome thereof

Reply: Since I took Office, I have always been advising members of Federation to cast aside their egos and personal interests and to strive for the best interest of sports. Unfortunately, internal conflicts have perpetuated within a number of Sports Federations thus undermining their proper functioning.

My Ministry was informed through copy of a letter dated 26 September 2013, addressed to the President of Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee that the Mauritius Wrestling & Allied Games Association had suspended the Rodrigues Regional Committee with immediate effect. Upon enquiry, it came to light that the reason behind the suspension was that the President of the Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee had queried the Federation about the mode of selection of athletes for the forthcoming Commonwealth Games and thereafter he failed to attend a meeting of Managing Committee of the Federation on 15 August 2013 whereat he was supposed to give certain explanations about the Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee.

Immediately, my Ministry sought advice on the legality of the action taken by the Federation. The State Law Office advised that it was legally not in order.

The Federation was informed accordingly on the 23 October and was instructed to review its decision. The Federation replied on the following day that it has decided to repeal the suspension of the Regional Rodrigues Wrestling Committee. However, I note with much concern that as at yesterday no such decision has been conveyed to the said Regional Committee.

Under such circumstances, my Ministry has suspended with effect from yesterday all financial assistance to the Federation until the situation is regularised.

I wish to seize this opportunity to send a strong signal to all sports federations. While I am prepared to go an extra mile to help them in their difficulties, I will not tolerate mismanagement and condone egocentric decisions which can do a lot of harm to our sports community. In the case of the Wrestling Federation, the wrongful decision of the leaders has prohibited young Rodriguan wrestlers from benefiting in the training programme recently funded by CONFEJES. It is really a pity, I must say.

MES - POLICE OFFICERS - INVIGILATORS

(No. B/888) Mr F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the examinations recently held by the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Syndicate, information as to if the services of Police Officers were retained as invigilators during the holding thereof and if so, indicate if they were paid special fees and if not, why not.

Reply: Yes, security being a very important aspect in the context of the organisation of examinations, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) has recourse to the services of Police for -

- a) maintenance of law and order;
- b) ensuring the peaceful conduct of examinations;
- c) enforcing law before, during and after the examinations, and
- d) assisting the staff of MES in conducting the examinations without any problems.

It is worth pointing out that for the organisation and conduct of the last CPE examinations 2013, for instance, the MES has operated 354 Examination Centres in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega in respect of which services of around 5727 Resource persons have been enlisted by the Syndicate. For the SC/ GCE O level examinations, MES operated 130 Examinations Centres and 83 Examination Centres for HSC/ GCE A Level.

The services of the Police are provided as a matter of policy based on a working arrangement with the Commissioner of Police for such security measures are necessary for the smooth conduct of these national examinations marking and the issue of results. No remuneration has been provided to the Police for the conduct of CPE, SC and HSC

Examinations. I understand that a request has been made to the MES and same will be looked into.

For the organisation and conduct of professional examinations, such as ACCA examinations and others, MES resorts to the services of the Police against remuneration at approved rates and this is incorporated in the fees paid by the respective institutions requesting MES to conduct examinations under their aegis.

With regard to Rodrigues and the Outer Islands, I am informed that the services of the Police are enlisted during the holding of the CPE, SC and HSC examinations. The Police is also involved in the escort of examination papers from MES to the Airport on their transfer to Rodrigues and Agalega and back as well as their conveyance to the respective Marking Centres.

SOLAR WATER HEATER SCHEME - MONEY DISBURSED

(No. B/889) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Solar Water Heater Scheme Phase III, he will state out of the 40,000 applications received in October 2012, the number thereof which have been approved and granted, indicating the amount of money disbursed as at to date in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

CUREPIPE/FLOREAL - PRIVATE CLINICS - LICENCE RATES

(No. B/890) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the private clinics operating in Curepipe/Floreal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, a list thereof, indicating the yearly income received by the Council in terms of taxes, fees and licence rates.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being placed in the Library.

VALLÉE PITOT – LANDSLIDE - SURVEY

(No. A/279) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the landslide at Vallée Pitot, he will state if the Japanese International Cooperation Agency has completed its survey and submitted its recommendations in relation thereto and, if so, indicate the actions, if any, taken as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

STC - MANGALORE REFINERY AND PETROCHEMICALS LTD - DEMURRAGE FEE

(No. A/280) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the amount of demurrage fee claimed therefrom over the past five years, indicating the amount thereof recovered as at to date, and
- (b) where matters stand as to the arbitration proceedings brought against the company in relation to the consignments of the poor quality fuel oil delivered in 2009.

(Withdrawn)

CHILD PROSTITUTION - REPORTED CASES

(No. A/281) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to child prostitution, she will state the number of reported cases thereof, since 2010 to date, indicating in each case, the age of the child.

Reply: In regard to child prostitution, since 2010 to date, 25 cases have been reported. The document is being laid in the Library.

GRNW & PORT LOUIS WEST - ZEP SCHOOLS - HOT MEALS

(No. A/282) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the provision of hot meals in each of the *Zone d'Education Prioritaire* schools in Constituency No.1, Grand River North West and Port Louis West, he will state the -

(a) name/s of the caterer/s therefor, indicating in each case, the amount of money paid out thereto, and

(b) number of pupils who are/have been in receipt thereof.

Reply: Following the announcement made in the Budget speech 2013 for the provision of a daily hot meal to each child attending ZEP schools, Government allocated a sum of Rs130 m. representing Rs75 per child daily.

Arrangements were made at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to implement same as from 14 January 2013 i.e at the resumption of school in 30 ZEP schools in the Republic of Mauritius. In constituency No 1, 5 ZEP schools have been provided with hot meal from 14 January to 15 February 2013.

On 16 February 2013, following cases of food poisoning at Bambous A Government School, and the results from laboratory analysis made by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, which showed the presence of E.coli above acceptable norms in some samples of meals taken in ZEP schools in some regions, this Ministry decided to suspend, with immediate effect, the provision of hot meals in all ZEP schools. Alternative arrangements were thus made for the provision of bread/butter/cheese, a fruit and water to pupils at the rate of Rs 35 per pupil per day as from Monday 18 February 2013.

As from the second term, i.e 19 August 2013, after consultation with Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the above meal was supplemented with dried fruits, nuts and biscuits among others.

As regards parts (a) and (b) of the question, the name of caterers, the amount paid to them and the number of pupils who have been benefitted from the programme are being placed in the Library.

(No. A/283) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Consulates/Embassies/High Commissions, he will state the number thereof set up in 2013, if any, indicating in each case, the location thereof.

Reply: In 2013, no new Consulate/Embassy/High Commission of Mauritius has been established overseas.

MUSEUM (VIRTUAL) - SETTING UP

(No. A/284) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed study for the setting up of a virtual museum on the history of Mauritius, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Museums Council that a Committee comprising of the following institutions was set up to look into the setting up of the Virtual Museum on the history of Mauritius.

The Mauritius Museums Council

The Central Information System Division

The National Archives Department

The National Computer Board

The Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund

The Committee had several meetings and has made preliminary recommendations. Meetings were also held with Mr Bharat Parekh of “Eternal Gandhi and Special Projects of India” in August 2012. The latter will provide the Mauritius Museums Council the Multi-Media Technology for the setting up of the Virtual Museum.

MUSEUMS – MASTER PLAN

(No. A/285) Mrs M. J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed preparation of a master plan for museums, he will state where matters stand.

(Reply not available)

BEAU BASSIN - ROYAL ROAD - ACCIDENTS - JANUARY 2013-12.11.2013

(No. A/286) Mr K. C. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Royal Road at Beau Bassin, from the roundabout near the Police Station to the Dumas Street, he will state the number of road accidents having occurred thereat, since January 2013 to date, indicating the –

- (a) number of fatal ones, and
- (b) traffic control measures, if any, taken to ensure road safety thereat.

(Reply not available)

BOIS MARCHAND CEMETERY - SECURITY MEASURES

(No. A/287) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Bois Marchand Cemetery, in Terre Rouge, he will state the measures, if any, taken to prevent -

- (a) families from being attacked when paying respect at the tombs, and
- (b) profanation of the tombs.

Reply: I am informed by the District Council of Pamplemousses that the following measures have been taken to tighten security at the Bois Marchand Cemetery -

- one additional Security Officer has been posted in the Chinese Section of the Cemetery;

- the Cemetery is being well maintained and kept clean in order to prevent intruders from hiding therein;
- bollards have been fixed to prohibit entry of vehicles from the Northern Trunk Road;
- the Police authorities have been requested to effect regular patrol in the vicinity to act as a deterrent.

EDUCATION - YEARS 2000-2012 - EXPENDITURE

(No. A/288) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to education, he will state, for the years 2000 to 2012, the –

- (a) total expenditure on education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product
- (b) total public expenditure on education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product
- (c) total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure
- (d) public current expenditure on primary education as a percentage of public current expenditure on education ,and
- (e) public current expenditure on secondary education as a percentage of public current expenditure on education.

(Reply not available)

ROCHE BOIS TRANSFER STATION – ARSON CASES

(No. A/289) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Roche Bois Transfer Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Solid Waste Management Division, information as to the number of reported cases of arson thereat, since October 2013 to date, indicating -

- (a) if any environmental assessment has been carried out on the consequences thereof on the local residents and, if so, the outcome thereof, and
- (b) the additional measures, if any, that will be taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

Reply: I am informed that two incidents of fire occurred at the Roche Bois Transfer Stations, namely on 22 October 2013 at 15.00 hours and 24 October 2013 at 14.30 hours. These incidents were reported to the Police for enquiry.

The above-mentioned incidents followed the fire outbreak at the Mare Chicose landfill following which a decision was taken not to cart away wastes from the Roche Bois Transfer Station to the landfill for a temporary period until resumption of normal operations at the landfill. This situation resulted in accumulation of around 500 tons of wastes on the upper platform of the transfer station.

No environmental assessment was required since smoke from the fire was blowing seaward and as it was strictly a localised fire on part of the upper platform of the Transfer Station. Furthermore, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services intervened rapidly and the fire was brought under control.

I am informed that the local Police, DSU, ERS, CID and SSU personnel are carrying preventive patrol in Roche Bois area to prevent further recurrence and the situation is under control.

In regard to part (b) of the question, given that the Mare Chicose landfill has resumed its operations, no waste is being stacked on the upper platform of the transfer station, but is instead being carted away to the landfill immediately. The rapid carting away of wastes from the Transfer Station to the landfill will minimise the risks of fire at the station.

MILITARY ROAD - CAMP YOLOFF - FOUL SMELLS

(No. A/290) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the inconveniences being caused to the residents of some eight houses by the emanation of foul smells due to water accumulation at

the blocked drains/canals situated at Military Road, Camp Yolloff, opposite the ABC Motors and the CEB Stores and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if urgent remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

(Reply not available)

MAHEBOURG SOCIAL WELFARE CENTRE - PROJECT

(No. A/291) Mr M. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, in regard to the building which formerly housed the Mahebourg Social Welfare Centre, situated in the vicinity of the Mahebourg Waterfront, he will state if he has been informed of the abandoned state thereof and that it represents an eyesore and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Property Development Limited, information as to the –

- (a) remedial measures that will be taken, if any, in relation thereto, and
- (b) project, if any, earmarked for implementation thereat.

(Reply not available)

MARE CHICOSE, LA CHAUMIERE AND ROCHE BOIS TRANSFER STATIONS – FIRE OUTBREAKS

(No. A/292) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the fire outbreaks at the Mare Chicose, La Chaumière and Roche Bois Transfer Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, information as to if decontamination exercises and medical treatment to prevent occupational diseases, due to exposure to toxic smokes for days, have been carried out and administered, and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that

- (i) decontamination of personnel and equipment is an established procedure of the incident Command System of the Department for all incidents;
- (ii) all officers exposed to such hazards are referred for further medical examination and presently arrangements have already been made with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life in this respect;
- (iii) all officers should wear their personal protective equipment comprising fire helmets, fire boots, fire tunics and leggings and gloves. Moreover, self contained breathing apparatus is utilised in irrespirable or contaminated atmosphere, and
- (iv) officers of the firefighting cadre undergo regular checkups, arranged for by the Occupational Health Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

I am informed that with regard to the recent fire outbreak at the Mare Chicose Landfill Site which was a major one, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development conducted regular air quality tests throughout the duration of the incident and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, arranged for adequate number of Doctors to call on site regularly. Moreover, the Cluny Health Centre, which is in the vicinity, was also contacted in case of any emergency.

I am further informed that the fire outbreaks at La Chaumière and Roche Bois Transfer Stations were minor ones.

I am informed that no official complaint has been received from members of the staff regarding any case of contamination or suffering from such related ailments.

FIREFIGHTERS – FLASH FLOODS - OVERTIME ALLOWANCES

(No. A/293) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the flash floods of 13 February and 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Services, information as to if the firefighters of the Bank of Firefighters have been paid their overtime allowances in connection therewith and, if not, why not, indicating when same will be paid.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service that payment of overtime allowances have already been effected in June 2013 to the officers who had been recalled for

duty from the “Bank of Fire Officers Scheme” on 13 February and 30 March 2013 respectively in connection with the flash floods.